



<http://pastorhobbins.wordpress.com/2011/01/03/bible-study-basics/>

# The Encounter

## October 2012

The Parish of Victor Harbor  
St Augustine's Church, Victor Harbor  
St Christopher's Church, Mt. Compass

## **"Understanding, following, and guarding, the truth"**

In October the Bible Society has called the churches to think again about the importance and place of Scripture. Each Sunday in October we have been thinking about this in the sermon in particular. In this article for The Encounter I would like to focus on some words of Paul to Timothy in his second letter, because they relate to Scripture and the teaching of it.

***"Think over what I say, for the Lord will grant you understanding in everything."*** 2 Timothy 2: 7.

Paul's words here to Timothy have two principles in them applicable to all of us who want to receive understanding from the Lord.

"Think over what *I* say.....". Paul is an apostle of Christ, and he is conscious of his Christ-given authority. This comes out in the beginning of his letter - "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus ***by the will of God*** ....." (1:1). In his first letter he also begins this way - "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus ***by command of God our Saviour and of Christ Jesus our hope.***" And so if we are to receive understanding from the Lord, we must consider what ***the apostle*** is saying.

Some people have at times given the impression that they have reservations about Paul as a teacher. But let us recall that Jesus himself commissioned him. We read of this in Acts 26:18. "I send you to the Gentiles to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."

However, if we are to receive understanding from the Lord, we are also to ***"think over"*** what Paul teaches, that is, ***consider*** it. Bible study is in order, using our minds and grappling with the text of Scripture.

In short, ***thought, with confidence in*** Paul's teaching authority (or for that matter in John's or Peter's or Jude's or James' ) and ***prayer*** to the Lord for giving us understanding, belong together. That's a balanced combination as we use Scripture today.

***"Follow the pattern of the sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus, guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us."*** 2 Timothy. 1: 13, 14.

Again we see how we have a solid basis for our Christian faith and teaching today by Paul's words to Timothy - "Follow the pattern of the ***sound words which you have heard from me.***" Now ***who*** is Paul that we should do that? Let us hear how he describes himself at the beginning of his letter - "For this gospel ***I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher*** ...." (v.11). Then he adds "and therefore I suffer as I do.!"

There are no apostles of Christ (in the sense of the 12) today. Their teaching found its definitive form in the New Testament. Indeed the church is "built

upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Ephesians 2:20). There can be no new gospel!

Now Timothy, and preachers and Bible teachers today are "to follow the pattern of the sound words" of Paul (and Peter, John etc.), and to "guard the truth..."

Now "**sound**" words are "**healthy**" words, not diseased or maimed. And Timothy was to follow "**the pattern**" of these sound words. In other words, Paul's teaching is to be Timothy's guide or rule, or model. To that he is to hold fast, and not to depart from it.

The apostolic faith then is a standard of sound words. We can study it with confidence. However, Paul also tells Timothy to follow this "**in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.**" In other words, his convictions and teaching of others are to be characterised by **faith** and **love**.

Not only is the apostolic faith a standard of sound words, but it is "**the truth** (or the **good deposit**, or **the treasure** (N.E.B.) **entrusted** to you (or put in to your charge)".

The gospel, the apostolic faith is a treasure deposited for safe keeping with the church. And Timothy is to "guard it". And so are preachers, teachers and Christians today!

Guard it - that is, keeping it pure, and preserving it against every corruption - "by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us" v. 14. God himself is its final guardian and he will preserve it.

Alex Bainton

### **Judge gently**

Pray, don't find fault with the man that limps  
Or stumbles along the road.

Unless you have worn the shoes he wears  
Or struggled beneath his load.

There may be tacks in his shoes that hurt  
Though hidden away from view.  
Or the burden he bears placed on your back  
Might cause you to stumble too.

Don't sneer at the man who's down today  
Unless you have felt the blow  
That caused his fall or felt the shame  
That only the fallen know.

You may be strong but still the blows  
That was his if dealt to you  
In the self-same way, at the self-same time  
Might cause you to stagger too.

Don't be too harsh with the man that sins  
Or pelt him with word or stone  
Unless you are sure - yea, doubly sure  
That you have no sins of your own.

For you know, perhaps, if the tempter's voice  
Should whisper as soft to you  
As it did to him when he went astray  
It might cause you to falter too.

(Author Unknown)

Submitted by Philippa Walker

## **How to tell if your church is healthy (even though it still looks sick)**

Is it possible for a church to be healthy when it looks sick? Yes, indeed. The reason we doubt this is because we have become accustomed to assessing the 'health' of our churches by certain signs. Common criteria include good numbers, high quality music, buildings in excellent condition, a long history (preferably one hundred years or more,) creative use of technology, a substantial bank balance, numerous groups and programs and a multi-gifted pastor.

Some of these are often found in healthy churches, but, as the old songs says, 'it ain't necessarily so'! A church may have all these attributes yet amount to little more than-a once- a-week sacred concert. Others may lack most, perhaps all of them, and yet be wonderfully productive in the things which matter most to God. I, and many others, trusted Christ and grew in our faith and ministries in just such a church.

### **The Basis of Our Priorities**

It is disturbingly easy for our priorities to become the things which matter most to us. I came across a church recently whose aging members were asked to describe the vision they held for their church. They replied, 'our primary concern in this church is to keep it going long enough so that each of us can be buried from here'. For others the priorities are survival, financial viability, 'keeping the doors open', flying the flag for their denomination, maintaining a tradition, affording a minister, or avoiding the 'shame' of having to close down.

What a tragedy all this is! These concerns are unimportant to God. Making them priorities, or attempting to achieve the commonly believed signs of church health, is the primary sources of stress, conflict, discouragement, pressure on marriage and family, ill health, and resignation from office of both ministers and members alike. No wonder then, when burdened with such concerns, we wonder wistfully about Jesus' words - 'My yoke is easy and my burden is light' (Matt 11:30). I am not suggesting there is no hardship, difficulty, perplexity and opposition involved in serving the Lord. There certainly is! But Jesus did say that when the yoke we wear is of His making the burden is not heavy.

