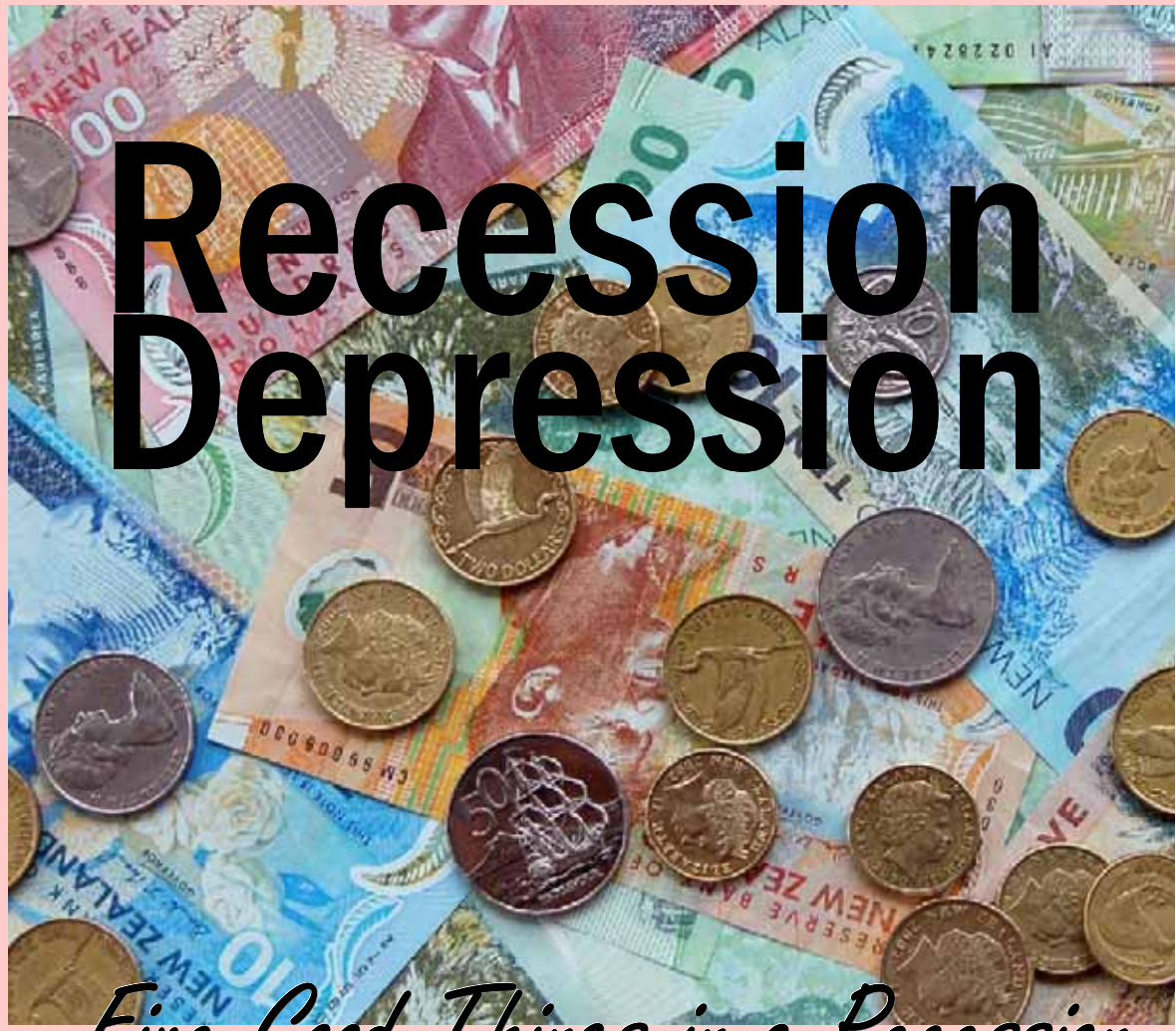


# the **+**Helper

December 2009

**The Magazine for Women**  
Grace Presbyterian Church of New Zealand



## Recession Depression

*...Five Good Things in a Recession*

Shopping Tips

Contentment

Credit Crunch Recipes

*plus* Providence Fun Day

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## Editorial

November is here and we are beginning to count down the days until the end of the year. It only seems a short time ago since we were turning over the calendar for the beginning of the New Year! Now the next one is beckoning us.

The months have slipped by since many of us were stimulated by the *Living the Life of Faith* Conferences held around the country back in May. What has been happening in your life since then? Have you taken to heart the challenge to live in dynamic relationship with the Lord Jesus, a relationship that flows over into all of life? Have you been able to rely on Him and draw upon His grace in the daily grind of life? Have you looked to Him in complete dependence for His power to be at work in your life, and known something of the joy of being a witness for Him? It is one thing to be stimulated about living in Christ during a conference but another to make the changes necessary for that to become a reality in our day-to-day existence. Old patterns of life are hard to change. Let us keep on encouraging each other to experience the living Lord Jesus more fully, and inspire one another to offer ourselves to be used by Him as He works out His purposes in the world.

Although we hear of encouraging signs that the economic recession is beginning to lift, there are still many people losing jobs and consequently, struggling to know how to make ends meet. It is with this in mind that our focus in this edition of *The Helper* is on facing hard economic times. In his book *Issues Facing Christians Today*, well-known author John Stott argues that Christians need to develop habits of simplicity, moderation and generosity. That holds true whether we are facing hard economic times or enjoying seasons of abundance. Jesus would live that way if he were us.

We trust that you will find this edition both helpful and stimulating. We also hope it provides prayer fuel so you can intercede intelligently for your sisters around the country. It is my prayer that you will all experience the Lord's grace as you continue to know Him and grow in Him, and as you seek to reach out to others around you in His Name.

On behalf of *The Helper* Team.

- Nola Young

# Save on Groceries

## Shopping Tips from Ronalda

Do you actually know how much you spend? You probably feel you are quite economical. Those of us, who have been brought up in the Scottish Presbyterian influence, secretly feel proud of ourselves for this inheritance! Well, the University of Otago (yes, that Scottish heritage again!) did a survey in March 2008 that showed a family of four can live on a basic but nutritional diet (including non-food groceries) for around \$220.00 a week. A couple can get by on \$120.00. Both of these are in Auckland - if you live elsewhere, you may need a few more dollars. Basic meant no pre-made sauces or bought biscuits. As I had kept a record of my spending this past year, I tallied up my own spending and felt very pleased I nearly came within the \$60 for a half-couple! I do treat myself to bought biscuits and a frozen meal or take-away once a week, and probably spend more than what is generally necessary on fruit and vegetables for my health's sake.



