

the **+**Helper

August 2009

LIVING *the* LIFE *of* FAITH



The Magazine for Women
Grace Presbyterian Church of New Zealand



Around the Country in 16 days

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Editorial

Welcome to another edition of *The Helper* – a celebration of the Lord's mighty work through the recent *Living the Life of Faith* Conferences held throughout the country.

Our goal is to give you all a sense of the shared experience we knew as women within our denomination even though we remain spread out from Invercargill to Auckland.

Back in January, the Lord challenged me with Jesus' words to two blind men who were following him in the hope of being healed (Matthew 9:27-31). Jesus challenges them: "do you believe that I am able to do this?" These words were to become my challenge especially when the task of bringing everything together for these conferences seemed too overwhelming and my energy levels were barely registering. Again and again I needed to put this conference and all that it involved back into His hands and look to Him in believing trust that indeed I did believe that He was able to do it.

As I sat in the crowded Covenant Preschool room in Auckland, where Barbara was sharing for the final time I was filled with overflowing gratitude and praise. The Lord had indeed 'done it'! The end of the tour had been reached and from my perspective anyway, everything that we had dreamed of for these conferences had been fulfilled. Of course, our dream also includes what will continue to happen but that is a story yet to be told.

We trust this edition will cause you to rejoice at all the good things the Lord has done. One of our prayers is that

those of you who attended will know ongoing benefit which will flow over into our families and congregations. For those of you who were unable to attend, audio and DVD recordings are available (see page 11 for further information about obtaining copies).

Special thanks are due to all of you who laboured many hours to put together the conference in your location. So many people contributed in many different ways. This often took you beyond your comfort zone and stretched your faith and trust in the Lord. May the Lord Himself add His own blessing upon your labours and use this experience to lead you into fuller avenues of ministry for Him.

May we continue to grow to be women whose lives are the 'out-flowing of the in-filling life of Jesus Christ' that enables us to believe great things and expect great things of our God. As Barbara likes to remind us 'what would happen if we truly believed all that we say we believe'!

On behalf of *The Helper* Team.

- Nola Young

Give thanks to our
Awesome God for His
provision and faithfulness.

As at the end of June all of the
national financial needs for
the Conferences have been
met!

Thank you to everyone who
contributed and responded to
this venture of faith.

To God be all the glory.

To my Precious Friends



9th June 2009

To my precious friends in Grace Presbyterian – both those whom we have known and those whom we have just had the privilege of meeting.

It is hard to believe that only a week ago we were sitting with Nola Young in the Auckland Airport waiting for our flight home, recounting the joys and blessings of the last two weeks, and praising God for His faithfulness to us in every conceivable way. We have not had words to describe to all those waiting for our return just how wonderful our time with the women of Grace Presbyterian had been. We have been so moved with the incredible prayer support that was constantly undergirding our ministry *there* by our friends *here*, and how eager they were to hear all of the stories of the places we had been and the people we had met, and the work that was being accomplished by the Lord through our sister denomination in New Zealand.

What joy it was for us to be connected to the ministry there and to observe how God's faithfulness is being demonstrated among you. We cannot thank you enough for the warmth of your reception of us or for the incredible work that had so obviously been done to coordinate all of the individual meetings so that they were times of real blessing and fellowship for us. We will

A letter from Barbara Barker

continue to pray for fruit to come from these meetings, and that God will bless His Church there in New Zealand, and use the ladies of Grace Presbyterian to usher in a revival in the whole country. We now have faces and places to attach to our prayers!!

And to all of those who so graciously welcomed us into their homes for meals and for warm nights of rest after long days of traveling and meetings, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. You were such beautiful examples of God's admonition to "practise the gift of hospitality". (And we just love those electric under-blankets that we soooo looked forward to each evening!!) And please know that our homes are always open to you if you could pay us a return visit one day!

What a treasure you have in Nola Young. I could not believe how every detail of our visit was so beautifully pre-arranged that all we had to do was "be there and be blessed"!! We are thrilled to see someone step out in faith as she has done, with the help of so many of you, I am sure, to put this nation-wide conference together. What else could we see God accomplish if we just believed Him to do what He promised and trusted Him in the outworking of all of the details!

God bless you all with His Ephesians 3:20 blessings – *"exceeding abundantly above all we could ask or think"!!*

Your Sister in the Lord,
- Barbara

Barbara the Tourist!

Favourite saying:

"Oh look, look, look!!" (as yet another landscape came into view!)

Her greatest fear:

What was Betty doing taking all those pictures when she should be focussed on driving! (still adjusting to the driver being on the right hand side of the car) and then all those cars seeming to rush towards her on the wrong side of the road.

Her greatest joy:

Discovering the warmth of an electric blanket after a long day.

Biggest concern:

"O those poor wee things – they must be so bored! All they do all day is have their heads down eating grass" (this was in reference to the sheep). And "you mean to say this is one of those precious sheep I am eating?!"



Barbara in awe of a sheep at the Winter's farm in Wyndham

The Five 'R's

An extract from a message that Barbara shared with us:

The Christian life is so often misunderstood by people. Often they think of it as a series of principles or a lifestyle. Instead the Christian life is Jesus Christ coming into our lives to enable us by His indwelling power to let Him demonstrate His strength, His glory, His sufficiency, His faithfulness. Faith allows us to trust in such a way that this is the manifestation of our lives.