Perhaps many things we regard as 'occupational hazards' of church involvement are of our own making. This is never more likely than when, even inadvertently, we replace the things that matter to God with the things that matter to us. The most haunting prayer I have ever heard reminds us of this danger - 'Lord,' prayed a faithful, long-serving elder, 'deliver us from church-craft'!

He meant, I think, the mindset which sees a church as an end in itself, and our primary work as 'running the church'.

### **Taking Your Church's Pulse**

What is the true indicator of health in a church? Paul describes a healthy church in Eph 4 v 11-16. Your church is healthy, irrespective of all else, when each part is working properly. Is this our priority? What are the signs?

- a) When the daily sphere of influence of every member is known, acknowledged and taken seriously, and
- b) when every gift and every ministry of every member has been identified, developed, and fully employed.

Irrespective of all other outward signs to the contrary, anything less is sickness. Most churches, including many regarded as successful, are by these criteria in very poor health indeed.

The ministry of a church is not primarily what the minister does, nor is it mainly the church's organised programs. The primary ministry of a church is twofold:

- \* first, in the total effect of every attitude, word and action of every member in every situation in which they find themselves on every day of every week;
- \* second, in the impact of every member's God given gifts employed both within and beyond the congregation.

Seen like this, every church has a twenty-four-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week ministry! Yet despite all this, I am continually meeting Christians whose pastors and church leaders show little interest, in terms of active support, in what their members do day by day.

Even a small church already has potentially a vastly wider ministry than it imagines. Because of the many different spheres of influence of its members, through their workplace, study, neighbourhood, recreational and community involvement, every church has an influence far more extensive and diverse than any program could ever provide. And all of this is already 'in place', with not another dollar spent and not another late night committee meeting!

### **A Layman Speaks**

Gordon Preece, in his paper, 'Everyday Spirituality', a Zadok publication, quotes former vice-president of Bethlehem Steel in USA, Bill Diehl. 'In the almost 30 years of my professional career my church has never once suggested to

me that there be any type of accounting of my on-the-job ministry to others. My church has never offered to help me improve those skills which could make me a better minister, nor has it ever asked if I needed any kind of support in what I was doing. There has never been an enquiry into the ethical decisions I face, or whether I seek to communicate my faith to my fellow-workers. I have never been in a church where there has been any type of public affirmation of the ministry I fulfil through my career. In short, I must conclude that my church couldn't care less as to whether or how I minister in my daily work'!

This is a devastating indictment of many church leaders' attitudes towards their members' workplaces. This tragic situation is true in churches of all kinds.

### **A Life Support System**

And notice this businessman's terminology - 'my on-the-job ministry to others', 'a better minister', 'my ministry in my daily work', 'the ministry I fulfil through my career'. These are not the words of a clergyperson. They are the words of a 'layman', a manager, a church member who rubs shoulders with many unchurched people every day. This is not a man whose major Christian activity, like thousands of his peers, needs to be supported by his church and minister. This is a man, who like thousands of his peers, needs to be supported by his church and minister.

And likewise, by a public recognition that what they do and how they live in their community are vital ministries of their church. To this end, Sunday by Sunday, we should commission individuals, couples or families to their sphere of daily influence just as we would commission missionaries going overseas. Those so commissioned would be greatly encouraged and every member who witnesses this would begin to see their own daily situations in a new light. Such a mindset, and such support are signs of a healthy church. They display a commitment, for the kingdom's sake, to ensure that 'each part is working properly'.

### **Missionary Mode**

This change of thinking and practice is necessary for a church to move from maintenance to missionary mode. This shift is absolutely crucial in this post-Christendom era.

When a church is in maintenance mode most prayer is for the sick, most counselling is for those with problems, most exhorting is to the half-hearted, and most visiting is to those who have called for help. When a church is in missionary mode most prayer is for the well, most advice is to those who are seeking to

help others, most support is to the committed and most visiting is of those who have not called for help.

This does not mean that members in need are neglected, but that priorities are completely different. It is the difference in motor-racing terms, between a garage for repairs and a mobile support unit. It is the difference between being reactive and proactive.

Pastors, or others to whom pastoral support has been entrusted, must not wait in their office for people with problems to come. They need 'to show up', where and when appropriate, at places of work, residence and study! To support those who never call! Many a promising new church has been neutralised by the 'squeaky wheel' syndrome.

On the other hand I know from my own experience how members' perceptions of their workplaces and daily situations, and of how God can use them there, can be transformed by an occasional supportive 'on-the-job' visit or call.

### **Gifts and Groans**

Another sign of true concern that 'each part is working properly' is when a church gives priority to developing and fully employing the gifts and accompanying ministries of every one of its members.

The generally increased interest in spiritual gifts in recent years is welcome. Literature, questionnaires and profiles have been developed to help Christians identify their gifts. But two great needs remain.

The first need is for a better way to identify members' ministries. The best way is to encourage them to put into words the things they feel most strongly, urgently, burdened or concerned about; the issues, causes or needs that, to them personally, matter more than anything else in the world. Something I call a 'God-given groan'. You will then discover that almost always the 'gift and the groan' go together. When God calls His people to do something He usually equips them with the gifts required to do it.

The 'groan in the heart' and the 'gift in the hand' go together. Often the gift does not become apparent until the 'groan' has been sought, heard, taken seriously and affirmed by a pastor or other leaders. In a very small church or a church which has no pastor members can encourage each other to bring to light these God-given concerns, and to act upon them.

