

In Brief

Happenings and Prayer Points from around the country

SOUTH AUCKLAND - Flat Bush Redeemer Grace Presbyterian Church For Prayer:

- Pray that deeper relationships would be established with the mothers bringing their children to Musicise.
- Pray for the neighbourhood woman's bible study that is just starting; that it will provide growth and stability to those involved and that others would also like to join.



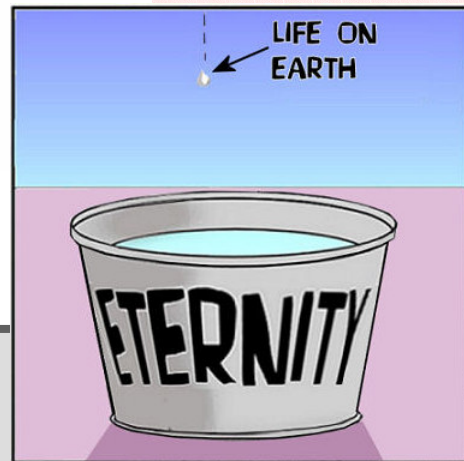
'Musicise' runs out of Redeemer's Ministry House every Tuesday morning and is a fun music time for preschoolers and their mums or grandmothers. This is proving a good means for building relationships with women in the community and is leading to opportunities for bible study with some of the mums.

SOUTH AUCKLAND - Papatoetoe Providence Presbyterian Church Happenings:

The women at Providence come from a number of nationalities (Samoan, European, Nigerian, Chinese and Korean), cover a range of ages and the majority work or study full-time. This has created challenges as to how best to cater to the needs of this group. Last year a weekly bible study was held but a different approach is being taken this year. The goal is to hold seminars with a variety of formats (e.g. talks, prayer treat, inductive bible study) during the school holiday periods. The first seminar is being held on Easter Sunday with Ruby Brightwell speaking on "Women serving in the Church". Invitations to attend will also be extended to the women of other GPC congregations.

For Prayer:

- That the Easter seminar will be a time of fellowship, stimulation and growth.



Our time on earth is a DROP IN THE BUCKET OF ETERNITY.. so live with eternity in mind.

What is My Ministry?

- The foundation of ministry is character.*
- The nature of ministry is service.*
- The motive of ministry is love.*
- The measure of ministry is sacrifice.*
- The authority of ministry is submission.*
- The purpose of ministry is the glory of God.*
- The tools of ministry are the Word of God and prayer.*
- The privilege of ministry is growth.*
- The power of ministry is the Holy Spirit.*
- The model of ministry is Jesus Christ.*



One of the latest additions to Redeemer Church - Lisa Bracefield, with Mum, Sue Bracefield.

The Helper is a publication of the Christian Education and Publications Committee (CE&P) of the Grace Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, through its Women's Sub-Committee.

Any concerns to be addressed to David Bayne

Address: 117 Pages Road, Ashburton

Ph: (03) 307 7355 Email: bayned@consultancyservices.co.nz

the **+** Helper

May 2006



'Musicise' At Redeemer

Inside This Issue - All About Evangelism

Sausage Sizzle Evangelism in Dunedin

A Life Changing Testimony

Resources for Evangelism



The Magazine for Women
Grace Presbyterian Church of New Zealand

Contents

Inside this Issue

| | |
|---|--------|
| Editorial | 2 |
| Sausage Sizzle Evangelism | 3 |
| A Bead Evening | 4 |
| “TOOT” in Invercargill | 4 |
| Dorothy Nicholls “Doing Her Bit” | 5 |
| A Testimony | 6 |
| Gospel of Belief | 7 |
| Resources for Evangelism | 8 - 9 |
| In Brief - Happenings and Prayer Points | 9 - 12 |



- Nola Young
Redeemer Presbyterian Church

Evangelism. Witnessing. Many of us freeze when we hear these words. The thought of “going out there” and confronting someone with the gospel message is just too much. It’s not that we are ashamed of our Lord, or don’t want to share the wonderful news of his salvation. It’s the confrontation bit that frightens us.

Some of us try to explain this in terms of our personality – we are shy, we say, and would rather take the back seat. Others struggle with their fear of the unknown, or lack of preparation, or lack of skill.

