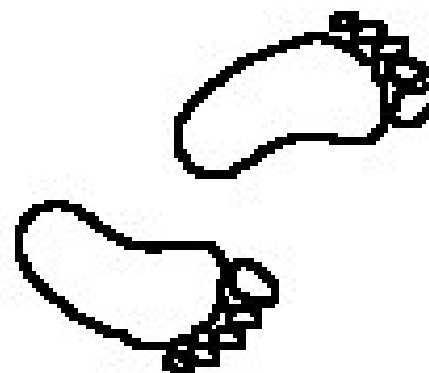


March 2016
Issue 86

The Next Step



Canberra Christian Fellowship
(in the Methodist Tradition)

Shoebboxes

We tend to associate the Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes with Christmas - the name gives it away - however a good bit of the preparation for the Christmas dispatch and distribution of boxes happens much earlier in the year. We were reminded of this when June passed on a message from Norma informing us of recent shopping expeditions which procured a whole lot of exercise books, pencils and similar items destined for shoeboxes. A stitch at a time, vast quantities of cuddly teddy bears and glove puppets are being knitted or stitched up, again to take up residence in a shoebox.

Is all this activity and effort worth it?

From time to time we've heard stories from those participating in the distribution, of responses to the boxes. Those stories give a wonderful picture of God at work and the joy a box can bring to a recipient. This suggests to me that the shoeboxes are a wonderful means of expressing God's love and care.

What do we (the givers) get out of it, personally?

There is a real joy in participating in God's work especially when it is so easy to imagine the pleasure that work produces. Doing God's work brings its own special reward.

Each of us should be looking out for what God wants from us. God has given some a particular heart for shoeboxes and the joy they spread. Of others He asks different things. For many of us shoeboxes are one of a number of ways we can participate in His work.

While God places shoeboxes (or any other form of service) before us, let us do it enthusiastically, at the same time watching for anything else God wants of us.



My husband and I couldn't decide which jacket to buy our granddaughter, so we asked the young salesman. "If you were buying a jacket for your girlfriend," I said, "what would you get?" "A bulletproof one," he said. "I'm married."

My boss texted me, "Send me one of your funny jokes."
I replied, "I'm working at the moment, I will send you one later."
He replied, "That was fantastic! Send me another one."

My seatmate on a flight was a woman. Ever the charmer, I asked, "Does the airline charge you extra for sitting next to good-looking men?" "Yes," she said, "but I wasn't willing to pay."

Cyclone Winston

Towards the end of February, news came of Cyclone Winston which tore through Fiji leaving a number of people dead and many villages and homes destroyed.

As a Fellowship we contributed \$500 through Red Cross to help those who suffered from the cyclonic devastation.

We have built up close links with a part of Canberra's Fijian community and that brought the disaster closer to us. We understand that Rev. Paul Tabulutu's sister was one of those to lose her home.

A letter from Taiwan

Happy New Year !!

I miss you and particularly thought about you at the end of last year when I tried to write down things and persons that I am grateful for. I had a very warm memory with you in Canberra. Thank you for taking me in your fellowship, welcoming me, and treating me like one in your own family.

Good news from me is that I am five months pregnant. Fred and I are expecting a baby girl in early June. Through Ultrasound, a new life is quite amazing, growing in a mysterious way. She is all good now. I will email you some photos when she arrives.

Big
With love and hugs,

Fanny.

29/1/2016

As the golfer approached the first tee, a hazardous hole with a green surrounded by water, he debated if he should use his new golf ball. Deciding that the hole was too treacherous, he pulled an old ball out and placed it on the tee. Just then he heard a voice from above say loudly, "Use the new ball!"

Frightened, he replaced the old ball with the new and approached the tee. Now the voice from above shouted, "Take a practice swing!"

With this, the golfer stepped backwards and took a swing.

Feeling more confident, he approached the tee when the voice again rang out, "Use the old ball!"

Sunday, 21st February – Mr. Michael Bevan – Gideons

We were glad to welcome Michael Bevan from the Gideons in February and to hear more about their mission.

Operating since 1908 (1956 in Australia), Gideons now are working in 201 countries, distributing scriptures in 99 languages.

Gideon Bibles are placed in most hotel and motel rooms and replaced periodically so they don't become too worn or tattered. Of course some Bibles seem almost untouched when they are due to be replaced and in such cases those Bibles are reused in other ways.

We have had some old Gideons Bibles for people to refer to during our services which were past their best. (The content couldn't be faulted but the packaging was far from pristine). Those Bibles have now been taken away and their place taken by as new recycled hotel Bibles.

Thank you Gideons.



Bible Studies

All our Bible Studies are back in action for 2016.