*Ronalda Warner making bread with her grandchildren*

Anyway if you are spending more than this the experts say you do not need to. You are buying more than you need, shopping at the wrong stores, or not doing your own baking and cooking. Personally I believe there are times when this may be God's guidance for our lives. We may have extra stresses in our lives, and have been provided with an income that covers the greater expenditure. But, for many of us, we enjoy the challenge to provide food for ourselves, our families, and in hospitality to others and to do it as economically as possible. However, we do also need to remember that a generous spirit is godly too.

What about the nitty-gritty of how to? Here are some hints. Try to find something you have not thought of before and be willing to change or try a new way. When we had this topic for a women's meeting at Covenant, I led a discussion where we shared our own hints, but I came away feeling we were all so proud of our own patterns that we were not too willing to listen to or consider other possibilities.

**Make lists** of what you need to buy each week. Some super-organised people plan their meals and buy accordingly. I keep a little card and pen handy in a kitchen drawer, where I note down basics that I observe are nearly run out.

**Shop at the right store.** Pak'n Save is the consistent winner in supermarket price surveys. However, one obviously has to add in travel if there is not one in your suburb or town. My nearest supermarket is New World. New World specials are actually lower priced than the regular

Pak'n Save prices. Not all foods come on special of course, but I find about one third of what I buy does and I wait for them. In preparation for this topic I followed the foods that did come on special and found there were certain patterns: a) Each week a different brand of ice cream, margarine, bread and fruit juice were on special but at variable prices. b) Different brands of foodstuffs came on special at regular intervals - between one month to six weeks and were well worth buying accordingly. I try to stock up one spare of these specials, especially my personal favourites, like Nescafe coffee, Watties fruit in fruit juice and

those items I use for my hobby of birthday/wedding cake making. Incidentally, I search the New World advertising brochure each week and add them to my list.

**Fruit and vegetables** I now mostly buy at a separate shop where the prices are consistently lower, apart from occasional New World specials. Obviously buying in season and NZ grown are cheaper. A gold medal for those of you who grow your own. It is something I aim for!

**Meat shopping** typically accounts for 20% of the food budget. Having experienced living in Asia I am fortunate to love Asian food which is much lighter on meat content. Try a simple Asian cookbook for a meal once a week. Sanitarium has good vegetarian meals. Tinned fish is nutritionally great and very cheap. Even just reduce your meat intake and be more adventurous with vegetable cooking.

**The little question "Is it a need or a want?"** is a useful question for each item if we are spending too much. I have often thought, but not yet practised, taking around a calculator with me to keep a tab on my total spending. Shopping on-line at Woolworths does it for you (giving the total and enabling you to change your mind as you go) and is marvellous for anyone house-bound.

**Try and make as much as possible yourself.** Even making bread can be fun. It is a favourite with my grandchildren and the more they play with it the better the dough becomes. Admittedly I do use an ancient Bread-maker for the basic dough preparation. Biscuits and special cakes is another child's play activity that happens quite often in my kitchen! I think it makes for good memories.

Take a look at the tips and strategies in the online cookbook put together by Work and Income NZ - The Great Little NZ Cookbook - hints and healthy eating on a tight budget [www.govt.nz/documents.cookbook.pdf](http://www.govt.nz/documents.cookbook.pdf).

Have fun!  
- Ronalda Warner  
Covenant Presbyterian Church

# Five Good Things!

**It's not all downhill in a Recession**

**Here are five things we learn:**

You can't avoid it these days. Every news bulletin has something new to report about it, every front page screams it out, and every economist is obsessed with it. We are talking about 'the Recession' of course. Recessions come and go regularly, so what can we learn from this one? What does the Bible have to say to us about a recession? Here are five things that the Bible teaches us about financial hard-times.

## 1. This is a renewed opportunity for you to trust in God.

Proverbs.9:21 says; *"Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand."* If you are superstitious this makes it sound like God will always mess up your best plans. However, if you really know God, you also know that his plans are good. God's plans are the best plans and will really happen.

**"If you really know God, you also know that his plans are good"**

Losing your job, missing that bonus, or having to eat into your savings forces you to trust in God. Does God love me? Does He intend the best for me? Can I trust Him to do what is best with my finances? The answer is, 'yes'.

## 2. We learn to be content with what we have.

Trusting God with your wealth requires contentment. Discontent means you are always wanting more and are never satisfied. Paul writes in 1 Timothy. 6:8; *"But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content"*.

With contentment comes compassion for those who have less than us. If you and I have food to eat and clothing to wear, this reminds us that 300 million children go to bed hungry every day and every 3.6 seconds a person starves to death, the majority of which are young children. One person every 3.6 seconds amounts to 25,000 every day, or 9 million every year! Our kids will complain when they don't get any pudding!

Modern commentators call affluent westerners 'the suffering rich' because we are richer than ever, but more depressed than ever. While we are all angst-ridden about our interest rates going up (or down) or not being able to go on that overseas trip, most of the

world's population has only ever known recession. An estimated half of the world's population lives on \$3 or less a day. Therefore, *"godliness with contentment is great gain"* (1 Tim. 6:6).

## 3. To humble our pride.

Only God can take care of what is really valuable in life. It just takes one big earthquake, one tsunami, or a house fire and you can lose everything. The book of

Daniel tells how God humbled proud King Nebuchadnezzar by afflicting him with *mad cow disease* for seven years. After his trials the King soberly declared; *"Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble"* (4:37).

I do not know about you, but I find that possessions tend to distort my view of myself. A flush bank account, a thriving business, a new car or house, expensive new clothes or jewellery, or electronic gadgets all tend to make

me proud and exalted in my own eyes. Losing some of your stuff may just be God's way to humble you. Being humbled before God is a great place to be.

## 4. A recession exposes our sin and leads us to repentance.

How many of us are in love with our stuff? How many of us are lovingly treasuring up our retirement fund, our house, car, or mp3 player?

In the Bible we read about a man called Job. His story starts like this; *"There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil"* (Job 1:1). However, God allowed Satan to take everything away from Job – even his health.

**"...we are richer than ever, but more depressed than ever"**

Along came his three friends and accused him of sinning. Job could honestly tell them that his conscience was clear...until God appears at the end of the book, and demands; *"Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me."* (38:2-3). Then this blameless and upright man admits; *"I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes"* (42:6).

Job saw his sin and repented when he came face to face with the Creator of the universe. It was through his huge and traumatic loss that he came to this view of himself and God.

This recession has revealed a lot of sin: pyramid schemes of billions of dollars, fake investment portfolios, overvalued houses, and obscene bonuses paid out to company executives. At the heart of everyone – even the best of Christians – is a seed of idolatry. That is why John Calvin termed the heart a ‘factory of idols’. Take away your retirement investments, your mobile phone plan, your car, your TV or house, and your idols will quickly be exposed.