One moment that is crystallised in my heart occurred when listening to a missionary speaking. I was sitting behind some kids who were really misbehaving. When we got up I said "Y'll, you were awful. This is a Christian school and you are supposed to act like Christians." Then I walked out and it hit me. Wait a minute – is Christianity an act? No! Christianity is not an act that we put on. Instead *Christianity is the out flowing of the indwelling life of Christ.*

Now how do we allow that life to flow? Jesus said "*I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman...he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for apart from me you can do nothing*" (John 15:1,5). How do you abide in Him? How do you allow that life to flow so the fruit can grow?

Rely The first thing is to **Rely** on Him. Through the years there have been many times of God's provision of faithfulness when I have had nothing to rely on but Him. God has repeatedly used ballet to reinforce this in my life. He gave me back ballet, and then opened the door for it to develop into a ministry through a ballet school. Whenever we have big productions it's a matter of just relying on the Lord. It's beyond me, I cannot do it and yet He can, so He calls us to this utter relying. He lives in us and is available to us (Jer. 33:3; Phil. 4:13). But how do I know what I have to rely on?

Retain I have to **Retain** His word in my heart. If I want to rely on Him, I cannot dream up what to rely on Him for, but must rely on what He has promised in His Word. Having faith is not just believing, for believing something does not make it true. Faith is what attaches me to truth and that truth is God in Jesus Christ and His promises.

It's not how much faith you have, but what is the object of your faith. It is Jesus Christ. He *is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we can ask or think* (Eph. 3:20). *Faith comes by hearing and hearing by His word* (Rom. 10:17).

As I come to know Him and to know His Word I

Relinquish

must **Relinquish** as I find things in His Word that conflict with my own will. I can give many illustrations of these places in my life where God has held back His blessings, held back the flow of His power because of an unwillingness of mine to deal with something. Praise God He breaks us. He loves us enough not to leave us in that place. "*Whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives ...that we may be partakers of His holiness*" (Heb. 12:6,10).

Request

And then **Request**. If I really want to have that vital life, I need to depend on Him by asking. Prayer honours God. Prayer is saying I know what a great God you are. I know nothing is impossible with you. I know that you will not give me a stone if I ask for bread! Jesus asked the blind man "*What do you want me to do for you?*" (Luke 18:41). And I thought, 'Jesus – why do you ask?' – look at him! But Jesus wanted the man to identify his needs with Christ's ability.

Finally **Resist**.

Because when you are being *fruitfully* connected to Him, the enemy of God will come against us. He will come with deceptions, through the world, through our own flesh – which though it has lost its power to dominate, is still there to war against us. So we have to learn to stand.

Resist

The Christian life is the most exciting privilege any mortal man could ever have. God

Himself came to pay the debt of our sin so He can accomplish in us what He called us for, *chosen in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before him* in a love relationship (Eph. 1:4). **The reason that He saved us was to remake us** (Rom. 8:29; 1 John 3:2,3).

"Christianity is the out flowing of the indwelling life of Christ."

"The Christian life is the most exciting privilege that any mortal man could ever have"

Down in Dunedin



Friday Night Outreach in Dunedin

Grace Bible Church Dunedin began their conference, on Friday 22nd of May, with Barbara Barker sharing her testimony, followed by coffee and dessert. Through the medium of her experience, Barbara shared about God's faithfulness, explaining that a genuine life of faith is one lived in imitation and reflection of Him.

On Saturday Barbara opened, teaching about the outworking of true faith in our lives, pointing out that "to live for Him is what it is all about – all else is shadows." The following discussion and Scripture study explored our tendency to sin and guarding ourselves from sin's snares.

Later Denise Hamilton spoke about the reality of trials in our lives and the importance of making God and His truths our focus. Barbara closed with the story of the Briarwood Ballet School and its ministry,

including DVD excerpts of a recent, stunning performance. Her message: "*Satan can't do anything except lay a stage on which God will do something bigger!*"

The conference was enjoyed by all; many valuing Barbara's real and humble manner, Denise's clarity and humour, and their honest openness.

- Ruth Peoples
Grace Bible Church, Dunedin

Ashburton Shared Tea

On Monday evening (18th May), Ashburton EPC ladies, young ladies and friends gathered at Linda Philp's home. We had a lovely shared tea (Barbara loved that term) but the feast was still to come. Barbara, Denise, Betty and Nola had stopped in enroute to Christchurch. Over tea the room was abuzz -the American sisters were an easy addition to the gathering and privately encouraged many.

It was a great opportunity to chat with each other and also get to know new friends. Then Barbara sat in our midst and shared of the Lord's goodness to her over her life. She has a delightful turn of phrase which often sent ripples of laughter around the room. It was easy to relate to what she said; our hearts were lifted up to see Christ and inspired to walk more faithfully in His help and care. The American ladies were glad to meet the mothers of young people they had met in the Southern churches - again, we were reminded of the faithfulness of our covenant God.

We were truly blessed that these gracious, godly women could "stop off" on the journey to spend time with us. We hope to have a video night later for the ladies who were providentially hindered from coming on that evening.