Tuesdays at 2-30pm mostly ladies meet.

Most Wednesdays at 5pm foreign students (many with little or no knowledge of Christianity) meet and are currently studying Mark.

On Fridays at 2pm a small group of men get together.

All studies are held at the church. Join us. You'd be most welcome.

Washer Uppers

Roving photographer Warren caught these two washer uppers just as they had hung up their tea towels before heading home after our Valentine's Day (and Decimal Currency 50th Anniversary) service.

Howard and John may have been 'on duty' this particular Sunday, however it would be amiss to not mention other regular scrubbers and dryers including Ken (whom I have noticed performing kitchen duty most weeks), Laurie and Alec.



Thank you all. You do a great job.

PS After our Harvest Thanksgiving service, a new set of kitchen hands seemed to have taken over. Many of our Chinese Methodist friends had control of the sink and tea towels.



Sunday, 28th February – Rev. Patrick Cole – Withered hand, withered hearts

This was Patrick's first visit to our Fellowship although he knew some of us from other places.

In Mark 3 we find a story of Jesus healing a man with a withered hand. Jesus saw the man and the man's need when he visited the synagogue. Jesus also recognised that others there would use His actions against Him if they could. He asked what was the right thing to do, good or evil but got no response. Jesus was upset at the hardness of heart of those people. The man had a withered hand and was willing to be healed but those looking on accusingly had 'withered hearts' and didn't even realise their own condition.

Jesus knew by healing the man, he would be playing into the hands of His enemies, yet he cared more for the man and his need than He cared for His own life. He healed the man and His enemies went away and began to plot how to kill Him.

All of us need Jesus' healing in some way. We would be wise to accept that healing as the man with the withered hand did, but foolish to harden our hearts and become like those with 'withered hearts', unwilling to acknowledge their need and rejecting their only true hope for the future.



Marie with Patrick after the service

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Sunday, 6th March – Rev. David McDonald – True Satisfaction

Our Harvest Thanksgiving services over the last few years have each proved to be a special time when we have particularly acknowledged God's goodness to us and His provision for our needs. This year we invited the Chinese Methodists to share in this time with us.



Once again Joyce and her helpers arranged an impressive display of produce to remind us of the good things we enjoy from God.

Our Chinese friends sang for us and we all enjoyed a meal together afterwards.

David McDonald in his sermon brought up the cry we hear so often - "If only ...". That cry assumes that if circumstances were just a little different, things would be so much better for the person saying it and that person would be satisfied. It doesn't work.



Something else would come up to cause more dissatisfaction.

In Philippians we find Paul content, not because things were going well for him, but despite his imprisonment. His satisfaction, as ours should be, was in knowing and serving God.

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Sunday, 13th March - Service in Song

On the 13th March, we joined together in a Service in Song prepared by Mike Poulton.

Instead of having prayers led and a sermon presented in our usual way, we used hymns in their place. This meant we had to pay particular attention to the words we were singing. Mike had selected hymns which very eloquently spoke our prayers to God and presented the Gospel message clearly and powerfully.

Afterwards, a number of the congregation commented on how meaningful and helpful the service had been to them and suggested we do something similar again next year.

One 'hymn of comfort from faith in Christ' had both meaningful words and a story behind it which helped us appreciate what it said even more.

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

[chorus]
It is well, with my soul,
It is well, with my soul,
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

The author, Horatio G. Spafford (1828-1888), was a Presbyterian layman from Chicago. He had established a very successful legal practice as a young businessman and was also a devout Christian. Among his close friends were several evangelists including the famous Dwight L. Moody, also from Chicago.

Spafford's fortune evaporated in the wake of the great Chicago Fire of 1871. Having invested heavily in real estate along Lake Michigan's shoreline, he lost everything overnight. In a saga reminiscent of Job, his son died a short time before his financial disaster. But the worst was yet to come.

Hymnologist Kenneth Osbeck tells the story: "Desiring a rest for his wife and four daughters as well as wishing to join and assist Moody and [his musician Ira] Sankey in one of their campaigns in Great Britain, Spafford planned a European trip for his family in 1873. In November of that year, due to unexpected last-minute business developments, he had to remain in Chicago, but sent his wife and four daughters on ahead as scheduled on the S.S. Ville du Havre. He expected to follow in a few days.



Horatio Spafford

"On November 22 the ship was struck by the Lochearn, an English vessel, and sank in twelve minutes. Several days later the survivors were finally landed at Cardiff, Wales, and Mrs. Spafford cabled her husband, 'Saved alone.'"