Many older peoples' experience of church involvement is the result of being persuaded to fill vacancies in administrative roles or existing ministries. Therefore, time and encouragement, often for weeks or months, is sometimes

needed before they can describe their God-given 'groan' in words. It is all so new to them. Most of them have never been asked this question before! But when they do name that deep down burden about something that God has implanted in their hearts, and realise their church wants to support them in pursuing it, their understanding and experience of Christian service will be transformed.

### **Employers Or Facilitators?**

Thus, the second need is for local church leaders to see themselves not as 'employers' but as facilitators. Even churches positive about members' gifts still work on the 'situations vacant' approach. I have actually heard pastors say - 'I am sure you will find a place to use your gifts among the many programs run by our church!' No doubt this will be true for some. But it seems that many churches' primary concern is not the facilitating of members' gifts but the staffing of existing programs. Such churches are more in maintenance than missionary mode. To be in maintenance mode in today's world means to be sick while appearing to be healthy.

What about the members God is calling into ministry for which the church has no 'department', for which, therefore, there are no 'vacancies'? God is burdened to restore to himself every person for whom Christ died. He is always the God of 'new things'. No doubt he has many new ways and needs by which his people might share his love with others. He is not primarily concerned with staffing programs but furthering his kingdom by every possible means.

### **Situations Vacant**

The 'situations vacant' approach to the involvement of church members has produced countless people who, having 'served their term', resign, as soon as possible, from 'church work'. Thereafter, often for several decades, they are passive spectators, at the very time when their truly God-given ministries, if recognized and supported, would have been most fruitful.

There is an inherent contradiction between this approach and the biblical pattern in which God calls and gifts believers for ministries which He has chosen. These ministries may or may not correspond to ministries already in place in their church. But whether they do or not, pastors and local church leaders are responsible to welcome and facilitate them for the Kingdom's sake, even if some existing ministries must be discontinued for lack of volunteers, or conscripts!

### **A New Way**

From my own twenty years of pastoring, plus twenty more working closely with ministers, I fully understand that this is a difficult matter. For generations

ministers have been concerned to involve members in, and thus maintain, programs and activities which already exist. But the issue in this 'post-Christendom' era is this. If ministers do not take members' God-given gifts and callings seriously, members will not take their ministers and churches seriously. The emphasis of Scripture, that ministers are primarily called to equip and facilitate, supports their view. Neglecting this, in these days, drastically disables a church and inevitably leads to its decline.

This fact requires us to comprehend 'church' in a way very different to the way we have in the past. In essence, not what we are doing for God but what he wants to do through us. And irrespective of how 'inconvenient' this may be, is this not totally reasonable? Are not 'our churches' his churches? Is not Christ the head of this body? Is he not the Lord of today's harvest?

### **The Real Issue**

The reason we need to change the way we go about being church is not for the sake of novelty, 'relevance', or a new image. It's because the massive changes sweeping the world today are changing the very people God wants to reach through us! Changing the way they hear, think, and choose. God's concern is their eternal destiny, not the preservation of our familiar forms of church. Are not churches merely means to an end, the end being nothing less than the kingdom of God? As the first generation of Christians to serve God in the post-Christendom era we will experience, much more than our predecessors, what it means to lay down our preferences and familiar ways for the sake of the kingdom. If we are not willing for this he will leave us maintaining churches while he goes marching on! But I am sure this is not his preference. God wants to use churches that have served him well in the past to serve him well now. And his grace is sufficient for us!

I once visited a church whose many different ministries had all arisen in the hearts and minds of the members. The vision of the leaders was not to establish certain ministries, but to assist the members in pursuing ministries God had called and gifted them to fulfil. Even a small church can have many such 'ministries'! Who knows how a God of such infinite creativity and imagination might choose to gift and lead His people in times like these?

Amongst other things He may be calling and gifting some in the areas of

- ecology, cosmology, genetic engineering, cyberspace and ethics, as well as
- politics, local government, social action and community enrichment, as well as
- care of the needy, of refugees, of people from broken families, as well as

- prayer, prophecy, leadership, helping, giving, preaching, teaching, and creating very different, new forms of church.

In a post-Christendom era, so different from the time which produced most of our present churches, it is more than likely that we do not have 'departments' for some of the things that are high on God's agenda!

### **Can a church be healthy even when it looks sick?**

Yes indeed. Building or no building, and notwithstanding small numbers, 'ordinary' music, zero technology, peeling paint, a short history, an uncertain, fragile future, minimal finances, few if any programs, and pastor or no pastor - all these things, ultimately, are neither here nor there to God. What matters most to Him is that 'each part is working properly!' This must matter most to us. This produces health. It results Paul says, in a church making 'bodily growth and building itself up in love' (Eph 4v16).

This growth in love, in learning to live out, in practical terms, what it means to love God with our whole hearts, one another as Christ loves us, and our neighbour as ourselves, enables us to do what, matters most to God.

Such a church is a healthy church. Healthy churches are crucial to the glory of God and the furthering of His kingdom. And of course growth results from health as surely as night follows day.

Our concern should be not how our church can look healthy, but be healthy. The crucial question is this - 'how can we best invest, for the sake of the kingdom of God, the live gifts and callings of the people whom God has entrusted to us?' Not the people we wish we had, or once had, or might have, but the people we do have, now!

And as for anything else which may be needed, we can be immensely encouraged by Him to whom all churches belong, 'Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness' Jesus said, 'and all these things' (i.e., everything you need) shall be yours as well' (Matt 6:33).

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Gil Cann is Minister at Large for the Australian Evangelical Alliance and edits their quarterly journal 'Working Together'. Gil is involved in a ministry of church renewal and leadership training in Australia and overseas. The author of 'Liberating Leadership', he is currently writing a book about crucial issues for churches in the 21st Century.