- Lynda Bayne
Evangelical Presbyterian Church -Ashburton

My Heart's Desire

O Lord, I want to have a heart
That's just like yours, from self apart.
I desire to glorify Your Name,
More than I long for wealth or fame.
I want to die to self and sin,
And have your purity within.
I want to keep Your Cross in view,
To seek Your Crown in all I do.
I want to lean upon Your breast
And find in You my soul's sweet rest.
I want to hear Your strong, clear voice,
And in Your Word of Truth rejoice;
And act upon that truth I find,
And leave self-love and doubt behind.
With all my heart, O Lord, My Christ,
I want Your hand in all my life;
So here's my heart - to Yours' conform,
And by Your Word my mind transform.
And in my body take Your place
To share through me Your love and grace.

- Barbara Barker

Another First for New Plymouth



Thursday 28th May was a very special day in the life of Grace Community Church of New Plymouth and especially for the women.

As a new church we have gone through many phases. As far as premises go, we have moved from meeting in a house to a small sports hall, to a bigger school hall and finally to a bigger Community hall with separate and ample room for Church, Sunday School and for Babies & Toddlers.

The moves were very necessary each time because of, praise God, growth in our numbers. We now at last feel our moving has come to an end but we all pray and have faith that our growth in number and most of all our spiritual growth will continue.

Our spiritual growth was given a huge challenge and stimulus with our first Women's Conference on Thursday 28th May.

Yes, it was another first for us here in New Plymouth. I can remember clearly the little group of four women who traveled from New Plymouth last November to join Grace at Wellington in their Women's Conference. We had a lovely uplifting time with the Wellington Ladies not for a moment thinking that in less than a year, we would be having our own conference with an attendance of over 60 ladies and one lone man. Who was the lone man? Naturally it was the pastor. He felt that the pianist (and the ladies) needed accompaniment of a guitarist, but if you ask me, it was only to spy on us so that he can do something special for the men as well!

The hall was beautifully laid out in Café style with a little box of chocolates on the tables for each attendant. It was a lovely friendly atmosphere with more than enough to eat and with some fun giveaway prizes. One giveaway prize was for the attendee with the most grandchildren and our guest speaker Barbara walked away with this one with 11 grandchildren.

We had two guest speakers: Barbara Barker and Denise Hamilton from Alabama, USA. Betty Matthews, another

pastor's wife from the USA accompanied them and her input in the conference was to chat and share with everyone on a one-to-one basis. Let us not forget our lovely Nola Young who traveled all over the country with the three ladies as they visited as many Grace Churches in NZ as possible on their two week visit.

But enough of the peripherals. You might ask what about the Word of God and the challenge mentioned earlier.

Denise gave us a short, humorous and memorable 15 minute talk on faith especially as it related to trials and this was followed by the main speaker, Barbara.

Barbara's 50 minute talk continued the theme of *"Living by Faith in the Nitty Gritty of Life"*. It was centered on her testimony and especially around her years as a single woman in her early 20's and then as a young mother with three young children. In her talk she referred to them as "My 3 and a half, my 2 and a half and my half year old", which in itself told a story. She shared about the challenges in her life as the wife of a busy pastor and that of a young Christian mother. Her talk was a tremendous testimony, a real spiritual challenge and although it was based around her life, she brought out God's Word in a wonderful way as she quoted scripture after scripture and explained the application in our lives.

We all felt a real blessing in attending this first Women's Conference at New Plymouth.

- Ann Farr
Grace Community Fellowship, New Plymouth



Photos from New Plymouth



“Life is not about what we can do for God but about what we are willing to trust Him to do through us.”



The Challenge of Ministry

Barbara Barker speaks on Isaiah 43

(Barbara spoke on the final Sunday afternoon in Auckland to a room full of women who were involved in ministry in different capacities. Unfortunately the message was not recorded but we asked Barbara to write something that carried a similar theme. – Ed.)

In Isaiah 43:10, God declares to His people, *“You are my witnesses, saith the Lord, my servant, whom I have chosen, that you may know me and believe me and understand that I am He.”* Jesus came as a servant, and so was a witness to God’s love, purpose and priority of humility and selflessness. Our calling is to serve those to whom Jesus sends us and point them to Him.

But what does this practically mean for us in ministry positions? As a pastor’s wife, I would find myself “playing the martyr”, complaining to Frank about the endless stream of needy people in our home. His response was, *“Barbara, if you complain about the cost of ministry, God will remove the privilege of ministry.”* He would remind me of God providing the Gospel, His Spirit and His truth, His love and acceptance, and then giving me the privilege to distribute it as His steward. *“But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing man, but God who trieth the heart”* (1 Thess. 2:4).

We are called to imitate the selfless serving of Jesus, presenting ourselves to Him as *living sacrifices* (Romans 12:1). A sacrifice is the relinquishing of something important and precious to us, as an act of love, to gain something of greater value. And is there anything of greater value than knowing *God* has used *you* to minister His love, and truth, and provision to one for whom He died? We can sacrifice our time, convenience, resources, plans, emotions and natural affinities. I remember complaining to Frank about all the people who would come to our door, interrupting me. His answer was, “Ask God to put an angel at the door and prevent anyone from coming in unless He has sent them, and then receive them as sent by Him.” When I began to receive anyone who came as sent by God, it really made a difference in the way I received them and could minister to them.

One very important principle of ministry is that we are the *branches* attached to the Vine, Jesus Christ. It is *His life flowing through us* that causes the fruit to be produced. *“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord”* (Zech. 4:6). Even with whole hearted service we still must acknowledge that it is only by His Spirit that another life can be really touched.