#### 5. To ensure that we love God and not our stuff.

Jesus taught his followers not to lay up treasures on earth but in heaven, because, *“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”* (Matt. 6:19-21).

Notice that Jesus has to warn his hearers about the trap of earthly wealth. The original Greek is even better, for it translates; *“Do not treasure up treasures on earth”*. You see, Jesus wants to drive a wedge between yourself and the dearest idols of your heart – our possessions that we treasure.

There is a Don Henley song that has the line; *“You don’t see hearses with luggage racks on”*. Whatever it is – if the moth can eat it, if rust can corrode it, or if the burglar can steal it – it stays on earth when you leave. You can not take your stuff with you.

Instead, says Jesus, we are to treasure up heavenly treasures which are impervious to moths, rust and thieves. Heavenly treasure is the free gift of God – forgiveness of sins in Christ. Paul wrote about his

**“Where your  
treasure is, there  
your heart will be  
also”**

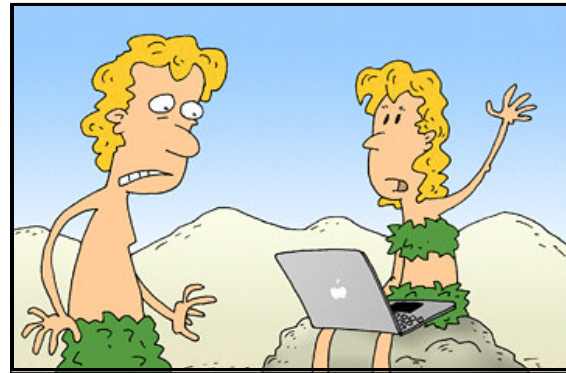
treasure *“...that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead”* (Phil. 3:10,11).

It is our relationship with God, not the size of our retirement savings or bank balance that ought to capture our attention. *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”* Your affections will be with those things that you value most and give you the most satisfaction in life. If you love your money, the value of your shares, or a certain level of lifestyle, you will be dangerously distressed – even suicidal – if God takes them away from you. You are in danger of losing the love of your life, and then what will there be left for you to live for?

Treasure up eternal and godly treasures. Set your heart on the bread that does not go mouldy and stale. Set your whole heart, hope and future joy on the Lord Jesus Christ and Him alone.

- Geoff Macpherson  
Grace Church, Gisborne

<sup>1</sup> Some of these ideas are from Pastor John Piper.



Thanks to Charles Dunleavy (See Genesis 3) 01-19-2009  
I KNOW WE CAN'T AFFORD IT BUT THAT  
SERPENT IS SO CONVINCING AND YOU KNOW I  
CAN'T RESIST APPLES

**"Faith is not occupied with difficulties, but with Him with whom all things are possible. Faith is not occupied with circumstances, but with the God of circumstances."**

A. W. Pink on Elijah

# Contentment

*These thoughts are from the perspective of an older woman looking back over the last thirty years. I write with the clarity of hindsight and with wisdom given by God through His Word, through others' lives, and through the writings of people more challenged yet more contented with the circumstances He has brought into their lives, than I am. These thoughts were first shared at an evening at Covenant.*

One of the main obstacles to godly contentment is that our circumstances do not match our dreams or expectations. We all have dreams. It is part of who we are and the way God has made us. Our dreams motivate and inspire us. My earliest dreams were about families who lived in colonial-style houses, with perfectly dressed children and antique furniture! Problems arise when our dreams become desires, then expectations, then demands placed on God and those around us; leading to sins such as covetousness, comparing, thanklessness, manipulation, scheming, and bitterness and anger when our desires are thwarted. Contentment, on the other hand is "an internal quietness of heart, supernaturally given, as I submit to God's Providence in all my circumstances" (Flavel).

Grasping too tightly to my dreams meant I lived according to my agenda not God's. I was often frustrated because my desires did not match the reality! There was not enough money, the house was too small, there were too many people to feed and too much to do. I was often angry and controlling, not relaxed, thankful nor pleasant and certainly not contented!

God will not allow His people to continue like this (Deut. 8), so after some trials He began patiently to teach me about His Providence. The Westminster Confession of Faith summarizes this as, "His most holy, wise and powerful, preserving and governing all His creatures and all their actions". The Apostle Paul under house arrest said, "For I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am... I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry..." (Phil. 4:11,12). Throughout the Psalms there are passages like "I will cry to God Most High - to God who accomplishes all things for me" (Ps. 57:2 KJV). I needed to learn that ultimately I could not control my circumstances, but I was to entrust my circumstances and my expectations to my faithful and sovereign Heavenly Father. It was not my job to change the people in my family either, but to acknowledge God's work in them, and rest in that daily. Growing understanding of these biblical truths continues to affect my attitude today.

What were the circumstances in which I was to apply these biblical truths? To my family. We belonged to God and wanted to value what He values instead of what the world values. We tried to think biblically about the large family God had given to us. I am the materialistic dreamer and my



husband is the one who can keep a tight budget! Apart from an American colonial-looking rocking chair, our house was furnished with treasures found or passed on. Cooking was a creative outlet for me and I read about good nutrition, purchased fruit and vegetables from the orchards, and packed as much goodness into our food as I could. The children laugh now at their basic school lunches. In the early years all our clothes were hand-me-downs, even most of mine. Op shop clothing became high fashion. We bought school uniforms when the time came, but not 'label' clothing. Anyone who wanted those could buy them from their earnings... good incentive for after-school work. Our holidays and trips were usually part of church and school life. The children enjoyed many tramping and ski trips with Boys' and Girls' Brigades and

music and sports trips with school groups.

Joni Eareckson Tada, in her book *When God Weeps* says that "contentment is being full". In the light of her circumstances we may ask what that means. We tried to teach our children that compared with those around us we were "rich". Our house was modest, our Bedford van (an ex-school bus) was old; we seemed to have less of everything except children! We stressed that we were rich in people, love, family relationships, our church community and in belonging to our loving and faithful Heavenly Father. The small hardships we faced were character-training for all of us. Blessings are more obvious when there is less, thankfulness is developed, prayer is enriched, empathy for others grows, we learn to think about what God values, hard work is practised and skill in managing money is developed.

The Apostle Paul said he learned to be content. Learning involves practising, training our minds to think biblically, setting our minds on what brings contentment, not on what is unattainable, and continually balancing the desires of our hearts with God's Providence. My desires and circumstances are different now that the children have grown and left home. There are different issues but many other opportunities to develop that internal quietness of heart that trusts and leans on God daily. Looking back reassures me that "Providence is wiser than me and I may be confident that Providence has suited all things better to my eternal good than I could have done had I been left to myself" (Flavel).