Submitted by Keith George

## **Hope for the Short Twelve year old Girl with very Straight Hair**

I don't know why my hair won't curl,  
I've been eating lots of carrots.  
I don't know why I can't grow tall  
or fly around like the parrots.  
I'm going to jump, yes, jump up high  
I'm going to really, really try  
I'm going to stretch my back and legs  
and then I'll sprint and race on by.  
I'm going to see just what I've got  
then I'll be giving life a shot.  
I'll count my blessings  
and see what's what.  
If I start right now  
I can play my part.  
I may be short with such straight hair  
but I'll be really, really smart.

Anstice F. Chiverton

## **Highlights from South Coast Christian Community Care AGM held 20th Sept. 2012**

Over the last 12 months -

Victor Harbor outlet - 190 clients helped with mainly food hampers, some fuel and chemist vouchers. Some receive fresh veg from the garden, always frozen bread is included and sometimes frozen meat.

Goolwa outlet - 330 incidents.

Beds are always in demand and therefore bed linen can always be used.

The bakery run is working well and excess bakery items are delivered to those in need.

At the Annual General Meeting Mary McCleave from our church was elected Treasurer. We wish her well.

Cheryl Bainton.

## Profoundly Changed

**Dear Friends,**

We know that the Word of God has the power to transform lives. But you have to know of His love, compassion, and mercy before any change can take place. Here is a miraculous story of change brought about by coming to faith through listening to an Audio Bible.



### Rogério accepts Christ

To people from the outside, Rogério looked like a dangerous lunatic. His hair was long and dirty, he was covered with filth and grease, and he lived in Chureca, the largest dump in Managua. He spent his days high on crack, coke, and pot. People called him "the witch."

To Rogério, inside, he was struggling to survive, vestiges of a wounded boy, held in bondage by drugs, and increasingly hating his life.

As he sat in the dump, the stench of rotting garbage all around him, memories faded in and out from his childhood—

"Maybe I'm finally going home," he had dared to hope when they put him on the bus. But no, it had kept going, past his house. He had already spent a month at a juvenile centre—not eating because he was so upset at being there. Now he hoped he would go home, but instead the bus kept going, eventually stopping at a juvenile detention school. He just wanted to go home. He was only 11.

He gets jolted back to the present by a buzzard alighting too closely to him as it grabs a piece of rotten produce. Darn buzzards. He has to watch out for them and the rats, although by now he's used to them.

The buzzard flies off and his mind drifts back again ...five years! He was there five years! He shakes his head. He used to play baseball and soccer; he enjoyed that. He also learned music there. At least he studied to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

He remembers the day when he was 16 and they finally released him from the school. He stood outside, not sure what to do, but nobody came to get him. Soon thereafter, he had his first hit of crack and what at first made him feel high, was now his living nightmare.

What's the point in looking back ...life now was worse than being at the school. "I wish I knew a way out," a very small voice within him says.

## The Way Out

The church in the barrio began inviting the people from the dump to come listen to God's Word. One day, as he walked past the church, he overheard the Scriptures in audio coming out from the building. He says, I listened to a portion of Faith Comes By Hearing, and it got my attention because I was impacted by Matthew chapter nine where Jesus says, "The healthy ones do not have need of a doctor, but the patients."

He continued to go to the church and listen to "Faith Comes By Hearing" every time they met. After one month, he accepted Christ.

People at the church helped him out, giving him a shower, clothes, and a hair cut. The change in Rogerio was so profound that when he returned home, Kaiser, the family dog, didn't recognize him and began barking at him.

His family still can't believe the radical change in him and Rogerio says, "My mother is content because she has seen how much I've changed."

When Rogerio looks back now, he uses his past as a testimony to the power of God to change lives. He says, "I was immersed in this problem for 12 years. I was involved in assaults, armed robberies, gang fights, and dealing drugs. I was desperate because I couldn't quit, but since I accepted Christ, I quit." He has shared Christ with many of his former drug associates and now works at a farm in agriculture, helping provide for his family with some of the food that he grows. He says, "I say to all of those who are caught by this addiction that God can help us and deliver us from this world of drugs and sin. I've changed. No, God changed me."

<http://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com/church-partner-report/2008/11/profoundly-changed>

## Christian Responsibility to Others

If you are a responsible person you help other people's needs  
diseases around the world spread like awful weeds.

When you think you don't have enough,

think of people who suffer too much

Responsibility to others is being a caring person

and is something we all know is true

That's why God created humans

to be responsible and do what we do

Claudia Stevens

Robin and Angela Stevens grand daughter

## 'There are no outsiders' - Desmond Tutu

Desmond Tutu spoke on a wide-range of issues that face the Anglican Communion, and of his belief in the Church's future, his faith in human beings, and the central passion of his life - love - in an interview with Anglican Communion News Service.

"Anglicans must keep in mind that the chief characteristic of Anglicanism is that it is all inclusive. It is especially important for Anglicans to promote this because the world finds it impossible to deal with diversity." Jesus, he continued, had stated the most radical of ideas, that we are all of one family. "Everyone is an insider, there are no outsiders, whatever their beliefs whatever their colour, gender, or sexuality. Worldwide Anglicanism is born out of diversity, and in this family we should be able to disagree with each other but not have people renounce the friendship that exists between us. We all disagree on many things, but those that I disagree with are still my brothers, are still my sisters. That is the gift that Anglicans should be giving to the world."

He said that the difficulties between the Episcopal Church of the United States (ECUSA) and the Province of the Church of Uganda, where the Ugandans had not wanted to allow representatives from ECUSA to attend the enthronement of their archbishop, had particularly pained him. It was so sad, he said. "Show me one family where there is always unanimity and I will show you liars. It should be 'I don't like your lifestyle, but you don't stop being my brothers and sisters, whatever the disagreement.'"

He added however, that Anglicanism's inclusive spirit should go beyond that of our own faith, because the world's people - of whatever faith - needed to share their experience. "At this time, the world finds the difference between Christian and Muslim particularly difficult to handle."