Evangelism frightens still others because they don’t know many non-Christians, and don’t feel at ease talking to them. For one reason or another, we hold back from sharing the gospel as often and as boldly as we should.

In this issue of the *Helper* we want to tell you of some of the ways women in our churches **are** making the gospel known. One thing you will pick up is that “confrontation” is not the only (nor most winsome) way of making the gospel known. We preach Christ also by the way we live. Evangelism is about loving people and caring for them, and being open and honest with them about our faith. It’s about admitting that we find life tough most of the time, and that Christians don’t always get things right or have it easy.

For many people, its seeing Jesus in the lives of open-hearted, loving Christians that makes them ask

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

1 Peter 3:15

Editorial

questions about the gospel. That’s the message of the moving testimony we have included in this issue. It points to the attractive power of a well-lived life. It should make us all want to be more like Jesus in our homes and in the community. Let’s pray that will become a reality, and that the Lord will work through us to draw many people to himself.

The *Helper* team hopes that you enjoy this issue and that you are stimulated and provoked by what you read. Do use the “News and Happenings” section to help you pray for your sisters throughout the country – especially in their various outreach activities. Please do keep sending us material that you think may be of interest to others. And don’t forget to take photos of your events and activities and send them along as well.

May the Lord richly bless each of you in His service.

In Brief

Happenings and Prayer Points from around the country

(Continued from Page 10)

The programme is based on Children's "Evangelism Explosion" and consists of a craft activity plus singing and Bible teaching. So far, we have had between 12 and 23 girls and very positive feedback. There are several girls coming who are not from EPC and the girls are making friends amongst each other, so we are very excited about this venture.

We have 2 Ladies Bible Studies during the week, both during the day as the church holds "Growth Groups" in the evening to give opportunity for Bible teaching and growth.

The Tuesday study, involving several EPC ladies and several from other churches, is looking at the second half of Revelation and enjoying it. The Friday study is a 'Sermon Introduction' study, which previews the sermon and is aimed primarily at new English learners. Again, several of the ladies are from other churches. We are excited at meeting and ministering to different ladies and being able to encourage the wider body of Christ here in Christ-church.

We plan to hold one evening meeting each term for fellowship and to invite ladies outside the church. This term we had a 'bring your craft' evening which was fun. We had a short devotion and the ladies enjoyed chatting and inspecting each other's work!

For Prayer:

- Pray that the women of the church will encourage the girls and young women through their friendship and help.
- Pray that those who meet for Bible study each week will grow in their walk with God, not merely head knowledge.
- Thank God for bringing new friends to Girls Group and our studies and pray that we will help them to know Jesus.

WELLINGTON

Grace @ Wellington

For Prayer:

- Colossians is the book currently being studied by the women in Wellington. Pray that they will be enriched through this time and deepened in their fellowship with one another.

SOUTH AUCKLAND - Takanini Trinity Presbyterian Church For Prayer:



Helen Macpherson from Trinity Church teaching the young ones about Jesus.

- Pray for urgently required Bible in School teachers at Conifer Grove School in Takanini, one of the few schools in this area still allowing Bible in Schools to be taught.
- Pray for the women's bible study which began in April, that the women attending will make a commitment to Christ.
- Pray for our girls group, especially for strong, ongoing friendships to be built between the girls and leaders.



Some of the Trinity Girls

SOUTH AUCKLAND - Manurewa Covenant Presbyterian Church For Prayer:

- Pray for our Mid-Winter Dinner on 1st July to celebrate the completion of a year of Spiritual Mothering Groups. We plan to rematch the groups and introduce new study material. Pray that new women would be encouraged to come along.
- Pray for the planning of a Marriage Seminar day to held later in the year to particularly focus on the different roles God has given to men and women. May the Lord bring along all who would benefit from these studies, that they would be a blessing to families in Christ.

In Brief

Happenings and Prayer Points from around the country

GORE

Grace Presbyterian Church

Happenings:

Our ladies have been enjoying working through a book on the Doctrines of Grace, finding encouragement in the big truths God reveals in the Bible.

For Prayer:

- Give thanks for the new playgroup started this term as a ministry to mums in the community. We have a regular group of ladies now coming.
- Pray that through this contact people may hear the gospel.