- Leslie Flinn  
Covenant Presbyterian Church, Manurewa

## References:

*When God Weeps* - Joni Eareckson-Tada and Steven Estes  
*The Mystery of Providence* - John Flavel  
*How People Change* - Paul David Tripp and Timothy Lane

# Update on Aria



*The story so far - Aria is our three-year-old daughter whose digestive system does not work and whose kidneys are small with poor function. Her liver is starting to suffer too, due to the liquid 'food' fed into her veins. So we are off to Omaha Nebraska, USA for an intestinal, kidney and liver transplant. Aria will be the first NZ'er to receive this transplant and it is rarely performed even in the US.*

Currently we are waiting for funding from the Ministry of Health for this transplant and Aria's medical care in the US. The cost is around three million dollars - A massive amount of money. We hope to leave on the 1st December 2009 but without funding this date remains only a hope.

Aria's health is declining and we know she does not have much time on this earth without this transplant. As you can imagine, it is difficult to watch our daughter struggle and her health head downward as we wait for health officials to negotiate the contract for her life. My husband Hamish has left his job and we are currently packing up our house in hope of the green light for departure.

Since I last updated *The Helper* much has happened. Lots of hospital admissions and disruption to our family. Asher is growing older and more aware that his sister and one parent are absent from the home and he is struggling at times. But among the gloom and difficult times God has brought fresh perspective and great understanding of Himself. I have felt this keenly as I have struggled greatly at times with the burden placed on me as a mother of a chronically sick child. There has been lots of pain and hurt and anger and fighting in this journey.

At the beginning of 2008 I felt sure that the Lord was not calling our family to the same year as 2007. We now had another baby and there was no way I could manage two children in hospital and Hamish continue in his job. The answer was simple: less hospital admissions. I informed God of my plan and felt sure He would comply (yes I am that silly). But as the year wore on my plan was not, well, going to plan. I was angry and tired from balancing breastfeeding a baby and Aria being sick in hospital. Thankfully I had lots of support and to this day have never had to have both children in hospital by myself. But it was still hard work.

At the end of a very bad two week admission, I was at rock bottom. Aria had been desperately ill for around a week for

an unknown reason. Doctors would come in and out and look worried and held corridor meetings but no answers. Our elders came in and anointed Aria with oil and prayed over her. The next day, the 40° temperatures of the past six days had gone!! No answers for that from the Docs - except we knew the answer - God had healed her. But there was another week of recovery because her body was totally out of whack. We eventually got home and I proceeded to spend the next weeks sad, crying and just tired. But God had a plan for me. That is good because my idea clearly was not working.

My cousins, missionaries from Columbia, visited for several days and spent time with me, answering my questions and pointing me back to the Cross. Something I loved and believed in but had lost focus on, crowded out by the pain. The biggest thing God revealed to me again - when Jesus died for me on the Cross, He not only took my sin but He also took my pain. My pain! My pain was the burden wearing me down. Heartbreak over Aria's diagnosis, our life with her, our family separation for days / weeks at a time, her suffering, her likely shorter life than I had hoped for. Just pain really.

The death of Christ meant that our sin and pain was taken but His resurrection represented victory over death! Death - losing my little girl. The thing I feared - but Christ has defeated death, pain, sin and sickness on the Cross. I stand victorious covered by His selfless act in sacrificing His life for me. This story will always have a happy ending.

So I knew afresh the wonderful news of my salvation. I felt God really telling me to give my burdens, pain and anger over to Him and I did. And He took them and I felt the Holy Spirit blowing through my life. I was almost surprised and it was like I could breathe again. Things changed instantly in our house. I felt better and was better able to cope. I knew I could do anything and God was the one to determine each and every admission. Don't fight it, learn from it and God will enable. And He has.

In March 2009, Aria had a near fatal dose of sodium as a result of a hospital error. She spent time in ICU and was very sick. Praise God He revealed Himself to me because I never ever would have been able to cope with that in my previous state.

Funny though, my idea of less hospital admissions in 2008... well Aria had exactly 60 days in hospital in 2007 and exactly 60 in 2008! Not one day more and not one day less!! God has a sense of humour I think. 2009 has been the same, perhaps worse. Aria has been admitted six times as her health declines, with at least a week for each admission. We are okay but living daily in His power.

Thank you for those who have supported us and kept up-to-date on Aria's blog. We are so grateful for all the awesome support we have had over the past three years, words can never express! If you would like to read updates please go to [www.aria.org.nz](http://www.aria.org.nz).

- Anita Macdonald

# Devotions: If Only...

## *Make it your goal to please Christ*

Life is full of “if onlys”. Especially when we come to relationships we are very good at saying, “if only.” “If only I was married. If only I was single. If only I had a better husband. If only my husband would lead our home better. If only I had a larger house. If only I could have children. If only I could have healthier children, easier to manage children, less children, more children ...”

When did these “if onlys” start? There has only ever been one perfect marriage – a marriage made in heaven. Adam and Eve were made for each other. They understood and communicated perfectly until the “if onlys” started. “If only I could have that fruit. If only she hadn’t taken it. If only You hadn’t given her to me as a wife. If only the serpent hadn’t tempted me...” When they sinned there was no longer a perfect marriage. They shifted blame. They were discontented with one another. Their punishment included a breakdown in their relationship – “Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you” (Gen. 3:16). And so the battle of the sexes began. From then on man and woman were going to be at odds. There would be constant misunderstandings and the woman would seek to rule the man and the man would seek to rule the woman in the wrong way. If only...

The wonderful thing is that in Christ there is a reversal of this discontent problem that we all have. Instead of the “if onlys” Jesus Christ says, “I am come that you might have life and have it to the full” (Jn. 10:10). No matter whether you are married, single, widowed, or divorced; in Christ you can have a fulfilled life. That life comes through abiding in Jesus Christ and He in you. Jesus said, “Apart from me you can do nothing” (Jn. 15:4-5).

One of the greatest lessons I have learnt (and am still learning) in life, is that no matter my situation, I need to be content and serve the Lord. I did not marry until I was thirty. Before that I never had a boyfriend. I was considered not just on the shelf, but on the top shelf – by myself, my family and my friends. As I struggled with the idea that I would be single for life the Lord taught me some valuable lessons – the major being *to make it my goal to please Christ* (2 Cor. 5:9). He taught me that, as a single woman, I could have an undivided heart to serve Him (1 Cor. 7:34-35). What a privilege to be in that position – to have NO divided heart – to get on with serving the Lord – to be in His will, doing His will with no encumbrances. Psalm 57:2 says “I cry to the Most High who fulfils his purpose for me”. What a wonderful God we can trust in – He has purposes and plans for us and He will fulfill them. The “if onlys” in our lives are only sinful discontent against a loving God who has a perfect plan for our lives.