The archbishop went on to say that while the Anglican Communion was facing difficulties he knew that it would continue to grow. "The great evangelism work will mean our Anglican spirit will grow, especially in the poorer countries. Richer countries - because of the constraints on time, because of the distractions that go through their lives - find it difficult to let God in." Evangelism would be a harder task in wealthier countries.

It was not just that people found it more difficult to find God in the developed world but that people also found it difficult to admit their weaknesses and reconcile their vulnerability to God. "People find it hard to come to terms with 11 September. It happened because the perpetrators were human, just like you and me, not because they were something completely different. We must come to terms with difference; this is the example we set as Anglicans. We are all vulnerable, radically contingent, and there is only one invulnerable: God."

On the issue of sexuality that currently divides the Communion, Desmond Tutu said that it was only natural this had become a dominating issue. "When there is confusion in the world, and complex, heart-breaking problems - such as HIV/AIDS, violence and poverty - people turn to issues on which they can have a black and white stance, because then they will be in close association with people of the same attitudes and they feel protected and safe. That's why fundamentalism grows in periods of confusion. But this is not the answer. It is to admit vulnerability and to embrace your brother and sister with whom you disagree. But difference is seen as a threat." Any issue that sought to exclude people from Church was wrong," he said.

The archbishop also spoke movingly of the experience of justice in Post-Apartheid South Africa. He said that this had been an example of how people had violently disagreed but had now come together as brothers and sisters, although some differences remained. "You will not believe, but people whose families suffered at the hands of murderers have now embraced those that did them wrong, as brothers and sisters," he said. "Retributive justice seems to prolong people's suffering, but we tried to practice restorative justice; something that would bring people together." Through restorative justice, he continued, people began to understand each other's vulnerability and acknowledge their humanity. "The analogy is that when you are angry it's bad for your health, but coming to terms with your anger can restore you to health," he added.

"An enemy is a friend waiting to be made; that's the only hope for this conflict-ridden world."

Edited version of ACNS 3789. Anglican Communion News Service, London

By Michael Craske

Submitted by Keith George

For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!

2 Corinthians 4:17, NLT

Our troubles should not diminish our faith or disillusion us. We should realize that there is a purpose in our suffering. Problems and human limitations have several benefits: (1) they remind us of Christ's suffering for us; (2) they keep us from pride; (3) they cause us to look beyond this brief life; (4) they prove our faith to others; and (5) they give God the opportunity to demonstrate his power.

See your troubles as opportunities!

<http://www.newlivingtranslation.com/>

# South Coast Christian Community Care Inc.

## Chairman's Report 2012

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other way - in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only. Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities

What an inspiring, challenging, releasing, stretching and yet confirming year we have come through!

We have seen an amazing cross section of Community rise and fall, stand up and step away, cry out and yet remain hidden as we endeavor to reach into and assist those who are in need in our midst.

I cannot ever see the day when we are accurately able to forecast our incomings or our outgoings except for the voice of the Holy Spirit leading us and directing us in the areas and ministries that He allows us to move in. I am ever blessed and thankful, in awe yet never surprised that God is able to continually move across His Church Community equipping us and resourcing us for whatever lies ahead.

His continued supply of monetary donations a grants, the never ceasing offerings of food supplies from both within and outside of our local Church circles of influence, the generosity of local businesses who although are going through difficult times themselves, continue to dig deep into their pockets demonstrates the immense interest shown by God for the work and vision of SCCCC.

We need to remain ever grateful for such supporters as Coles Victor Harbor, Foodland Goolwa, our friends at Port Elliot Bakery and Bakers Delight amongst many others.

Again let me be mindful of our Executive Committee Members, our outgoing Treasurer in particular and of course our coal face Managers, Mary, Bernie and Lorraine, Phil and their respective team of tireless volunteers.

Let us also keep our minds in "future mode" ever alert as to what needs are not being met which fit into our vision statement and not trying to do what we are simply not called to do.



Let us all keep our eyes fixed on Jesus who said in Matt. 25:40 "And the King shall answer and say to them, Truly I say to you, Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brothers, you have done it to Me."

## Where is Heaven?

I don't know where heaven is:  
is heaven in your smile?

I'm searching very carefully  
and hoping all the while,

That some-one will convince me  
that the answer lies within,  
Then I will know with certainty  
it's where love reigns without sin.

Is heaven all around us,  
does it move from place to place?  
As when I held our baby  
and saw love in your face?

Can we find heaven when we're living?  
or must we all be dead,  
Before we meet our Father  
in heaven, Our Lord, Our King, Our Head?

Anstice Chiverton

People think I'm crazy. They say "you take this Jesus thing too seriously." Well I don't know, but Christ took me pretty seriously when He died for me on that cross



### Recent Entries from the Parish Register

Alex was the marriage celebrant for the following:-  
Timothy Bainton and April Hoppo, 22nd September, 2012  
and Richard Decrevel and Eva Koman, 6th October, 2012.

## Belonging or Believing?

Recent research amongst new Christians in the United Kingdom reveals a trend which 21st century churches must take very seriously. Most people who have become Christians there in the last five years said they 'belonged' before they believed.

This is a reversal of a long-time pattern in which, for the most part, Christians have believed before they belonged. In the past it has been typical for a person to be converted through attending an evangelistic event, reading a Bible, being led to Christ by a Christian friend (i.e. believe) and then seeking out, or being introduced to a church to which they could belong.

Nowadays it is common for people to 'belong', i.e., be loosely associated with a church for several years before coming to personal faith in Christ. It is very important that churches consider the implications of this change. Evangelical churches in particular, ironically, have not related easily to the 'fringe dweller', the undecided, the long term enquirer. We have felt uneasy about such people. We like clear-cut situations, things to be 'black and white', people to be in or out. The presence of such an uncommitted 'fringe' makes us feel there is something wrong with them, or even worse, something wrong with us, or our message or methods!