MILTON

Tokomairiro Grace Bible Church

Happenings:

A small group of women are meeting weekly for study and prayer, and are currently working through a booklet looking at Christian Disciplines. Jessie Fraser, who is leading this group, is also drawing on other material to supplement the booklet. She has found "All Things New" by Andrew Young and Edith Schaeffer's "Common Sense Christian Living" particularly helpful.

For Prayer:

- Pray that this group, although small, will bring a rich sense of encouragement to all those who attend.
- Pray that they will be able to establish some contacts with women in the area who do not attend church.

DUNEDIN

Grace Bible Church

Happenings:

With many of our women working different hours and/or studying, our 'women reaching women' ministry has focussed on encouragement pairs and praying for one another that we would minister and reach out in the situations we find ourselves in each week.

For Prayer:

- Pray that we would be encouraged and strengthened in the Lord, and that we would reach out to others in our daily situations.
- One exciting initiative some of our younger women have and will continue to be involved with in 2006



is the Ignite Sausage Give-aways, held late at night on the university campus. See the report on page 3.

- Praise God for the contacts made during the previous BBQ and pray that the Lord would use this as a means to bring people to Christ.
- Pray that the girls involved would be equipped with Christ's love and boldness as they seek to engage people in discussion and share the gospel during these events.

ASHBURTON / FAIRLIE

Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Happenings:

Ashburton continues to hold a monthly Ladies Fellowship. Recently they had a 'show and tell' where they shared their different hobbies and another time a night of silly games. Twice they were able to combine the evening with a baby shower for new mums and their babies. Devotions leading to the topics were effective. They plan to start a bi-weekly Ladies Bible Study in May using Sinclair Ferguson's "Lets Study Philippians"



For Prayer:

- Pray that the Lord's blessing would be upon the study of his Word, giving them joy in study and understanding in how to work it into their every day lives.
- Pray that non-Christian friends may come to their monthly fellowship time.
- Give thanks for the smooth transition of the Baynes to their Ashburton home. Ask the Lord to give continued strength to David and Lynda as they move between Christchurch and Ashburton, for David's other work and for the children's schooling in Christchurch.

CHRISTCHURCH

Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Happenings:

We are holding a "Girl's Group" on alternate Friday nights for girls aged between 7 and 12 years. This aims to build up the girls in their faith and walk with God, to build bonds of friendship between the girls, to provide opportunity for them to invite their friends to a 'happening' and to give opportunity for interaction between the generations of women in EPC.

Sausage Sizzle Evangelism In Dunedin



The offer of free sausages surprised many students. They couldn't believe we were actually giving sausages to them free of charge, though they were very appreciative of them all the same. In fact, the service we offered proved so popular that we couldn't keep up with the demand. Many students milled around for 10 minutes or more waiting for theirs to cook.

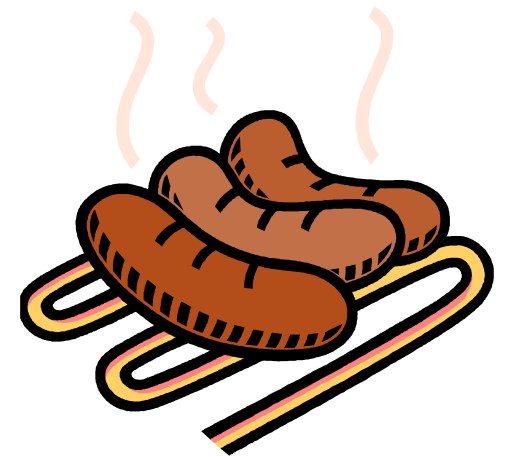
The delay gave us a perfect opportunity to talk to students about their faith/beliefs and our own Christian beliefs. Many with no church background were open to discussing Christian ideas. It was incredibly encouraging to chat to such a receptive audience.

The Ignite Ministry associated with our church, Grace Bible Church of Dunedin, ran a sausage-sizzle throughout Otago University's notoriously rowdy Orientation Week this year. We thought it would be a perfect way of making contact with students, since many of them are out and about during Orientation Week.

By the end of the night we had run out of church pamphlets to hand out and had a list of students interested in Ignite and in the church. We pray that many will be willing to learn more and be willing to join us.