But then marriage came along. When I sensed the Lord leading Ernest and I together I felt a bit cross at first. I had struggled and accepted the single state I was in and it was a bit of a nuisance to have to let someone else into my life. By this time I was a bit of a stropky young lady and the idea of submitting to a man’s leadership was a struggle – I was happy doing my own thing in the Lord. Again, God was so good showing me from 1 Cor. 11:7-9 that His purpose for me was to be married and to be a helper for Ernest.

But being married brings its own struggles and “if onlys” too. I had to learn the danger of looking to Ernest to fulfill my needs in life. It was easy to have a divided heart – looking to my husband, instead of Christ. In marriage Jesus was still to be my fulfillment, not my husband. *My goal* in life was still *to please Christ*. Marriage led to learning more – together we realized we needed to look to Christ to overcome the many problems and “if onlys” that come up in marriage. I learnt that it is God who could change my husband – not me. My job was to pray and often I found that it was me that God changed. My goal must always be to please Christ and to be content in Him. When I had difficulty conceiving and then later miscarried I learnt that God alone opens the womb and I was to be content with what the Lord gave me. As Job said, “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. May the name of the Lord be praised.” (Job 1:21). God did bless us with four wonderful children.

After 23 years of marriage the Lord called Ernest home at the age of 47 to be with Him and so I entered a new stage – that of widowhood. What has the Lord taught me and is still teaching me in this stage of life? When Satan throws up the “if onlys”, when I face the constant loneliness, or coping with decisions on my own, or handling teenagers, I have learnt to say, “Lord I am your servant, do as you wish”. Luke 17:7-10 tells of the servant who serves his master though tired after toiling all day. We are Christ’s servants and to serve Him is our duty. So here in my widowhood it is still the same aim. *I must make it my goal to please Christ* and to be content in the situation He has placed me.

Whatever state you find yourself in at present, do not live in discontent. Don’t waste your time with the “if onlys” of life. Fix your eyes on things above. *Make it your goal to please Him*. Be content, for God’s will is perfect for you. Trust Him to work out the purposes He has for you. Keep on serving Him wholeheartedly.

- Shirley Smith  
Providence Presbyterian Church, Mangere



*Shirley Smith's wedding dress.  
Modelled by Laura Levi.*



# Excuses & Rebuttals



During our *Living the Life of Faith* Conference earlier in the year, many of us were challenged to rise to new levels of living in dependence upon the Lord, relying on Him for our daily strength and whatever else we need as well as looking to Him to direct us for what He wants to do through us. Yet how easily excuses rise to the surface as to why we cannot serve Him and be involved in ministry just now. Maybe later when ...

Barbara Barker, in one of her studies has gathered together some of those excuses that we easily offer and counteracts them with God's response! Search your own heart as to whether you sometimes fall into these traps.

- "But I don't have the resources to do what God is asking of me." 2 Corinthians 9:7-8; Philippians 4:19 (Notice the need of the Philippians had been created by their generous distribution to other Christians in need.)
- "But I don't have the strength to do this, I am just exhausted." Philippians 4:13; Colossians 1:11,27,29
- "But I have this physical problem, and it hinders me." 2 Corinthians 12:9,10
- "But there are too many obstacles to my doing what God told me to do." Numbers 13:26-14:9
- "But I am too weak to stand against this temptation." 1 John 4:4;5:4; 1 Corinthians 10:13
- "But I can't take this job (that God asks of me); I can't love that person; I can't control my temper; etc."

Philippians 4:13; 1 John 4:4

- "But I'm just a nobody, and I don't have any clout, they won't listen to me." Jeremiah 1:6,7; Exodus 3:11-14; Judges 6:15,16
- "But I can't talk, I'm not eloquent. I'm just not a speaker or a teacher." Exodus 4:10-12; Jeremiah 1:6-9
- "But I never turned YOU down, Lord, I just can't take care of all of these people." Matthew 25:44-45
- "But I'm too small and weak and the obstacles are too big and awesome." 1 Samuel 17:22-54 (esp. v. 45-47)
- "But Lord, I'm just too busy to do this." Matthew 22:4,5; Luke 14:16-24; Ephesians 5:15-17; Matthew 6:33
- "But, Lord, this is impossible!" Luke 1:37; Daniel 3:17; Romans 4:20,21

Barbara also adds "These are some of the excuses we can give to avoid doing what God has clearly commanded or things we know to be His will. Certainly there are times when it is not God's purpose for us to be doing a particular action even when the need may be great. However we must not look at our weaknesses, our lack of resources, or the seeming impossibility of our circumstances, when it is obvious that God is calling us to a particular response in serving Him. At such times we must abandon ourselves to the truth that HE is our strength and provision, our all-sufficient resource for whatever we need to serve Him. HE is the One Who orders the circumstances of our lives – not to restrict us, but to accomplish His will and His purposes in and through us. And, of this we may be sure – the place and the circumstances I am in presently, is the place where I am to serve Him."

## Book Review

### "Calm My Anxious Heart" by Linda Dillow

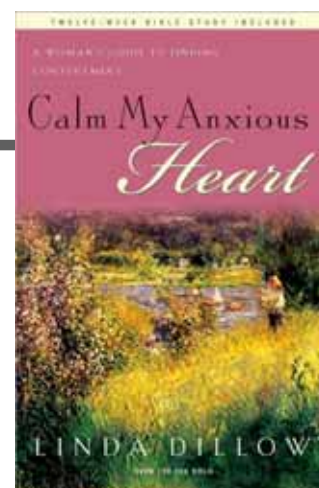
The scriptures and our own experience teach us that we have a great capacity to worry about many things. As women we often worry about those who are close to us – our children, our friends, our families and our spouses. We can identify with sleepless nights grappling with 'what if' situations and the churning of the stomach that we associate with anxiety. We can even smile at the quote: "Worry is like a rocking chair; it will give you something to do but it won't get you anywhere!" Being totally free from anxiety in this life is obviously not realistic. However, if you are finding that worry is one of your familiar companions, then this book is for you!

In her book *Calm my Anxious Heart*, Linda Dillow identifies herself as one prone to worry. She points out that at the heart of anxiety is a desire to be in control and a tendency to distrust God, who is in control of all things and working out his purposes in our lives. Dillow spends the first portion of the book discussing what it means to be content; in our circumstances, with who we are, with our role and in our relationships. She then examines barriers that keep us from being content; greed, a faulty focus, and anxiety. In

the last part of the book she argues that faith in God and His promises is the bridge that takes us from the "tumultuous waters of discontent... into a new land where contentment flourishes". Her mixture of personal illustrations and biblical insights encourage us to trust God with the 'what ifs', 'if onlys' and 'whys' of this life.