Furthermore having uncommitted people associating with us long term can be an embarrassment. We are not really geared up, as churches, to relate to them. We don't have a 'department' for them! We may find ourselves wishing they would make up their minds one way or the other, so that we can 'get on with the job' of winning people who are either more desperate or more decisive.

Most disturbing of all is that the presence of such people 'on the edges' of our congregation, groups, and ministries to the community suggests they are looking for relationships. This is exactly the case. Sometimes this is what we fear the most! Also, they want to observe us, at close-range, month after month. And ask deep, searching and personal questions about our own relationships with God and these people with whom we may feel we have little in common might want to become our friends. All very disturbing!

It is not hard to find explanations for this wistful hunger for some form of welcoming 'extended family'. Amongst these people the divorce rate is approaching fifty per cent. Families are shattered; broken relationships are almost the norm. Consequently loneliness, isolation and depression prevail even amongst people living in busy suburbs and cities. In Melbourne, the average dwelling occupancy rate is only 1.9 people. If the present trend continues, by

2006, there will be more people living 'solo' than in any other family or social grouping. Our population levels are static. The birth rate is falling, and now 30% of Australian women declare they do not wish to have any children at all.

As you will notice on many church notice boards it is common for churches to promote themselves as 'a church for families'. By all means let us be supportive of marriage, good parenting, and stable family life. But to pursue that goal for your church is to automatically exclude nearly half the unchurched population! Forty eight per cent of unchurched people don't live in what Christians think of as families i.e., the original husband and wife, living together with their own natural offspring. They live in a bewildering array of broken, single-parent, adopted, adapted, blended, divided, second or third time round, grand-parent led and even same-sex parent families.

In the twenty-first century, (i.e. tomorrow!) we must see our churches not as 'churches for families' but as extended families for people of all kinds. Many of these people have no experience of healthy-family life. Even those, whose marriages, first or otherwise, are still together, are in desperate need of 'extended family.'

The nuclear-family is very fragile. It is a pathetic substitute for true family, yet throughout the western world it is idealised by most people including millions of Christians. Even the vast amount of Christian literature on marriage and family unquestioningly accepts the 'norm' of the small nuclear family. But its smallness, independence, desire for privacy and 'fortress mentality' make it incredibly vulnerable, as the statistics tragically show.

An old African proverb declares 'it takes a whole village to raise a child'. Likewise it takes a whole church, or at least part thereof, to make a marriage work, to enable good parenting, to grow in our relationship with God and to become more authentic followers of Christ. Modern western individualism has wrought havoc in evangelical churches, justifying private faith, consumerism, independence, and resistance to sharing resources, being disciplined and receiving correction and advice.

God never intended us to 'make it on our own' at any level, or in any area of even our private lives. We all need to be part of an 'extended family'. Churches, by their very nature, are potentially such families, desperately needed by Christians and non-Christians; alike properly understood, churches are incredibly well - placed to meet a large and rapidly growing need in our communities - the need to 'belong'.

At the conclusion of a recent weekend church family camp in which I was involved, a young single-parent, with his four-year-old daughter by his side,

stood and said to the hundred-plus church members, 'as you know, I am not a Christian, but I want you people to know that this is the best weekend my little girl and I have ever had in our lives'.

A strange 'testimony'. Not the kind to which we are accustomed at such times. But quite a few tears rolled down several evangelical cheeks! Because it was just beginning to dawn on these people what enormous potential there is in a local church to be an 'extended-family' for people of all kinds.

There is a desperate need for churches to which it is easy to 'belong'. This does not require any compromise of membership standards but it does require a church community to be welcoming, easily related to, accessible, 'open', in various forms seven days a week, 'user friendly', readily contacted, with open boundaries'. It requires we set aside ways, habits and customs which are intimidating, exclusive and threatening.

Our approach to programs and activities needs to change, we need to be more flexible, less hurried and fun to be with. We must abandon the idea that we should always have a solid, advertisable, evangelically 'legitimate' reason for every occasion of meeting together. There is great validity in meeting at times primarily for the sake of being together. Those who 'don't belong' are far more aware of this than we are.

I will not be surprised to hear that the little girl and her father who does not believe, but who feel they belong in that local church, have become believers. Would they feel they 'belong' in your church? We must act quickly, because there are hundreds of thousands more people like them.

Gil Cann, Minister at Large for the Australian Evangelical  
Submitted by Keith George

Is there a conflict, then, between God's law and God's promises? Absolutely not! If the law could give us new life, we could be made right with God by obeying it. But the Scriptures declare that we are all prisoners of sin, so we receive God's promise of freedom only by believing in Jesus Christ.

Galatians 3:21-22, NLT

Before faith in Christ delivered us, we were imprisoned by sin, beaten down by past mistakes, and choked by desires that we knew were wrong. God knew we were sin's prisoners, but he provided a way of escape--faith in Jesus Christ

Without Christ, everyone is held in sin's grasp, and only those who place their faith in Christ ever get out of it. Look to Christ--he is reaching out to set you free.

<http://www.newlivingtranslation.com/>

## **The Hospital Patient**

A steady man, domestic rock,  
result of parting, sudden shock  
but he was sick, his life at risk;  
his move to hospital was brisk.

He looked so healthy sitting there,  
not even lying in a bed  
But he had evil germs within  
and worries in his head.

'Why am I needing such great care?  
How soon can I breath country air?  
How long must I stay by this bed?  
I'd rather be at home instead.'

"Patience Mr., we know how you feel  
but time and nursing care will heal.  
Do as you're bid and try to smile  
and you'll be home in a little while."

Anstice Chiverton

## **News from St Monica's Fellowship.**

Our annual Visitor's Day was a great success. We had quite a few visitors in our hall from other fellowships in the town and a good attendance overall.