- Karen Lean
Grace Bible Church, Dunedin

And out and about they were this year, in spite of the unpleasantly cold weather. The cold, in fact, probably worked in our favour. We think the heat of the BBQ may have been as much of a drawing factor to the students as the free sausages we were handing out!



Southern Presbytery Women's Conference

Expanding Horizons - Workshop Day

Saturday 20 May

Is to be hosted in Dunedin by GBC Dunedin.

Keep an eye out for registration forms with more details arriving at your church soon.

A Bead Evening

In Owaka

Following their successful ladies dinner held earlier last year, (see December 05 Issue of *The Helper*) the women of the Catlins Evangelical Church decided to hold a "Bead Evening".

Eva Panapa writes:

For many years I have had an interest in making necklaces and bracelets, and have collected lots of beads for doing so. It occurred to me that it would be fun to get some ladies together for a "Bead Night," and that's what we did.

We invited some of our neighbours and one or two other ladies and organized a supper to make the evening special. To our surprise around 35 ladies and their daughters turned up and busied themselves in making necklaces and bracelets. It was a time for everyone to talk and to get to know each other. We also used the opportunity to share a message from the Bible. My husband Steve gave a short talk on Proverbs 31.

This is just one of the ways we have used to make contact with women in our community. We have also helped

them with gardening, played scrabble, washed dishes and folded ironing. These are all small ways of serving that will, we hope, open doors for sharing the gospel.



"TOOT" in Invercargill



The ladies of Grace Presbyterian Church in Invercargill have set up a new ministry called *TOOT* also known as *Time Out On Tuesday*. This is an outreach ministry to women in the community aimed at bringing them together for a time of crafts, games and companionship, along with a short devotion.

We plan to run this programme from 9.30 to 11.30 on the first Tuesday

for the morning, and the ladies enjoyed learning new tips. It was a lovely time together, getting to know each other and advancing our skills in this field. Next month we will learn about crafts we can do with our children, a must know for mums, grandmas, and honorary aunties!

morning of every month, excluding the school holidays. We provide a crèche for children and morning tea for the mums.

On Tuesday 7th March we had our first meeting in the Church Lounge. Fifteen ladies and four children attended. Card making was the activity

We would value your prayers for this ministry. Please pray that ladies will want to come, that we will be able to get alongside them, and that with time we will be able to develop long lasting relationships. We relish this opportunity to witness the gospel to these ladies. Knowing that our sisters in Christ are holding us up in prayer will be an encouragement.

- Ainslie Bruce
GPC, Invercargill



Resources for Evangelism

"Consider Jesus" (continued)

Sample: From Study # 3: "His Miraculous Ministry" I: How It Began

Immediately after his baptism Jesus was tempted for 40 days by the devil.

"At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him." (Mark 1:12-13).

1. Who sent Jesus out into the desert? _____
2. What happened to him while he was there? _____
3. Who (or what) else was with him there? _____

In Brief

Happenings and Prayer Points from around the country

INVERCARGILL Grace Presbyterian Church For Prayer:

- Give thanks for the successful Holiday Programme that took place at the end of the January school holidays. Some children are now coming to TAG (Tuesday @ Grace), Youth Group or Sunday School.
- Pray for children coming to these outreach activities that they will realize the need for a Saviour.
- Pray for TOOT (Time Out On Tuesday) that it will be a valuable outreach to the women in our community.
- Please pray for our ladies who are suffering from ill health. Give thanks for the safe arrival into our church family of Riley Hope Bruce in December and Anna Grace McIntyre in March.



WYNDHAM Wyndham Evangelical Church Happenings:

The ladies' study, led by Alison Ure, is currently going through a Life Guide Bible Study, "Meeting God", by J. I. Packer. It has been an excellent study.

For Prayer:

- Pray for a recently formed walking club on Wednesday mornings.
- Pray for a Mother's Day meeting on the 13th May.

OWAKA Catlins Evangelical Church Happenings:

The Owaka ladies are working through Peter Jeffery's book "Opening up Ephesians", which looks at doctrine and practical instruction.

For Prayer:

- Pray that we would persevere in reaching out to those that are lost.

Resources for Evangelism

“The Way of the Master”

“The Way of the Master” is an evangelistic programme developed by Ray Comfort and Kirk Cameron to help people share their faith “simply, effectively, biblically ... the way Jesus did.” The basic idea behind the programme is to show people that we are all by nature law-breakers (that is, that we all break God’s law), and that we need to get into right standing with God.