This is a very practical book filled with wisdom and encouragement and applicable to any woman, whatever her circumstances or season of life. It includes a 12-week bible study resource making it ideal for studying together with a group of women. I personally found it very helpful, and have implemented many of the practical steps she suggests in my own life. A wonderful book to share with others.

- Reviewed by Anne Camp  
Covenant Presbyterian Church, Manurewa



# Waihola Pony Outreach



Ask the person sitting next to you in church this Sunday to join you on an upcoming outreach program and you will probably be met with a look of extreme terror, be deafened by the knocking knees, and overcome by the sweet perfume of fear. Why? Because few of us have the self confidence to walk into a strangers home, or up to a shopper in the mall and challenge them with the truth of the gospel, that, without knowing the love of Christ, they are destined for eternal damnation. How then do we fulfil our Christian calling to “go into the entire world and preach the gospel, making disciples of all nations?” Sadly, many Christians don’t, we give up before we have even begun. Not due to lack of conviction, apathy or unconcern, but because the task just seems too big!

Well, I’m here to tell you ‘bollix’ to that! God calls very few Christians into the kind of confrontation ministry that requires us to share Christ with complete strangers. Most of us are called into friendship evangelism. I guess you could term it modern day “evangelism for dummies”. Evangelism that simply involves sharing our faith in Christ with those people we already have a relationship or connection with, our next door neighbours, colleagues from work, relatives or friends from our local sports club. Reaching into our local community may just require us to find common interests on which to build friendships that open the door of opportunity for evangelism. Suddenly the task doesn’t seem that big or daunting.

In Waihola, one of those doors of opportunities has developed from a few local Christians’ passion for both reaching young people with the gospel and a mutual love of horses. We started up a local Saturday morning riding club, using mainly Joanne’s horses which she had previously used only for trekking at Christian Youth Camps (CYC). It was a huge shock for her ‘Country Brumbies’ who were forced to cast off their western saddles for the delicate ways of the dressage arena. To the young people attending though they are as precious as the most famous of eventing horses. Within a couple of days of advertising

the spaces were filled (all from non-Christian families) and we had a waiting list for the next term. Our aim was to encourage those attending to enrol in a CYC pony camp so they would hear the Gospel message. By the grace of God, all but one of that first group attended CYC horse camps and heard the good news of the gospel.

Now this ministry didn’t quite fit into a historically accepted evangelistic method box. It was initially not seen by many members of our church as an outreach because we didn’t have a ‘bible talk’ attached. Often in talking to other Christians about our riding outreach, I got the impression that they believed we were just dressing up a personal hobby as a ministry. At the time this annoyed me, but on reflection I guess they were pretty close to the truth. Only instead of dressing up our passion for riding as ministry, we were using our love of horses to build relationships with other horse enthusiasts in order to share with them our love of Christ. It was a real encouragement to me when our local fellowship caught the vision for this ministry and began to pray for us. Blessing has continued to flow from the prayers of the church family having made many contacts with the young riders, parents, siblings and friends.

From this outreach, our church has started a local youth group that quickly became the must-do weekly activity in Waihola. Parents that withdraw their children from local bible-in-schools classes are supportive of them attending youth group. Some of the kids have visited our church; others have made it their home. The youth group leaders have increased in number, enthusiasm and commitment to this outreach. We have seen God answering prayer in ways that are ever increasing in proportion to our expanding view of the power of God to change lives. It amazes me after all my years as a Christian I am still hesitant in asking people along to church, and surprised when they turn up! To have young kids ring up to see if it is alright to come to church with me is a dream come true! To see church families open their homes and hearts each week to them is unbelievably encouraging. I guess, like all Christians, we need to learn not to put God into the small box of our faith, but to remember God is all powerful and able to do exceedingly more than we can ask or imagine. Pray for wisdom, imagination, and faith as we seek ways to use the relationships already built with their parents to share with them the good news of the gospel.

To sum up, I guess the truth in my experience is that outreach to strangers is amazingly “hard”, “overwhelming” and often not very rewarding. Building contacts with people you share common interests with is “real easy”, “fun” and “rewarding”. Sharing your faith with those you come to love is natural and necessary. Ask the Lord of the Harvest.

- Brenda Thompson  
Grace Bible Church, Waihola

# Invercargill's Ministry of Love



As an answer to prayer for contacts into the local community, we have become involved with a number of families who live in the area of our church building. This is taking us into the lives of families who really struggle with life; whether in finances, health, relationships, and much of that which makes up the responsibilities and decisions of each day.

As the people of God, we are commanded to love others as we love ourselves, second only to the command to love God with all our heart and soul and mind. To do this involves time, effort, commitment and godly wisdom. We need to be undergirded with constant prayer as we seek to show the love of Jesus in practical 'hands on' ways. We explain to these families that our help is

very limited – but we can share with them One who is unlimited, in His power and wonderful love.

Last Christmas, we decided to deliver a Christmas hamper to each home with the Christmas message of love through Jesus Christ. These had food treats such as we supply to our own families at Christmas and small gifts and toys. Perishables such as grapes, strawberries, and grape juice were added at the last minute. The bulk of the hampers were generously given by the church family, adding to the regular food basket each Sunday. We are currently preparing to repeat it this year, with double the number of hampers compared to last year.

Our contacts with community families have grown over the year. This has also brought blessing to the church family as a whole, with increased church family participation, and the joy of working together in sharing the love of Christ with those amongst whom the Lord has placed us. Actually sharing in others hardships gives a deep appreciation of what Christ has done for us. We are encouraged to pray for these families, and for those who go into these homes, that we may be given godly wisdom and sincerity in the Name of Christ.

Please pray for us in this service, that it might all be done as unto Him 'who loved us and gave Himself for us...'

- Dawn Wallace  
Grace Presbyterian Church, Invercargill

## New Plymouth

### Ladies evenings take off with Coffee & Chocolate

Our Grace ladies were feeling most put out as the men in our church organized themselves first with a monthly Men's Breakfast Group. So not wanting to be outdone our Ladies Evenings were birthed. Bi-monthly meetings allow enough time to collect another 2000 words to explode upon one another and this is how they have unfolded.

Our first one was "Coffee and Chocolate Evening", an informal gathering just for the ladies to get to know each other and to start "Heart Sisters". It was a night of great fellowship, with a few ladies keeping us highly entertained with hilarious stories! Awesome to have people who don't mind sharing their embarrassing moments for others enjoyment. Also all the ladies names were put in a hat and whoever we picked out, was our Heart Sister. The aim is to get to know that person better and to do special things for them on birthdays, their busiest day of the week, pray for them etc. It has been very exciting

seeing gifts being passed around on Sundays and we can't wait for the reveal in December.