<http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-it-is-well-with-my-soul>

When the survivors of the wreck had been rescued, Mrs. Spafford's first reaction was one of complete despair. Then she heard a voice speak to her, "You were spared for a purpose." And she immediately recalled the words of a friend, "It's easy to be grateful and good when you have so much, but take care that you are not a fair-weather friend to God."

<https://todaysfreshmanna.wordpress.com/2010/11/09/an-inspiring-story-horatio-g-spafford/>

Spafford left immediately to join his wife. This hymn is said to have been penned as he approached the area of the ocean thought to be where the ship carrying his daughters had sunk.

<http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-it-is-well-with-my-soul>

The words which Spafford wrote that day come from **2 Kings 4:26**. They echo the response of the Shunammite woman to the sudden death of her only child. Though we are told "**her soul is vexed within her**", she still maintains that "**It is well.**" And Spafford's song reveals a man whose trust in the Lord is as unwavering as hers was.

<https://todaysfreshmanna.wordpress.com/2010/11/09/an-inspiring-story-horatio-g-spafford/>

2 Kings 4:26 *Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well: (KJV)*

Another daughter, Bertha, was born in 1878 as well as a son, Horatio, in 1880, though he later died of scarlet fever. After the birth of daughter Grace in 1881, Spafford and his wife moved to Jerusalem out of a deep interest in the Holy Land. There they established the American Colony, a Christian utopian society engaged in philanthropic activities among Jews, Muslims and Christians.

<http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-it-is-well-with-my-soul>

Four days shy of his 60th birthday, Spafford died on October 16, 1888, of malaria, and was buried in Mount Zion Cemetery, Jerusalem.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horatio_Spafford

the tragedy surrounding the hymn didn't end there, either. The tune was written by Philip P. Bliss, which he entitled "Ville du Havre," the name of the ship that took the lives of Spafford's four daughters. The hymn was first sung by Bliss himself before a large gathering of ministers hosted by Moody on November 24, 1876.

Just one month later, on December 29, 1876, Bliss and wife were traveling to Chicago by train. As the train passed over a trestle near Ashtabula, Ohio, the bridge collapsed and the passenger coaches plunged 75 into the icy river. Philip was able to escape through a window, but his wife was pinned in the wreckage. As he went back to free his wife, a fire broke out through the wooden cars and both were burned beyond recognition.

Nine tragic deaths surround the hymn, and yet those affected by them, could say, "It is well with my soul."

<http://www.jameswatkins.com/articles-2/hopeful/itiswell/>

Scripture Union Regeneration Dinner

Our little Fellowship has managed to have quite a big (relatively speaking) presence at these dinners over the last few years and this 2016 dinner was no exception. Warren had done a good job encouraging attendance and organising our tables.

Idea Of North provided entertainment for the evening. They are a very accomplished and world acclaimed acapella foursome.



The meals we were served were scrumptious.

Main speaker for the night was Clayton Fergie who I believe was Director of SU ACT some years ago. It was an entertaining, informative and enjoyable evening which raised just over \$80,000.

Dear Friends at Canberra Christian Fellowship



Greetings from David, Janenne and Rachel. Welcome to our second newsletter written from South Africa. We have been here three months now and are well settled in and feeling at home. We have been made so welcome and very much a part of the family at iKhethelo Children's Village.

Christmas @ iKhethelo

Christmas Day was spent at iKhethelo. After a lovely Christmas church service, our children opened their Christmas gifts. After a good lunch together, we reflected on 2015 and the various struggles and joys it came with. It truly was a wonderful family time, just a bit bigger than most families.

A New Family Member

During January we welcomed a new family member. Roxy ... is a German Shepherd cross. She is an excellent watch dog and is also excellent with the children in the village. Most of the children in the village have never had experience with a dog

A Day at iKhethelo

For volunteers and senior staff, the day begins formally at 7am with bible study and prayer together, until about 8am.

Janenne and Rachel then head off to iKhethelo Primary School to help for a couple of hours, to work one-on-one with some of the students requiring extra help.

After a couple of hours at school, Janenne and Rachel spend the next couple of hours helping at the preschool and creche.

In the afternoon, Janenne and Rachel put on their volunteer coordinator hats. In this role they co-ordinate the activities of all the volunteers while at the village.

David's primary areas of responsibility are in managing village building and maintenance activities, looking after all aspects of IT for the village, and implementing and improving processes to help with the operation of the village.

David meets with [7 workers] at 8am each day and also one lunchtime a week for bible study and prayer.

A couple of afternoons a week we help with our homework club. On these days we will be occupied until at least 7pm.



God's plan for ageing

Most seniors never get enough exercise. In His wisdom God decreed that seniors become forgetful so they would have to search for their glasses, keys and other things thus doing more walking. And God looked down and saw that it was good.