Another lesson learned was that God will never do

through me what He is not doing *in* me. Frank told me that we could not encourage others to do what we were not doing, to trust God in areas where we were not trusting Him, and if His Spirit was not working our lives we could not expect Him to use us in the lives of others.

We must always ask ourselves what our true objective in ministry may be. Paul invested his life and labour, his sacrifice and prayers into the churches: *“That you would walk worthy of God, who has called you unto His kingdom and glory”* (1 Thess. 2:12). But what was in it for him? *“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For YOU are our glory and joy!”* (1 Thess. 2:19-20). They were what Paul could offer to Jesus as the investment of his life. How determined we should be that the investment of our lives will be a praise and honour to Jesus on that day.

“If you complain about the cost of ministry, God will remove the privilege of ministry”

God reminds us that the fruit of our ministry may not always be immediately obvious, but He has also assured us: *“Consequently, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; inasmuch as you know that your labour is **not in vain** in the Lord”* (1 Cor. 15:59). When I felt that there had been no fruit from my ministry one of my spiritual mentors asked me, *“And did God make you the fruit inspector?”* She told me that my job was to go when invited to talk of Jesus and share the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit and to leave the results to God.

We will never understand why God chooses to use the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, or the weak things of the world to confound the strong, but He tells us in 1 Corinthians 1:29, *“He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”*



Christchurch Report

The 'Living the Life of Faith' Team heads to Christchurch

May finally arrived! The brochures, invitations and posters had been sent; we had stepped outside our comfort zone; the speakers were on their way... Had we made enough muffins and desserts? Would the sound system work? Would we be able to keep everyone warm? Would anybody come???

All these practical thoughts buzzed in our heads and threatened to overwhelm us. We had planned well but we had to exercise faith, trusting the Lord would bring whom He wanted and work in their hearts. The outcomes were in His hands.

The Conference in Christchurch was a very special two days. Barbara, Denise and Betty were warm, gracious and so pleased to be able to minister to us. All who attended enjoyed their openness and honesty as they shared from their experience of *Living the Life of Faith*. They certainly brought God's Word to apply in everyday situations and the not-so everyday.

One of the highlights was Barbara's visit with the Girls' Group. About 30 girls aged 8-12 years listened most attentively as Barbara encouraged them to be the best they could be for God: To strive for excellence and to trust God. They were fascinated as she told them the story of the ballet production 'The Heart of the Toymaker' and then showed them parts of it. They will remember it for a very long time.



The final session, held in a home with a very cosy log burner fire, was a very special evening as Barbara shared with us four key principles she had learnt from Psalm 71 for keeping our hearts hot towards God. These were great helps to keep us walking in close fellowship with the Lord throughout the whole of our earthly lives.

A note from a new friend... *"thank you for the conference and all the effort that went into it. It came at just the right time in my life and encouraged me to keep going"*. Joy and surprise when an unexpected friend came; the contacts with ladies from other churches; catching up with friends from around Christchurch; and the encouragement to our own hearts made it all worthwhile.

A huge thank you to Barbara, Denise and Betty who came so far and undertook a hectic schedule to minister to so many. Where do they get their stamina?! Also a huge thank you to Nola, who shared the vision and encouraged us all to be part of it.

- Dianne Eyre / Jenny Ross
Grace Presbyterian Church, Christchurch

Girls' Group Camp

April 2009, Christchurch

At Spencer Beach Holiday Park, just out of Christchurch, 19 enthusiastic girls gathered for a camp in early April this year.

There was a royal theme as Mrs Alison Ure from Wyndham spoke to the girls about the life of Esther. She also read us the challenging and exciting life story of Mary Slessor.

Making placemats for the royal banquet, building sand thrones, and making pizzas were some of the other activities that kept these southern

princesses busy. Food fit for a queen was prepared by our wonderful cook Mrs Steer.

The most time consuming activity may have been preparing for the talent quest. However the greatest revelation was the power of a jelly bean, which was awarded for the tidiest dorms during spot inspections. Competition was stiff as each girl showed remarkable skill in keeping their 'stuff' tidy. Woe betides anyone who had a sock hanging out of their case or a wrinkle in their sleeping

bag! (Their mothers would have been incredulous.) At the end of camp as well as there being many beans to share among team mates, there was also plenty of food for thought as they reflected on the messages they had heard.

Thank you so much to all who gave of themselves to make camp happen.

- Jenny Ross
Grace Presbyterian Church, Christchurch

Southernmost Conference

After a long tiring flight from the USA, Barbara, Denise and Betty arrived at Queenstown airport to be met by Nola and Andrew Young. Three days were spent recovering from jet lag, and preparing for the Conferences in a thoroughly beautiful setting, although for the most part, it was a 'life of faith' as the spectacular scenery was veiled behind thick clouds!

On Thursday they travelled to Wyndham for a lovely evening meal, and then on to Invercargill for the first of their *Living the Life of Faith* Conferences.

Well over one hundred women of all ages gathered in the Grace Presbyterian Church in Invercargill eagerly waiting to hear from these speakers they had heard so much about. Cynthia Swann opened the evening setting everyone at ease with a humorous description of the variety of ways we can say welcome, depending on our culture.