On our second evening Carla, one of our members, shared how she met her husband and how God has had His hand on their life. A great encouragement to love and cherish our husbands and that no matter what circumstance you may find yourself in, God is always there.

We are having another ladies evening in December with a Christmas theme and our Heart Sisters big reveal.

Within our Church we would like to model Titus 2:3-5 and our prayer is that whether we have Ladies Evenings or not, that we would demonstrate these verses to one another and allow God to work through us to one another!

# Credit Crunch Meals

## Economical Recipe Ideas

In these economically pressing times when living costs are going up while incomes are stagnant or decreasing, it is becoming harder and harder for families to make ends meet. Here are some recipes that may help stretch the budget. Quantities can easily be multiplied when catering for larger numbers.

### Meat Loaf

700g tube of sausage meat  
(or 500g mince or half n'half)  
1 small onion  
1 ½ cup of bread crumbs  
(or 1 cup of rolled oats)  
1 beaten egg  
¾ cup milk  
2 tsp Worcestershire Sauce  
(or a generous squirt of bbq sauce)  
1 tsp of salt  
pepper  
1 tsp beef stock (optional)  
1 tsp vegetable stock (optional)  
½ cup mixed vegetables (optional)  
2 peeled hard boiled eggs (optional)

Optional sauce to coat:

¼ c tomato sauce  
1 ¼ tsp golden syrup  
1 tsp Worcestershire Sauce

Mix all the ingredients together in a bowl and press into a lined loaf tin. If you wish to add hard boiled eggs place these in a line into half the mixture and drop the remaining mixture on top. Bake at 180°C for 45 minutes. Then mix together the sauce ingredients and pour over loaf. Return the loaf to the oven for a further 15 minutes.

This loaf is great with mashed potatoes and salad. Serve hot or cold.

### South Pie

1 tube sausage meat  
1 tsp curry powder  
1 tsp sugar  
1 tsp mixed herbs  
1 carrot, 1 potato, 1 onion, 1 apple  
- all grated

Mix all ingredients together. Put in oven dish. Top with breadcrumbs (and cheese if desired).

Bake at 180°C until golden on top - about 30 minutes.

Serves 6.

### Homemade Wedges

Eight medium sized potatoes  
½ cup flour  
1 tsp each of paprika, curry powder and salt

Peel (optional) and slice potatoes into wedge shapes. Pat dry with paper towel.

Place dry ingredients in a plastic bag. Add wedges and shake well till wedges are coated.

Oil roasting dish and spread wedges in it. Bake at 180°C till cooked - about 45 minutes. Turn wedges about halfway through cooking time.

Serves 6.

### Scalloped Potatoes

(microwaved)

1 cup milk  
2 tbsp butter  
2 tbsp flour  
1 tsp mustard  
½ tsp salt  
¼ tsp pepper  
3 medium potatoes peeled, thinly sliced  
2 slices of fried bacon or ham  
¼ cup grated cheese

Sauce:

Pour milk into two-cup glass measure. Microwave on high for 2 minutes. Set aside. Place butter in two-cup glass measure. Cook on high for 1 minute. Stir in flour. Cook on high for 1 minute. Briskly stir hot milk, mustard, salt and pepper into butter / flour mixture and set aside.

Place potatoes in 3 pint microwave-proof casserole dish. Add bacon / ham.

Pour above sauce over mixture and stir to combine. Cover with waxed paper.

Cook on high for 20 - 22 minutes stirring twice during cooking time.

Sprinkle with cheese. Cover and let stand for 10 minutes or until cheese is melted.

Serves 4.

### Fruit Crumble

Four cups of any fruit can be used for the base - e.g. cooked rhubarb, grated apples or pears, drained canned peaches, apricots or whatever you have on hand. Spread fruit in a 23 cm pie plate or shallow dish.

Topping:

½ cup flour  
¾ cup sugar  
½ cup rolled oats  
75g melted butter  
1 tsp mixed spice  
Pinch of salt

Combine ingredients and sprinkle over fruit. Bake at 180°C until golden and crispy - about 30 minutes.

### Marshmallow Shortcake

Base:

1 tbsp cocoa  
1 cup flour  
¼ cup sugar  
225g melted butter  
4 weetbix crushed  
1 cup coconut

Topping:

1 cup boiling water  
1 tbsp gelatine  
1 cup white sugar  
1 tsp vanilla  
food colouring (optional)

Mix base ingredients together. Press into sponge roll tin and cool in fridge.

While base is cooling, dissolve gelatine in boiling water, add sugar, essence and colouring. Beat until thick. Pour over base and cool in fridge.



# Providence Fun Day

On Reformation Day, (31 October) Providence Church hosted a free family fun day. The purpose was to introduce ourselves to the local community surrounding our new venue in Mangere East.

The Lord blessed us with an awesome sunny day. There was a good turn out, with a couple of hundred people coming through, and a very friendly atmosphere. There were games including a mini-golf course, darts, hoop shoot, ping-pong, sponge throw, Playstation challenge and a beanbag throw. Each of these games allowed the competitor to win tickets that could be exchanged for prizes. There was also a free clothes giveaway (well, everything that we did was free), crafts for kids, a café, sausage sizzle, bouncy castle and face painting. A highlight was a concert featuring the champion hip-hop group Sweet & Sour and the GPC band Coram Deo.

It was a great day that exceeded our expectations and was a wonderful way to make contact with those in our neighbourhood. As one person put it, "I hope they do it next year". One immediate result was that a local family attended church the next day. Praise the Lord!!



**"Cultivate that holy habit of seeing the hand of God in everything that happens to you." A.W. Pink**

# 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

#### MANGERE

##### Providence Presbyterian Church

- Give thanks for an encouraging evening with Russell and Mereille Cross, missionaries from Chad. Mireille cooked us a lovely Chadian meal which we ate with our fingers sitting on the floor. Then Russell shared a powerpoint of their work in Chad. Pray for them as they both are seeking work in NZ.
- Give thanks for the community fun day. Please pray as we seek to continue to build relationships with the community.
- Pray also for our planned *Carols on the Lawn* event in December. The Presbytery carol singers with nativity tableau will present items on the front lawn of our property and again we will be inviting the community to come.

#### FLAT BUSH

##### Redeemer Presbyterian Church

Following our Shine Party at the end of October, we held a special ladies night at Ministry House to be able to build friendships with some of the new contacts. The evening included a few games, Rita Williams shared about herself and her family, a devotion, and a wonderful supper of fruit, fondue and cake. It was a great evening and we plan to try to do something once a term from now on.