It works something like this. After introductions and taking time to get to know each other, the following questions are asked:

- “Would you consider yourself a good person?” Most people, of course, like to think that they are, so the answer usually but not always is something like, “Yes, I’d like to think that I am a good person.”
- “Do you think you have kept the Ten Commandments?” Some people say “Yes,” but some say “No”. We simply continue with the next question or two to help them see the real state of the case –
- “Have you ever told a lie?” (9th Commandment) or “Have you

ever stolen anything no matter what value?” (8th Commandment), or again, “Have you ever used the Lord’s name in place of a curse or swear word?” (3rd Commandment). We wait for people to answer these questions – questions that really expose the fact that we are all liars, thieves and blasphemers. Then we ask –

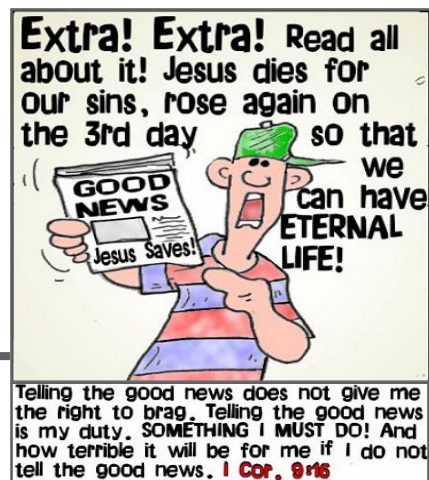
- “If God were to judge you on the Judgment Day by the Ten Commands, would you be guilty or innocent?” Many say they don’t believe that God will judge people, or that there will be a Day of Judgment. However, we ask them *if* there is a judgment, would they be guilty or innocent. Most have to admit they would be guilty.
- We then ask them about their destiny – “Will you go to heaven or hell?” Many say that they will go to heaven – even though they know they have broken God’s law. Others say they don’t really care.

When people reach this point we treat them in two ways. Those that are careless, we leave with the message of God’s law, his judgment and the

awful destiny of hell. Those that are genuinely concerned about their state and their future, we tell the good news of Jesus Christ. We do this, of course, with sensitivity, grace and humility. We try not to appear arrogant or self-confident, and seek to convey the deep concern we have for their eternal destiny.

It takes about 8 weeks to work through the material in this course in preparation for using it in witnessing. It can be used to engage anyone in serious discussion about the gospel – non-Christian, Muslim, atheist, Jehovah’s Witness – because it gets beyond the superficial issues to the condition of the heart. Information about this course can be obtained through:

www.Livingwatersnz.co.nz or www.wayofthemaster.com.



Teacher’s Guide for each study.

The “Consider Jesus” series has been written by Andrew Young, and can be obtained in either printed or electronic form by writing to him at ayoung@gtc.ac.nz

An ‘English as a second language’ version is currently being developed by Mary Webb (Christchurch). Pray for her in this endeavour.

“Consider Jesus”

“Consider Jesus” is a series of seven Bible studies designed to help people “discover and know the Jesus of the Bible.” It has grown out of the conviction that the primary task in Christian witness is to help people understand the nature and significance of Jesus Christ, and to respond to his claims.

This series of studies:

- Explores different aspects of the life of Jesus, including his birth, teaching miracles, death and

resurrection;

- Leads people to the point where they are challenged to respond to the Lord Jesus;
- Is based on key verses in the gospels (printed in the text of the study) which are examined through simple observation, interpretation and application questions (see the sample on Page 9);
- Brings people into immediate contact with the actual words of Scripture;
- Contains a brief Leader’s /

“Doing Her Bit”

Dorothy Nicholls and her yummy Anzac Biscuits



“Can we have another one please? They are so yummy!”

This is the typical response when the tin of Anzac biscuits is passed around during snack time at Redeemer’s Kid’s Church on Sunday mornings. These Anzac biscuits don’t come out of a packet from the local supermarket. No, they have been lovingly and prayerfully made

by an elderly widow seeking to “do her bit” to see the gospel spread.

Dorothy Nicholls, now in her 80’s, spent her early life in India (her delightful accent betrays that fact). A member of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Manurewa, living with a beloved cat and a dog for company, Dorothy still has a deep interest in young people and longs to see them

come to know the Saviour she has loved for so many years.

