

Parkdale Church of Christ

News & Views



Word and culture

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. (Genesis 1:1-3, NRSV)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. (John 1:1-5)

The beginning of John's Gospel deliberately echoes the beginning of the beginning, Genesis. It describes God's use of words in creation, and equates 'Word of God' with 'Jesus' before going on to consider Jesus as the light of all people.

Each tribe, race and nation that hears the Good News of Jesus Christ, that the Kingdom of God is at hand, responds to that news in a different way. It can only be so: as humans, we can only process news in the light of our own experience. The radiant, beautiful rainbow light of God's Word becomes limited by the glasses we look through; we cannot see it all, for we are only human, and it is beyond our ability and skill.

But we see some of it, and must respond. Each culture responds out of its own history and circumstance, and so African Christianity differs from American Christianity and from European Christianity; and within each culture there are variations, so we have Anglicans, Catholics, Churches of Christ. Each responds to the Word, the Light, the Good News; who is to say which response is right for each culture and group? Not I, but the Holy Spirit, and then not speaking through me alone. Too many have fallen into the trap of saying "I am right". We are all right, and all wrong; but we are all loved, and this too is Good News. Let us then look with holy love upon each other, and upon all believers.

- Steve

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TODAY: Steve is speaking again this morning and leading the evening gathering at 7:00pm. The evening group has been exploring ways of getting to know God better through prayer and way of life.

NEXT SUNDAY: Steve will be preaching again, and later that day he and Annie will depart for a family gathering in Austria. Their son Andrew will be married to Andrea on the 25th in Vienna – some will remember that Andy and Andi visited us at the church a few years back (they have known each other since 2004), and they were here when Steve & Annie's elder son Daniel was married to Candy two years ago.

[Photo omitted from Internet version for copyright reasons]

Andy and Andi in Rome – December 2009

Having considered the effects of jet lag on Steve's return, it seems best if the evening service breaks for three weeks beginning with July 18th, so it will resume on August 8th.

DURING THE WEEK:

Monday: No **Play Group** due to the school holidays.

Tuesday: **Service at Corben House.** Note that this will now be at **10am**, since our old time of 11am clashes with other activities. Please come – the more the merrier!

Wednesday: **Friendship Centre** meets as usual in the Arthur Scott Hall from 10:30am to 3:00pm with lunch at 12:15pm. (Arthur's Table is on holiday until August 4th.) Thanks to Kath Gillard for managing the food while Debby is unable to attend.

Thursday: **Coffee and Chat** as normal from 10:00am to 12noon.

Friday: This **Play Group** is carrying on through the school holidays after all. Wendy is our contact for this group.

TEMPLE DAY: We traditionally take this offering on the last Sunday in August, in this case, 28th August. Taking the Old Testament concept of bringing gifts for the Temple we dedicate this offering to renovations and improvements to our buildings. This year we have the Arthur Scott Hall in our sights for rejuvenation.

NEW FROM CONFERENCE: Dreaming Day:2—Saturday October 2, 2010. Churches will shortly be invited to appoint delegates to attend and participate in Dreaming Day:2 to take the Covenant/Belonging Together conversation to the next stage. The three key questions that will form the framework for the day are:

1. What is a Church of Christ? (What is our Common Mission? What are our Shared Practices? What is our Unifying Dream?)
2. What does it mean to belong to Churches of Christ? (What are the privileges and responsibilities?)
3. What might the percentage for a Ministry Contribution look like? (It is planned to have a specific percentage figure to work with.)

These themes will be engaged through plenary sessions, focus groups and feedback. A preparatory study guide will be available for churches in advance.

If you would like to be part of this thinking process, please speak to Steve or Gwenda. The process is important for the future of our movement.

Have we forgotten how to verbalise our faith?

by Monique ten Hoopen

(Director of Community Mission in Mission and Ministry – Vic/Tas Conference – from the July Conference Newsletter)

Have the sayings: “Share the gospel and if necessary use words” or “You may be the only Bible someone reads” become an excuse for not verbalising our faith? Similarly, do members of churches with great community and mission programs become complacent with sharing their faith and rely on their church programs to be their witness?

We are Jesus with skin on, his hands and feet to those we meet and minister to by our actions and example, but we are also his voice. Do we empower Christians to verbally share their faith in their everyday lives through their own story?

“...Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.” 1Pet 3: 15

Some Christians feel their story is inadequate - that another person's conversion from what is seen as marked 'sinful' choices or a major healing transformation story will speak louder and have more impact. Yet it is no less amazing that Jesus went to the cross for what is seen as a 'good person'. Does today's 'Christian' truly understand the magnitude of their salvation? We need to encourage Christians to be comfortable in sharing from who they are, as God created them to be, utilising their experiences, personality and giftedness. Sharing one's story is not restricted to conversion but includes the multitude of stories of Jesus encounters in everyday life. People want to hear how God is making a difference in your life today, not just 10 years ago when you became a Christian! However, to do so, we must have an active growing relationship with God or we won't have new stories to tell.