With formalities out of the way, Barbara Barker immediately captured our attention and held us spellbound as she shared with us her amazing testimony of how God has worked in her life. She shared many personal details regarding her conversion, her romance, her role as pastor's wife and mother, and the many marvellous ways

that God has revealed His love and power to her throughout her life. She encouraged us by her frankness in explaining that things did not always go smoothly for her, but that God proved His faithfulness to her time after time. As I listened to the facts that she shared and did a little maths in my head I was shocked to realise, despite appearances, that this lady was a lot older than she looked. In fact, she looked amazing for her age, and I began to think that maybe I should have taken up ballet when I was young!

I was greatly impressed by her knowledge of the scriptures and the natural way she was able to quote an appropriate scripture passage to support what she was saying.

When Barbara finished we were treated to a truly beautiful musical testimony. Shona Lamont, Suzanne Roy and Robin Winter accompanied by Winsome Humphries sang two beautiful numbers "Grace Alone" and "I Call Him Lord" which were so appropriate after what Barbara had shared with us.

Denise then spoke to us on coping with trials in our lives. She used a stool as her object lesson and went on to explain how all of the legs of the stool need to work evenly for it to support itself (and the person sitting on it!). Her four points (or legs) were very simple and yet most necessary for our Christian walk to be balanced (see article on page 12). Illustrations were simple, yet clear and helpful and at times very humorous. One wonderful illustration was that of an apple pie. She explained how we would not want to eat some of the ingredients e.g. flour, sugar, etc. on their own but when they are all put together we cannot resist a slice of apple pie! In just the same way God uses many things in our lives to build something worthwhile and moulds us to the people He wants us to be and to use in His service.

"She encouraged us by her frankness in explaining that things did not always go smoothly for her, but that God proved His faithfulness to her time after time."

Like Barbara, Denise was very open and frank and allowed us a glimpse of some special areas in her life and how God has met her every need.

The meeting was closed and we shared a precious time of fellowship over a cuppa and an appetising supper table. Again I was impressed with the ease with which our guests mingled with the crowd and used the opportunity to share personally with the women who attended.

- Ann Sinclair
Wyndham Evangelical Church



Conference Comments

"I very much appreciated Barbara's honesty and humour (we had so many laughs, because I'm sure most of us could see ourselves mirrored in her stories, and it's always good to laugh about yourself). Barbara is real, her faith is truly a 'heart-faith'. One statement she made on the Sunday afternoon session really touched me and made me think: *"If you complain about the cost of ministry, God will take away the privilege of ministry."* - For me, the conference was very convicting; life-changing. God sends the right people and the right messages at exactly the right time!"

"How exciting it was to see so many young girls and ladies turn up to listen to Barbara tell us about her ballet production. The ballet told the story of a toy maker who made two beautiful dolls who followed the temptations of the outside world, and left the toy maker, who in turn went to look for them, bringing them to life by giving his heart to them. To me, this was such a tremendous and powerful way to present the gospel, portraying our God and Maker's everlasting, unconditional love."

"I had forgotten how good it is to gather as women for a day like this. Especially in winter it is so easy to stay at home, but I have been greatly encouraged not only by the messages and the open hearted sharing but also by the interaction with other women. We need to do this more often!"

"I greatly appreciated listening to Barbara and Denise share so honestly from their lives. Hearing them testify of God's faithfulness to them in the trials they have faced and how He made them grow as Christians through them was really encouraging."

"Barbara and Denise were a great encouragement to me and helped me to see the truth that we all have sins that we need to overcome. We are not alone in this."

"Being with Christian women and feeling good about being a Christian myself, and laughing. Best of all it has helped me to understand more of what I'm doing wrong, pointing me in the right direction in love."

"I can say nothing wrong about the Life of Faith Conference. It was an incredible blessing & came at such an opportune time. The transparency of Barbara & Denise was especially encouraging. It was a tremendous ministry to women's hearts & lives."

"Very helpful. She was very real about her life and how through Christ she grew through her struggles - a real encouragement to look to Him and persevere in His strength."

Like Your Own Copy?

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Key Truths in the Midst of Trial

An extract from one of Denise Hamilton's talks:

Trials are inevitable in the Christian life (John 16:33) but as we hold fast to key truths we will know Christ's peace and his sustaining grace.

1. **God loves you** (some starting verses – Lam. 3:21-23; John 15:13; Rom. 8:15-17; 1 John 3:1; Rom. 8:35-39).
2. **God is in control** (consider – Matt. 8:27; Prov. 21:1; Matt. 10:29-31; Dan. 4:35; Lam. 3:32).
3. **All things work together for good** (Rom. 8:28,29).
As we keep these truths together, contentment will come and we will find strength to hold fast to our Lord and Saviour in the midst of the storm.
4. **We need each other. We cannot do it alone.** This too is vital for our endurance. Yet often we pull away from each other rather than pulling together. Pride, distractions of life, responsibilities, busyness, selfishness, a judgemental spirit can all contribute.

Some practical suggestions for encouraging fellowship:

- Walk closely with the Lord individually.
- Pray together.
- Speak encouraging words (Prov. 25:11-12; Is. 50:4; Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6).
- Show practical care that meets needs e.g. meals, cleaning of home, baby sitting.
- Give books.
- Speak truth in love.
- Demonstrate forgiveness. Holding a grudge is like drinking poison while waiting for the other person to die.
- Be a caring and sympathetic listener and comforter (be trustworthy of anything spoken in confidence).
- Be transparent and real about your own life.
- Laugh together.