The "Harbor side Boys" entertained us with wonderful harmonies in the barbershop style.

Pastor Lew Saunders was our guest speaker and he brought us up to date with the needs of the South Coast Christian Community Care. We presented a cheque to him for \$50 for the good work they are doing and this was topped up with extra gifts of over \$30 for Pastor Lew Saunders to take back as well. A raffle and trading table helped to top us our own funds.

In October we are looking forward to a speaker from the Bible Society as it is Bible Month in our parish.

Our Card Day fundraiser will follow the next day and we are looking for a good response to this as well.

Cheryl Bainton.

## News from Mothers' Union

### Mothers' Union members gather from across the State

The joy of reading the Bible together can be re-discovered if we take up the challenge from Wendy Mayer, the guest speaker at the Mothers' Union Provincial Joining Together Day in August.

Wendy encouraged us all to re-discover the joy of reading the scripture and discovering for ourselves what God is saying to us from the text. A simple approach to guide us in our reading was presented, called "1to1" in Action.



What shines out in the passage and draws your attention?

What's important in the passage?



What is hard to understand?

What would you like to find out more about?



What is God saying I should believe or do?

We may prayerfully seek someone to read a chapter or two with on a regular basis; a friend, relative, young Christian or established, or a searching non-christian friend. Then when meeting together over a cuppa and chat, pray a simple prayer, read the section, write what shines out in the passage, what is hard to understand or what you would like to find out more about. It is not a time to have all the answers, therefore, if you wish, when there is a query, take it away and ask someone, or do some research.

After sharing together about the verses, close with a short prayer. This way, we see what God is showing us personally, what to believe or do from the verses with no expectation of having the right responses.

This Provincial Mothers' Union joining Together Day was held at Magill on Saturday 11th August and there was a very good attendance with over 100 registrations. Wendy Mayer our Mother' Union Australia Education Officer was an excellent presenter. Wendy has been assiduously building us up in Mothers' Union with resources such as the above Bible Reading suggestion so that we can be well equipped as members of Mothers Union and to re-enforce our faith.

We were all welcomed with a cuppa, some members travelling from distant country branches. The day began with a time of worship and reflection, during which Wendy spoke on 1Thessalonians 5:5-11. After each talk we were given time for reflection on what had been said with questions and statements to help our reflection.

Narelle and Ronda, who came along with Wendy from Sydney, sang and played the piano beautifully to enhance our worship time. The worship time closed with prayers for each Diocesan Mothers' Union

After lunch Wendy, Narelle and Ronda presented an amusing sketch about what can go wrong when we have a guest speaker.

The bi-yearly Joining Together Days have been enriching and memorable times in the life of Mother's Union in our Province of South Australia.

### **Helping Refugee families.**

Our Project for Mothers Union in our Diocese is for each branch to collect home ware items to make a home a comfortable place, e.g. cushions, doilies, vases etc. Each branch has collected and boxed up these items and they have been passed on to Anglicare in Adelaide. This is an outreach to refugee families who are setting up home in the community and need the extra items to make a house a home, rather than just the essential items. Our Diocese has collected about fifteen parcels and they have been passed on through this Anglicare initiative.

Cheryl Bainton

## **The Seeking Father**

When I was a young man, a friend invited me to join him in establishing a "consistent quiet time," as he put it. I knew that regular Bible reading, prayer, and worship were essential, and I wanted to spend time with God. But my friend's plan never worked for me. I would stay with his routine for a week or two, rising early each morning to work my way through a regimen of reading and praying. It was a discipline I imposed on myself—like doing 50 push-ups every day. But I couldn't sustain the effort. In time I gave up, not knowing how to satisfy my longings to spend time with God.

Then one day I stumbled across something Jesus said to the woman at the well: "The Father is seeking" those who will worship Him "in spirit and truth" (John 4:23). That's when I realized that God was taking the initiative, putting in my heart those longings for time with Him.

The psalmist said he responded to the Lord's call to "seek My face" (Psalm 27:8). It's the idea of God longing for fellowship with me that now draws me into His presence. My quiet times with God are no longer a dreary duty, but a response to my Father who yearns to spend time with me.

Do you hear your Father calling to you?

I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew  
He moved my soul to seek Him, seeking me;  
It was not I that found, O Saviour true,  
No, I was found of Thee. —Anon.

Talk with God—He longs to hear from you.

David H. Roper

<http://odb.org/2003/11/03/the-seeking-father/>

## The Three Trees

Once upon a mountain top, three little trees stood and dreamed of what they wanted to become when they grew up. The first little tree looked up at the stars and said: "I want to hold treasure. I want to be covered with gold and filled with precious stones. I'll be the most beautiful treasure chest in the world!" The second little tree looked out at the small stream trickling by on its way to the ocean. "I want to be traveling mighty waters and carrying powerful kings. I'll be the strongest ship in the world!" The third little tree looked down into the valley below where busy men and women worked in a busy town. "I don't want to leave the mountain top at all. I want to grow so tall that when people stop to look at me they'll raise their eyes to heaven and think of God. I will be the tallest tree in the world."

Years, passed. The rain came, the sun shone and the little trees grew tall. One day three wood cutters climbed the mountain. The first wood cutter looked at the first tree and said, "This tree is beautiful. It is perfect for me." With a swoop of his shining axe, the first tree fell. "Now I shall make a beautiful chest, I shall hold wonderful treasure!" the first tree said.

The second wood cutter looked at the second tree and said, "This tree is strong. It's perfect for me." With a swoop of his shining axe, the second tree fell. "Now I shall sail mighty waters!" thought the second tree. "I shall be a strong ship for mighty kings!"

The third tree felt her heart sink when the last wood cutter looked her way. She stood straight and tall and pointed bravely to heaven. But the wood cutter never even looked up. "Any kind of tree will do for me." He muttered. With a swoop of his shining axe, the third tree fell.