God present in the everyday should be evident in our conversations, amongst Christians, but also amongst our friends and networks where opportunities to share with 'gentleness and respect' present themselves. Church leaders need to spend more time equipping their people for these opportunities.

People don't just want to hear the nice 'good' stories of life, rather they're interested in how you overcame the tough times, suffering, illness, or that time you succumbed to temptation and how you have had to face up to the consequences assisted by a forgiving God, as well as the everyday issues of parenting, relationships, pride, self discipline, anger and contentment.

They don't want the 'right' answer or our theoretical stand point; instead, they are more likely to listen to our authenticity and reality of our relationship with Jesus. Theoretical sharing simply points to a standard, and people know enough about what we stand against. Whereas when we share authentically from our own story we share: 'this is how I dealt with that', 'this is what is working for me', 'this is what I'm learning'. It becomes personal, relational and risky as it demands our vulnerability and imperfect self, yet it invites ongoing dialogue and opportunity.

Our actions, life example and church programs are important but not as a substitute for our willingness to give verbal testimony to the hope and faith we have through Jesus. If we put more time into equipping Christians to be who God created them to be, to utilise their gifts, to be open to share their experiences and the impact of Jesus in their lives with gentleness and respect for the listener, imagine what would happen.

Monique ten Hoopen
mtenhoopen@churchesofchrist.org.au



Please pray for...

- Continue to pray for our Temple Day offering. It will cost a large sum to make the hall more bright and clean looking. Whatever we do with the floor will cost a lot.
- Also continue to pray for our October programmes – concert, hymns and antique valuations. It is important that more people come into our buildings and realise what we have to offer, and the October activities are part of this; but also, it is important that they are enjoyable!
- The latest news on Danny, who has a rare form of epilepsy, is that he has responded really well to the latest treatment and is out of hospital against all expectation! His mother, Hannah, sends thanks for our prayers. Please continue to pray for him, in particular that this new treatment will continue to work well.
- Pray for a complete and rapid recovery of sight for Peter's eye, after the retina became detached.
- Continue to pray for all our travellers, that they may enjoy their holidays and return to us safely and refreshed.
- Pray that more people will become interested in matters of faith in this area, and that some of them will come along to explore what Christianity means in the 21st century with us.
- Listen to what the Holy Spirit has to say to us about how we conduct ourselves as a church, and if something is laid on your heart, be sure to speak to Steve or one of the Elders about it.

Lord, hear our prayers. Amen!

Civilization is littered with unsolved problems, baffling impasses. The best minds of the world are at the end of their tether. The most knowledgeable observers of our condition are badly frightened. The most relevant contribution that Christians make at these points of impasse is the act of prayer -- determined, repeated, leisurely meetings with the personal and living God. New life is conceived in these meetings.

- Eugene H. Peterson, from his book *Earth & Altar*

Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born.

- Anaïs Nin, from a diary entry in *The Diary of Anaïs Nin*

[*Cartoon omitted from Internet version for copyright reasons*]

Order of Service – 11th July, 2010

Welcome – Steve Jackson

Worship in song – Leonie Hargreaves

Announcements – Steve Jackson

Reading 1: Amos 7:7-17 - tba

Worship in Song

Lord's Table – Kath Gillard

Church Prayers – Steve Jackson

Worship in Song

Reading 2: Luke 10:25-37 – Warwick Newland

Sermon – Steve Jackson

Final song

Benediction

Door: Joan Maxwell

Creche:

Nicole East

Sunday School:

On holiday

Serving next week (18th July, 10:15am)

Organ/keyboard – n/a

Piano – Barbara Pitts

Worship Leader – Steve Jackson

Announcements – Lyle Yates

Lord's Table – Peter Pitts

Reading 1: Amos 8:1-12 – Barbara Pitts

Reading 2: Luke 10:34-43 – Lois Woodward

Helpers – Andrew Hargreaves, Hedley Hartrick

Church Prayers – Lyle Yates

Sermon – Steve Jackson

Children's talk – n/a

Flowers – Robb Cunnington

Door – Maureen Scott

Hall Cleaners – n/a

Foyer Cleaner – Coralie Scott

Crèche – Maureen Scott

Sunday School – holidays

Evening music – n/a

Service times: Sunday mornings 10:15am; 1st Sunday evening of month 7pm



We love our faith, we live our faith

Minister: Steve Jackson

Church Office phone: 9580-1445

E-mail: minister@parkdalecofc.org.au

Web: www.parkdalecofc.org.au

Readings during the week

Sunday: Philippians 3:12-4:1

Monday: Philippians 4:2-9

Tuesday: Philippians 4:10-23

Wednesday: Jeremiah 1:1-19

Thursday: Jeremiah 2:1-13

Friday: Jeremiah 2:14-25

Saturday: Jeremiah 2:26-37

Elders:

Gwenda Mathieson

Phone: 9580-4732

Alan Payne

Phone: 8707-1713

Lyle Yates

Phone: 9589-2436

Peter Pitts

Phone: 9561-6138