Denise speaks on Singleness

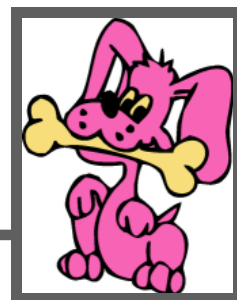
Delicious food. Christian fellowship. A warm house. What else could you want? Well, maybe a husband!

In Auckland, single ladies of a range of ages and situations gathered with Denise Hamilton for a Sunday lunch of food and fellowship. Denise elaborated on her struggle with singleness and how God had worked in her life around this and the blessings she had been able to enjoy being single. She spoke about the need for contentment in any situation, which is based on God's promises and provision for us (Prov. 19:23; 1 Tim. 6:6; Heb. 13:5; Phil. 4:10-13). She also spoke about the need to realise that there are advantages and disadvantages to

being single and married, but the problem is that both groups can desire the other's advantages – without wanting the disadvantages. Others also shared a little of their journey in this area, and of some of the challenges especially of being single in churches.

Overall it was an encouraging and challenging time. One younger attendee was heard to remark – “maybe being single is not so bad after all”.

- Katherine Young
Grace Church Gisborne



An Illustration from Barbara

What God has done for me in Jesus

My daughter was getting a little puppy from a litter of puppies. We went over to the house where this litter was, to pick up the puppy. When we got there the puppies were so precious and I wanted so badly to pick them up and love them. But they had been wallowing in each other's messes and were so gross! I had this desire to reach down, touch them, pick them up and love them but I didn't want to touch them in their current state because I had such an aversion to that kind of thing.

Then the young lady who owned the dogs went and got a white towel. She reached down and put that white towel around one of these puppies and then she brought and handed it to me so I could hold that little puppy!

I just stood there and I thought “that's what God did for

me in Jesus”. God's love for me was such that He wanted to draw me into a relationship with Himself but because of my sin and his holiness, he couldn't receive me. So he prepared a way, whereby he would send Jesus Christ to be that perfect righteousness that made me acceptable. He wrapped my life in Him and now I am in Christ Jesus and because of that I am in God the Father.

And do you know – that is the truth of all life. “God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son that whoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Now that we have that life, the desire of our hearts and of our lives is that the world might know Jesus. It is not just the facts about Him, it is the reality of His life, the reality of His truth.

Keeping Our Hearts Hot

An Extract from Barbara Barker's talk based on Psalm 71

The Christian life is just like physical life. I can become undernourished, sick, in difficult circumstances. So too, my Christian life can wither but for maximum health needs daily refreshment, daily provision and nourishment.

I have watched a number of people over the years lose their passion and involvement they once had in ministry. I have asked myself, how can I keep that from happening to me? The truth is that living the Christian life is day by day. Any change doesn't just happen overnight. It doesn't just suddenly go from the peak to the pit. It's a process. It's a gradual departure from that intimacy with the Lord, a gradually withdrawal from ministry.

While studying Psalm 71 – David's old age Psalm, some verses stood out to me as I struggled with this challenge. I want to make these truths a plumbline in my life. So everyday I make this commitment afresh, realising that its always straight to the Lord – *I want to walk with you – today.*

Ps. 71:14 begins **“But I will hope continually”** – that act of faith is an act of obedience. I choose to believe God. Faith is the evidence of things that I believe. We can all *say* what we believe, but until I *act* on that belief – ordering my life on the basis on what I really believe, only then do I really *know* what I believe. The choice to believe God is not based on what I feel, not what people say, not on what the world says. I *choose* to believe God. I *will* hope. Faith is hope directed to the future. I am going to keep my eyes on Jesus – the author and finisher of my faith.

And with that perspective and that goal **“I will hope continually and yet praise you more and more”** (v.14). How often we get caught complaining! – too cold, too hot, too long, too short – we seem to find a greater chord of complaint than that of praise. And the attitude of praise ought to be on the lips of every Christian. Every glimpse of God's faithfulness and provision should result in an overflow of praise. In Romans 1:21, Paul identified the lack of thankfulness as the point where people departed from their Maker. The act of praise on the lips of God's people is not only honouring to Him but it is uplifting for us.

“My mouth shall show forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day” (v.15). Don't be afraid to speak of what you believe. We don't want to offend people, nor to judge people but the reality of my life is that it is based on my faith in Jesus, in His faithfulness to me. We should never be reluctant to talk about Him in the same way we talk about our families, our husband and so on. So the more I speak of something the more real it becomes to me. *‘O Lord, today, give me the opportunity to declare – to share your life, to share what you have done for me – the reality of you working in my life’.*

“I will show forth your salvation all the day for I do not know the number of them” (v.15). This is the incredible reality – we do not know if this day we will ever get home. We think of those who have the ‘death sentence’ in them – yet we don't know when God's time is. No matter the prognosis we won't go until it's God's time. So I want to live this life *today* – in the fullness of what today has. I am going to walk with Him today. I don't know how many days I have

but I want my days to count. *‘So Lord let this day count’.*

“I will go in the strength of the Lord and I will make mention of thy righteousness” (v.16). Some days I wake up and it seems almost impossible. If I looked at the weakness of my body I wouldn't get out of bed. Then I get reminded that God gives the strength as I go. He will make all strength available to us. I can do all that he asks through Christ who empowers me. And girls, either it's true or it's not. That's faith. I have got to either know it and says it's true and base my life on it and live with that perspective or call myself not a believer. If I really believe it, it will affect my choices and the things I do. *‘Today you have promised your strength. I will rely on you in this day no matter the circumstances that come’.* I just love the whole concept of the manna provided – daily, not ahead of time, not more than I need at the time. I am not going to worry about tomorrow or the next day. I know when they come His strength will be sufficient. All I need to deal with is today.