The first tree rejoiced when the wood cutter brought her to a carpenter's shop. But the carpenter fashioned the tree into a feed box for animals. The once beautiful tree was not covered with gold, or treasure. She was coated with saw dust and filled with hay for hungry farm animals. The second tree smiled when the wood cutter took her to a shipyard, but no mighty sailing ship was made that day. Instead the once strong tree was hammered and awed into a simple fishing boat. She was too small and too weak to sail to an ocean, or even a river, instead she was taken to a little lake. The third tree was confused when the wood cutter cut her into strong beams and left her in a lumberyard. "What happened?" The once tall tree wondered. "All I ever wanted was to stay on the mountain top and point to God..."

Many days and nights passed. The three trees nearly forgot their dreams. But one night, golden starlight poured over the first tree as a young woman placed

her newborn baby in the feed box. "I wish I could make a cradle for him." Her husband whispered. The mother squeezed his hand and smiled as the starlight shone on the smooth and sturdy wood. "This manger is beautiful." She said. And suddenly the first tree knew he was holding the greatest treasure in the world.

One evening a tired traveller and his friends crowded into the old fishing boat. The traveller fell asleep as the second tree quietly sailed out into the lake. Soon a thundering and a thrashing storm arose. The little tree shuddered. She knew she did not have the strength to carry so many passengers safely through the wind and the rain. The tired man awoke. He stood up, stretched out his hand, and said, "Peace." The storm stopped as quickly as it had begun. And suddenly the second tree knew he was carrying the king of heaven and earth.

One Friday morning, the third tree was startled when her beams were yanked from the forgotten wood pile. She flinched as she was carried through an angry jeering crowd. She shuddered when soldiers nailed a man's hand to her. She felt ugly and harsh and cruel. But on Sunday morning, when the sun rose and the earth trembled with joy beneath her, the third tree knew that God's love had changed everything. It had made the third tree strong. And every time people thought of the third tree, they would think of God. That was better than being the tallest tree in the world.

The next time you feel down because you didn't get what you wanted, sit tight and be happy because God is thinking of something better to give you.

Submitted By Mike Ryan

## **Christian Responsibility**

Responsibility is something I think about, and is something that I know is true. The only person responsible for your actions and troubles is you.

Most of the time we don't want to admit it,  
but when we think about doing the wrong thing,  
God warns us before it.

When we are punished for what we have done,  
We look up and pray to God and say your message has come.

At the end of the day we have to understand what we have done wrong,  
even though learning lessons is tough but it's not if you are strong.  
God will still love and forgive you, even for the sins you have done.

Claudia Stevens

Robin and Angela Stevens grand daughter

## What Price For A Book?

A missionary who worked with Underground Evangelism told a story about a believer in Russia before the collapse of communism. Learning that a friend had acquired a Bible, he asked to borrow it. His friend, however, read the precious Book every evening until 10 p.m. So each night for 8 months, from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m., that dedicated believer laboriously copied his friend's Bible. Eventually, when some fellow Christians visited him with Bibles, he exchanged his handwritten labor of love for several copies.

Imagine not having access to a copy of the Bible. What price would you pay to get one? Let's take this question to a deeper level.

When Jesus' teachings began to "offend" those who were following Him, many chose to leave (John 6:60-66). So He asked His disciples, "Do you also want to go away?" (v.67). Peter replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (v.68). Peter knew that Jesus was the living Word—God revealed in the flesh. He was willing to forsake everything in this life to pursue the One who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Do we have Peter's commitment? Do we have the devotion of that Russian believer? What price would we pay for the Book? For our Lord?

Thy Word is a lamp to my feet,  
A light to my path always,  
To guide and to save me from sin,  
And show me the heavenly way. —Sellers  
© Renewal 1936, Broadman Press

One measure of our love for God is our love for the written Word and our love for the Living Word.

Vernon C. Grounds

<http://odb.org/2006/08/03/what-price-for-a-book/>

Obviously, I'm not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant.

Galatians 1:10, NLT

Do you spend your life trying to please everybody? Paul had to speak harshly to the Christians in Galatia because they were in serious danger. He did not apologize for his straight-forward words, knowing that he could not serve Christ faithfully if he allowed the Galatian Christians to remain on the wrong track.

Whose approval are you seeking--others' or God? Pray for the courage to seek God's approval above anyone else's

<http://www.newlivingtranslation.com/>

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ST. AUGUSTINE'S VICTOR HARBOR and ST. CHRISTOPHER'S MT. COMPASS

RECTOR: The Reverend Canon Alex P. Bainton

Phone: 85521076 (Office) 0438521076 (Mobile)

RECTORY PH. NO. 8552 8459 (AFTER HOURS)

14 BURKE ST, VICTOR HARBOR 5211.

P.O. Box 460, Victor Harbor

PARISH OFFICE OPEN:

TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY & FRIDAY 9AM - NOON ONLY

OFFICE PHONE & FAX: 8552 1076.

EMAIL: [augustin1@chariot.net.au](mailto:augustin1@chariot.net.au)

WEB SITE: [www.anglicanparishvictorharbor.org.au](http://www.anglicanparishvictorharbor.org.au)

<b>Wardens:</b> St Augustine's	Andrew Jeffery	8552 5315
	Brenton McLean	8552 6657
Mount Compass	Mark Gilpin	8556 8252
	John Newell	8554 9540
<b>Councillors:</b>	Sue Armstrong	
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Editor's Note.

Thank you to all who contribute. It is you that make this Edition what it is. I just arrange the pieces. I would encourage writers to continue to submit articles that would provide information about life in our parish and would spur one another on toward love and good deeds and encourage one another. These articles could be left at the church office, or

email to [brentonmclean1@gmail.com](mailto:brentonmclean1@gmail.com)

Brenton McLean, Editor