#### TAKANINI

##### Trinity Presbyterian Church

- Give thanks for two ladies taking part and passing their exam (Systematic Theology) at Grace Theological College.
- Pray for two of our young ladies - Clara & Zelita as they head off to Japan with the Covenant Mission Team.
- Pray for the pregnant ladies at our church.
- Pray for leaders to help out with girls group and junior youth.

#### MANUREWA

##### Covenant Presbyterian Church

- Pray for those involved in the Northern Presbytery Christmas Singing.
- For Community Outreach as they begin planning and practicing their carols.
- Give thanks for the women who attend Bible Study and for the blessing of fellowship and studying the Word together.
- Pray for wisdom and sensitivity to the Lord's leading as the Women's Ministry Team meets to plan for next year.

#### GISBORNE

##### Grace Church Gisborne

- **Grace Kids:** Pray for more children's ministry workers. This year has been more settled as we go deeper with a smaller number. However, we still have our up's and down's.
- **Grace@6:** Our junior youth meeting started in term three and has gone well. The older children appreciate the age specific teaching and games.
- **Katherine Young:** Katherine is returning to Auckland for further study and wider medical experience in January. Give thanks for the great help that she has been to the work here in music and kids ministry. Pray for a replacement!
- **A&P Show Outreach:** Give thanks for the success of the outreach trade stand that we were involved with on 16th & 17th October. Lots of gospel literature was given out and many people spoken to.
- **Haengas:** Please continue to pray for Sam Haenga's medical needs. Give thanks for the visits with specialists in Auckland and Hamilton recently. Pray for Roger and Lois as they care for their whanau.

### Central Presbytery

#### WELLINGTON

##### Grace @ Wellington

- Women's Bible study continues each week. We are currently studying Galatians and trying to read the books of the Law to help us understand that better.
- There is a regular music group run by some of the ladies of the church as an outreach.
- And of course there is the ongoing involvement with church organisation / rosters and events - Families take turns hosting monthly fellowship lunches. There have been celebrations for special events such as baby showers.
- Our annual women's conference was held on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> November looking at the subject of hospitality - *'Remember the Stranger'*. See report on page 15.

#### CHRISTCHURCH

##### Grace Presbyterian Church

- We are still looking to call a Pastor. We enjoyed a busy and blessed time with Pastor Rusty Milton, his wife Jennifer and their children from USA in October. Please pray for wisdom and clarity for all participants as we jointly seek God's plan for GPC Christchurch.
- **Life On Life Discipleship Training Programme:** Our 20+ group have done an initial block of training with this course and now one of our Growth Groups has started the programme. Please pray that we will be growing in strength and numbers in our leadership and discipleship as we meet together around God's Word.
- Several of our members have recently enjoyed experiences visiting or working with various people in ministry overseas. Please continue to pray for our GPC friends overseas.

# In Brief

## News & Prayer Points from around the Country

### Grace @ Wellington

Recently hosted its 6<sup>th</sup> Women's Conference. The conference was on hospitality with the theme being 'Remember the Stranger'. A good group of women from the church attended along with some from New Plymouth and the Wellington Reformed Church. Bev van Rij (Grace, Christchurch) was invited as the guest speaker and her wealth of practical experience was evident throughout her talks. Bev led the group through biblical directives, motivations and examples of hospitality in scripture. Her case studies focused in particular on Abraham, Lot and Boaz. It was good to take another look at these familiar stories and it was refreshing to examine a biblical approach to hospitality and there were new truths brought to light.

The group went on to discuss the blessings and barriers to hospitality that we can encounter. The more informal small group discussions were valuable in sharing experiences and helping each other think outside the square when we face challenges in opening our lives and homes. Jasmin Koning shared in the afternoon from her rich experience of living in many and varied countries. The day provided us with an



opportunity to stop and ponder on hospitality; to consider our current habits and motivations and compare them alongside what scripture teaches us.

Key points that came out during the day:

- Our motivation in caring for others is to bring glory to God and not ourselves, therefore we should offer hospitality without grumbling.
- Hospitality is distinct from entertaining as we are to love the stranger amongst us, not try to impress them.
- We have a particular responsibility to care for strangers and fellow Christians remembering that the growth of the apostolic church was supported by believers' hospitality.
- We were reminded that we too were once strangers in need of care who received grace at the hand of our Heavenly Father and that this should encourage us to show love and hospitality to those in need. (Eph. 2:12).

- Ros van Rij  
Grace@Wellington

## Southern Presbytery

### WAIHOLA

#### Grace Bible Church

We continue to be amazed at God continued blessings on our shift to Waihola.

- We give thanks for the commencement of our children's church and the planned commencement of a young adults study in the next couple of weeks.
- We also give thanks for the opportunities for outreach through: Youth group 11-15 yr. olds; Bible in Schools - all classes covered; Horse riding Club 10 - 15 yr. olds.
- Pray that the leaders may be enabled to live lives that impact for our Lord and that the Word shared may reach prepared hearts.
- Pray for opportunities to build meaningful relationships with parents and the community that may lead to our sharing our love for Christ with them.

### WYNDHAM

#### Wyndham Evangelical Church

Give thanks for the Wyndham School Holiday Programme (see photos on back page).

### INVERCARGILL

#### Grace Presbyterian Church

During the third term school holidays we ran a two day holiday programme. Twenty or so princes, princesses, and jesters [a.k.a. children from the community] joined in the fun at the programme held at Grace Invercargill. The themed programme

was based around the story of Esther. The children were taken through the story of Esther's life, enjoyed games, decorating cupcakes, and other royal activities.



- Please pray for more opportunities to show the love of Christ to the community, especially as we draw closer to Christmas.
- Pray for our pastors and elders, that God would continue to strengthen and encourage them and their families. Pray for wisdom and guidance as they look to the New Year ahead.
- Pray for the Ladies' Bible studies that meet each Thursday. Pray that we will continue to be encouraged and challenged by our studies in Romans, and also that the "openness" within the groups would continue.
- Pray for our Youth Study - for the teenagers that attend and for the leaders. They will be finishing off the year with a study on prayer, so please pray that the study will be an encouragement, and would strengthen the faith of our young people.
- Pray for the members involved with Bible-In-School. Please pray for patience and love as they teach each week. Pray that the children would be attentive, and pray that their hearts would be changed by the gospel of Christ.

# The Back Page

Grace Churches at Work with Children

## *Wyndham School Holiday Programme*



## *Musicise at Redeemer*



## *Weedons Kid's Connect Club, Christchurch*

On Friday 18<sup>th</sup> September, Weedons Kid's Connect Club, an after school club run by Mrs Adrienne van Rij and team in Christchurch, celebrated their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday. Games, afternoon tea and cutting of a cake, scavenger hunt and special teaching time with Neil Shaskey created a special event enjoyed by 36 children and their families.



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