Then the Psalmist says **“O God, thou hast taught me from my youth”** (v.17). Why am I walking with the Lord today? – He's kept me. He's kept me through conviction of sin that has brought me back to my knees. He has kept me through the experience of His faithfulness of His provision in so many ways. He is keeping me keeping on (see 1 Peter 1:3-5). He has overcome every obstacle that could keep me from the Lord. It is God's work in me, keeping me believing, giving me the faith to hold on – that He might be faithful to finish the work that He has begun. But that does not relieve me of the responsibility of obedience and faith. That is the faith that He will keep me keeping on.

Then he says **“O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed your strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come”** (v.18). What is the goal of our life? Paul writing to the Thessalonians asked *“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown or rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For you are our glory and joy”* (1Thess. 2:19-20). Investing my life in you so that you can know Him, you can trust Him and walk with Him. Now that is life! *‘May I see the reality of you in my life – the provision of your strength, of your faith, hope, love; all of those things – let me be a testimony now of who you are, wherever I am until I have shown thy strength to this generation and thy power to everyone who is to come’.*

So my daily prayer is this: *‘I will hope continually; alright Lord I am going to believe you – an act of my will I choose to believe you. Lord put your praise and gratitude in my mouth, in my heart. Let me see your hand of mercy and grace. I will speak of your righteousness – Lord don't let me withhold that expression of my love for you or your faithfulness. Let me remember that today you will give me what I need, and I want to trust in you for that. And I will remember that I am only walking with you today because you have kept me. I have seen my heart, I have seen how easily I can be pulled away. Now as I am getting old and gray headed, let this be the daily experience of my life that my ministry here is just to let people see who you are and when I am gone leave a legacy to yourself.’*

In Brief

News & Prayer Points from around the Country

While not all our congregations feature in this edition please still be faithful in praying for them in their work of the Kingdom as well as those listed below. We trust you are encouraged by what you read, gain new ideas for what would also work for you, and are helped to pray more effectively for each location.

Northern Presbytery

AUCKLAND: A combined Auckland event "Once Upon a Wedding" was held on Saturday 18th July. What a great night this was for all those who attended. See the BACK PAGE for photos.

MANUREWA

Covenant Presbyterian Church

Wednesday morning Bible Study continues this term being lead by Anne Camp. This term we are studying Hebrews. It is also great to see a few ladies attending from some of our other churches who at this point are unable to hold a women's bible study.

- Pray for Joyce and Eddie Hogg as they spend six months in Cambodia. Pray that Eddie will be able to complete building a workshop and that Joyce will have opportunities to work with children and in the area of healthcare.
- Pray for the new opportunity we have as a church to offer a literacy programme for people wanting to gain greater employment opportunities. Pray that this will open other doors for ministry.

TAKANINI

Trinity Presbyterian Church

- We continue to run a girls group every second Friday night.
- We are very thankful to now have a second church van to help with transport. What a blessing.
- We have also started a young mums' group. Betty Matthews came and shared with us just after the Auckland conference. What an encouragement that was to us. We are also looking at adding a small music and movement component into our gathering to cater for all our lively young children.
- Pray for leaders for our junior youth group (50+ kids and growing!)
- Give thanks for three deacons ordained into Trinity.
- Pray for Steve & Eva Panapa as they head to Rotorua to plant a church there.

PAPATOETOE

Providence Presbyterian Church

- Give thanks for a very suitable worship venue for Providence at the former Mangere Reformed Church building. We enjoyed being able to host a recent combined Presbytery service.

- Pray for several new families that have started coming, that they would be encouraged in their faith.
- Pray for the weekly meeting of our 'Little Leagues' (under 5's) outreach - for contact with new mums.
- Give thanks for our April Ladies meeting where we studied 'preparing for and participating in worship'.
- Pray for our July Ladies meeting which will have a missionary theme - a Chadian meal with Russell and Mireille Cross.
- Give thanks for a wonderful day conference with Barbara and Denise - for the encouragement they were and the good number of ladies who came.

FLAT BUSH

Redeemer Presbyterian Church

- We have been able to recommence our Musicise ministry on Friday mornings this year for preschoolers and their care givers. Pray for developing contacts with families in the area.



Ladies from Redeemer, Covenant, Gisborne and Trinity at Barbara Barkers 'Challenge of Ministry' talk in Auckland

- A Girls' bible study group (8-11 year olds) has commenced with a number of girls from the area. Most of these girls have been attending Kids' church for some time and its encouraging seeing them keen and receptive to learn and build on the understanding they have already gained. Currently they are studying Mark's gospel. Please do pray for this work and for Alison Jones and Sharon Bracefield who head up this study.