Though restricted in mobility, she realized that she could still contribute to gospel work among young people by using her baking skills. Every week she turns out batches of biscuits for children’s outreach ministries both at Covenant and Redeemer churches (and the mums at Musicize love them too!). She keeps to the same simple, economical recipe, mixing and melting all the ingredients in a single saucepan. And everyone agrees that the result is scrumptious. To children who perhaps never taste home baking, these biscuits are something special. They speak of the love and care of a Christian woman, and the Christian church, and we hope provides one more reason for them to “consider Jesus.”

Dorothy is a challenge to each one of us. No matter what our age, there are ways in which we too can participate in taking the good news to those who have not heard of Jesus.

Dorothy’s Yummy Anzac Biscuits

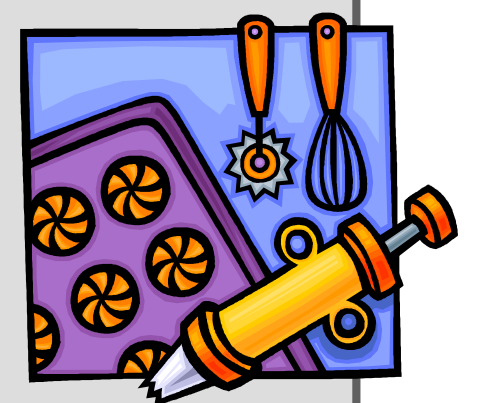
- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 cup sugar
- a little salt.

Mix these ingredients together

In a saucepan, melt:

- 125 grams of butter,
- 1 tablespoon of golden syrup
- 1 teaspoon of essence (vanilla or raspberry is best)

Dissolve 2 tsp of baking soda in ¼ cup of boiling water and add to the butter mix (it will froth up). When cool (slightly lukewarm) add dry ingredients and mix well. Roll into balls and put on greased tray. Flatten with a fork, dipped in cold water. Bake 160C for 10 minutes or less. Makes 25.



Testimony

Church? Doubt It...

Church... The last bastion of utter chaos, untouched by me for many years. The place where propriety and a veneer of respectability hide a seething mass of depravity and destruction. Mention church a year ago and that is how I would have described it. What a difference 12 short months can make.

I had grown up in a religious family for whom respectability, or at least the appearance of respectability, was important. What people at the church we attended didn't know was that the veneer hid an abusive secret. Thirteen years of extreme violence and sexual abuse had reduced me to a shell by the age of 16. I remember that by the time I turned 9 I wanted to die, and by 11, I was cutting myself with knives and razors.

I left home after waking up one morning bleeding from my fathers "love", my mother's anger and my own razor cuts. I looked down at my body and knew that I couldn't do it any more. As for God and His church, I made a promise to myself that I would never be involved with religious people again. Over the years I encountered them, but always kept my distance. In my own way I equated church and God with pain and abuse.

Two and a half years ago I was admitted to hospital for treatment of what was diagnosed as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Severe depression resulting from trauma and abuse. I knew I needed help, but didn't know what to do. Even after a year of intense therapy I was no closer to wanting to be alive. I had the sense during this time that maybe I needed to look at the God option, but I was not prepared to open myself up to His people. How could I?

But then I met someone – someone who professed to be a Christian, but who wasn't afraid to show weakness. As months went by I watched and saw that the words being spoken were also being lived. I was unable to see inconsistencies. A hunger started to grow in me for the kind of relationship with God that this person obviously had.

The biggest barrier to that was not my perception of God or the church. My biggest hurdle became the awareness of my own sin, and the belief that went with it, that what I had done in my life – through drinking, drugs, promiscuity and time spent in prison – was too big for God to be able to forgive me. Nevertheless I was hungry, and so I started going to my friend's church.

I was convinced the pastor was in conspiracy with God to only preach things that got to my heart. I had an overwhelming abundance of questions and the need in me kept growing. I felt enveloped by the people in the church. No one got in my face. No one told me I had to be saved. No one tried to convict me of my sin; they just accepted me. There was no judgement.