Then God saw there was another need. In His wisdom He made seniors lose coordination so they would drop things requiring them to bend, reach & stretch. And God looked down and saw that it was good.

Then God considered the function of bladders and decided seniors would have additional calls of nature requiring more trips to the bathroom, thus providing more exercise. God looked down and saw that it was good.

So if you find as you age, you are getting up and down more, remember it's God's will. It is all in your best interest even though you mutter under your breath.

Sunday, 20th March (Palm Sunday) – Rev. Ron Reeson – What rights do we have?

In society today, people's rights are often discussed.

When we consider Jesus, we find He didn't insist on His rights even though He didn't receive legally correct treatment. Philippians 2: 6-8 helps us understand Jesus' motivation at His trial. He *"being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, ... he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!"*.



Is clinging to our rights a christian way? Jesus way was submission to God's call on His life.

Many shops before Easter promote self indulgence - chocolate easter eggs and treats are available in abundance. Just before Passover, Jesus drove exploitive traders out of the temple. The temple was a place where God was to be worshipped, not somewhere for worshippers to be exploited.

Good leaders fight for the rights of others and work for the advancement of others rather than themselves.

Jesus saw life as a gift from God and trusted God for His outcome. God's gifts were better than His rights.

We as Christians should not look for our rights, but instead accept God's gifts. One of those gifts is eternal life with Him.

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Services over recent weeks have included the following:



Mr. Laurie
Hockridge



Mr. Michael
Bevan



Rev. Patrick
Cole



Rev. David
McDonald



Mr. Mike
Poulton



Rev. Ron
Reeson



Rev. Peter
Nelson

Sunday 14th February – Mr. Laurie Hockridge - A Royal Priesthood

Sunday 21st February – Mr. Michael Bevan - Gideons

Sunday 28th February – Rev. Patrick Cole - Withered hand, Withered hearts

Sunday 6th March – Rev. David McDonald (Harvest Thanksgiving) - True satisfaction

Sunday 13th March – Mr. Mike Poulton (Service in Song)

Sunday 20th March – Rev. Ron Reeson - What rights do we have?

Sunday 27th March – Rev. Peter Nelson (Easter) - Good news for all

"Do you believe in life after death?" the boss asked one of his employees.

"Yes, sir," the employee replied.

"That's good," the boss said. "After you left early yesterday to go to your grandmother's funeral, she stopped by to see you."

Coming Up

Tuesday Bible Study

Tuesdays at 2-30 pm.

All welcome - contact Joyce for more information
Studying Corinthians

Wednesday Bible Study Group

Wednesdays at 5-00 pm.

Catering for Uni. students. contact John or Howard for more information
Studying Mark

Friday Study Group

Fridays at 2-00 pm.

All welcome - contact John M. for more information
Studying John

Prayer Meeting

3rd Monday of each month, usually at Marie's.

All welcome

Contacts

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Rev. Owen Chadwick - Universities chaplaincy

Rev. Steve Lindner - Campbell High School chaplaincy

Rev. Peter Nelson - Institute of Sport chaplaincy

Please remember Phil, Owen, Steve, Peter and their chaplaincy work
in your prayers.



Coming Services

We meet at **Holy Trinity Finnish Lutheran Church, Cnr. Gould and Watson Streets, Turner**



Mr. Mark
Warren



Mr. Phillip
Ng



Mr. George
Huang



Mr. Brett
Hillam



Rev. Phil
Anderson



Rev. Dr.
Campbell
Egan



Pastor Steve
Prior



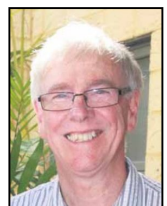
Rev. David
McDonald



Rev. Peter
Nelson



Rev. Michael
Pailthorpe



Mr. Robert
Nicholls

Sunday 3rd April at 5pm – Mr. Mark Warren

Sunday 10th April at 5pm – Mr. Phillip Ng

Sunday 17th April at 5pm – Mr. George Huang

Sunday 24th April at 5pm – Mr. Brett Hillam

Sunday 1st May at 5pm – Rev. Phil Anderson

Sunday 8th May at 5pm – Rev. Dr. Campbell Egan

Sunday 15th May at 5pm – Pastor Steve Prior

Sunday 22nd May at 5pm – Rev. David McDonald

Sunday 29th May at 5pm – Rev. Peter Nelson (Church Anniversary)

Sunday 5th June at 5pm – Rev. Michael Pailthorpe

Sunday 12th June at 5pm – details later

Sunday 19th June at 5pm – Mr. Robert Nicholls (Christian Blind Mission)