- Continue to pray for Anita and Hamish MacDonald, Aria and Asher

as plans progress for going to USA for transplant, probably at the end of October.

GISBORNE

Grace Church Gisborne

- The women intend to hold an evening watching some of the sessions from the conference. Pray that this will be a time of encouragement and growing together as women in the church.
- Give thanks for the new people who have started attending church over the last few months.
- Pray for health, strength and grace for those ladies who are struggling with health issues in the church.
- Most of our ladies are in outside employment. Pray that they may be lights in the workplace and have wisdom to balance time commitments.

News & Prayer Points from around the Country

Central Presbytery

NEW PLYMOUTH

Grace Community Fellowship

- The opportunity to hold the Living the Life of Faith conference at New Plymouth was very special. We had opportunity to invite friends, many of whom were not Christians and also to invite women from other churches. It was also a growing experience for those who organised the event. Pray that we can grow and develop our women's ministries further.
- Pray for our young mums and those expecting babies.

WELLINGTON

Grace @ Wellington

- Pray for our Thursday night women's bible study and also our music @ grace outreach each Thursday morning.

CHRISTCHURCH

Grace Presbyterian Church

- Pray for Holly Sterne and Mary and Trevor Webb who are currently over in Cambodia (along with Joyce and Eddie Hogg from Covenant).

Southern Presbytery

DUNEDIN

Grace Bible Church

Grace Bible Church Dunedin is experiencing a boom; a baby boom, a boom in student ministry with the arrival of Josh & Kirsten Eyre and a boom in elderly members. With all this happening there is much need of ministry and the women of our church are in amongst it all serving the Lord in a wide variety of capacities. We also have a number of women facing trials of illness, recovery from accidents, difficult pregnancies.

- Give thanks to our heavenly Father for the answer to many years of prayer for more elderly people to be a part of our church.
- Give thanks for the arrival of new babies and those yet to come.
- Pray for those elderly women in our midst and the challenges they face in Rest Homes, living on their own and in their own mobility. Pray also for those who seek to minister to and encourage these women.
- Pray for those leading and involved in life groups for the Ignite Student ministry.
- Pray for those involved in serving in music, children's ministry, hospitality... that they would be strengthened by God's Word to serve whole heartedly in their labours.
- Pray for the Mums' Coffee group that meets to encourage one another, discuss what the Lord has been teaching them and pray during a very busy and trying season in life.
- Pray for those facing trials of many kinds that the Lord would strengthen and uphold them in their time of need.

WAIHOLA

Tokomairiro Grace Bible Church

- We have been able to commence having a women's bible study. Lorraine Thompson has been leading this, taking us through the book of 1 Peter. This is a blessing to all who are able to attend.
- Continue to pray for the outreach through the Pony club and Youth group.
- Give thanks for the keen interest of non-churched youth attending the Youth group. Also give thanks for those now attending Sunday services regularly.

WYNDHAM

Wyndham Evangelical Church

- In our Wednesday morning Women's Bible Study we have just finished using a study guide by J.I. Packer called *'Meeting God'*. This study sought to bring the knowledge of God down into our experience of life. Now we have started using a study by Barbara Barker on the Life of Joseph – A Life that Counts. This is a great follow through to the ministry of Barbara that most of us were able to benefit from.
- We also made the most of having Barbara, Denise and Betty stay locally with a breakfast at Linea Winter's before they left to go further north.
- Pray that we can be alert to opportunities for connecting with our community.

INVERCARGILL

Grace Presbyterian Church

- Give thanks for the Ladies Regional Conference, the speakers and their testimonies. After the Ladies Regional Conference, and seeing how the speakers lived out and knew so well the scriptures, the Ladies Study groups (that meet on Thursdays) have covenanted to learn a Bible passage (verse or line or portion), and be accountable to one another. All the groups have also decided to seek to live out being a real Christian in every day life. Please pray for commitment and consistency, and openness and honesty among the ladies.
- Give thanks and pray for our new siblings in the faith. Pray that they would continue to grow in their love and knowledge of the Lord.
- Pray for our young families. Pray for the well-being of the little ones, that they would continue to be healthy and growing well. Pray also that they would come to know the Christ as Lord and Saviour at a young age. Pray for the parents, that they would have grace and patience as they raise their little ones in a godly way. Also pray that the parents would have time to spend with one another.
- Pray for the children's outreach ministry of TAG (Tuesday At Grace). Pray that the Lord would give the leaders a clear indication of the future direction of this ministry. Pray for opportunities to share the gospel with the parents of the children that regularly attend.

The Back Page

"Once Upon A Wedding" Photos from Auckland Grace Ladies Social Night



Melanie modelling Anne Thompson's dress from 1939



Rosie modelling Joyce Hogg's dress from 1966



Aline modelling Kay Coulthard's dress from 1971



Sharon is modelling Brenda Hill's dress from 1985



Jessica is modelling Michelle Willis' dress from 2000



Dresses from 1971 - 1989



Janina Muriwai & Gina Young in their own dresses from 2006



Winnie Orr was awarded wedding cake for being the guest married the earliest in 1945



Organising Committee - Sarah Leslie, Ronald Warner, Barbara Papesch and Judith Boldy



Shirley Smith shares a heart moving devotion



The compares - Michelle Willis and Melissa Macpherson

GRACE Ladies

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. Comments or inquiries are welcome and can be sent to:

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