That spoke to me more than mere words could have. You see, if anyone had tried to 'convert me' I would have been out of those doors so fast nobody would have seen my back. I think it is God who does that work anyway. I don't think there's a formula or set way of getting people saved. You can't just get in someone's face, tell them the gospel, then expect that automatically they will want to fall on their knees, get saved, sanctified, redeemed, restored and forgiven. God's bigger than our thoughts, he's bigger than all of us.

He knows far more than we ever can about each person's heart and mind.

Sometimes the truest and best testimony to God's saving power is to live it daily. But it's still a struggle for me to do so. I have had to challenge my beliefs about churches. I am reminded, for example, about the night the ladies of the church threw a kitchen evening for me. I brought along my crocheting thinking I would need something to do while we sat around and drank tea out of china cups.

But despite those things I'm learning. I'm learning that God's people aren't perfect, but God is. I'm learning that the forgiveness I extend towards those that have hurt me is not dependent on how I feel, but is a necessary outworking of the forgiveness I have been shown by God. I'm learning that the Bible isn't a dead book full of empty words, but rather a guide to life, a challenging life-giving message from the heart of God to my heart. I'm learning that the fallibility of my earthly father had nothing to do with the infallibility of my Heavenly Father.

But most importantly, for the first time in my life I'm learning to live – not just breathe, but live. Like it says in Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, not yet I, but Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." Thank you.

- Desi



The Gospel of Belief

Think Piece

Over the years I have often noted that evangelism or "soul winning" programmes encourage new believers to read John's Gospel. This has puzzled me somewhat.

As much as I love the Gospel According to John with its profound insights into Jesus' person and his relationship with his Father, I don't find it a particularly easy book to read. The opening verses, for example, are full of complexity and mystery. They are hard enough for a mature Christian to understand, let alone a brand new believer. I've often thought that it would be better for new Christians to begin reading something fast moving and full of action like Mark's Gospel.

As I continued to think about this I decided to turn again to the Gospel of John in my morning devotions. This time, I asked the Lord very specifically to help me see what it is about the book that does make it so helpful to new believers (and to those older in the faith too). What a feast I had!

I began to see from the very first page something of the special purpose of this book. John, of course, gives us a clue about this toward the end when he says, "these [things] are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31). Clearly he wrote what he did about Jesus in order that people would believe in him. On this reading of the gospel I began to notice this theme right from the start. The word "believe" seemed to leap out at me again and again.

I noticed in the first chapter, for instance, how John the Baptist was described as coming "to bear witness about the light that all might believe (1:7). A verse of two later John speaks of how those who "believed in his [Jesus'] name were given the right to become children of God (1:12). From this he moves on to describe the first followers of Jesus, those who "believed" that he was Israel's Messiah. And in the second chapter

I noticed that the outcome of the first miracle (the turning of water into wine at Cana) was that Jesus disciples "believed in him" (2:11, ESV).

The more I read, the more I recognized that practically every incident in the first 12 chapters of the book had something to do with people believing

or not believing in Jesus. Sometimes that belief showed itself in eager open confession – as in the case of the believing Samaritans (4:41, 42). At other times it showed itself in the stubborn resistance of the Jews to Jesus' testimony about himself (Chaps 5,6,8). On still other occasions the "belief" theme surfaces in commands to believe and promises to those who do. Little wonder that one noted Bible teacher once described John as "the gospel of belief."

Seeing this, I understood more clearly what makes this Gospel so

valuable to new believers. Yes, there are many difficult concepts, and several long disputes between Jesus and the Jewish leaders that are somewhat hard to follow. But in spite of this, the message is unmistakable. Time after time after time John confronts the reader with the reality that Jesus is the Son of God, the promised Saviour of the world. And in doing so, he calls for

a response of whole-hearted belief in the Lord as "the way, the truth and the life" (14:6).

Why not read it again yourself? Perhaps you too will find encouragement and strength as with fresh eyes you read it as "the Gospel of belief." What a wonderful Saviour and Redeemer we have. Nothing prepares us better to witness to others than a heart fully convinced of who Jesus is and overflowing with love to Him.

- Nola Young
Redeemer Presbyterian Church



[Editor's note – If there is some issue, or thought that has been going through your mind that you would like to share why not put pen to paper and send it in]

"The word 'believe' seemed to leap out at me again and again"

"John confronts the reader with the reality that Jesus is the Son of God"