



australia HERALD

April 2019

# FRESH Connections

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*These stories are about living with compassion and following Christ's mission.*



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For up to date news and information visit our website at [cofchrist.com.au](http://cofchrist.com.au)

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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

## Love Transforms

In 1984 my wife, Janine Wood, and I stopped off in India on the way home from a backpacker tour of Europe. We met up with Ananda Rao who was then a church National Minister in India. He took us to Sora tribes villages in Orissa in East India. That visit changed my life.

The people in the Sora tribes were probably the most materially poor group of people I have ever encountered. They had no electricity, the nearest water was over a kilometre away, they lived in grass huts, the kids' clothes were often rags and they made their own volleyballs out of discarded rags. They were also as happy as any people I have ever met. They were so happy they even danced when they took up the offering.

Ananda's explanation of their happiness was that, prior to converting to Christianity, they had been animists. Theirs was a type of animism that required gods to be pacified to obtain good outcomes. Christianity brought them the Easter message of forgiveness, acceptance and love. It was a liberating force for them



enabling them to face whatever came with the assurance of God's love. It called them out of a life of fear into one of hope.

That experience changed me. It actualised for me the conviction that there is no intrinsic connection between material wealth (or our various habits and addictions) and happiness. The transforming power of God's love brings happiness and enables us to find our true

selves and to see the other as one loved by God.

The articles in this issue embrace this theme too. Beryl and Ralph Ferrett's memories of their ministry in Korea also speak of the empowering effect of the Christian message. Harry Fielding's article challenges us to be resurrected as the full spiritual beings we are called to be. Art Smith's article outlines how the Canadian church is using a 'three-thirds' strategy to be guided by the Spirit in forming new connections. In Australia we are challenged to see the face of God, the face of Christ in those around us and to form fresh connections with them.

*John Taylon*

Editorial Team

**Back row L-R:** Dick Evans, Maurice Unger, Iris & Gomer Mansell, Jack Imrie, Les Smith

**Front row L-R:** Norma Unger, Dot Evans, Sybil Bannister, Val Imrie, Reva Smith

West Pennant Hills Seniors - 30 May 1994

# EASTER PERSPECTIVES

by Harry Fielding

For just over five years Adele and I lived at the foot of the mountains in Charlotte, North Carolina in the USA. One of the most intriguing aspects of living there, was observing the change of seasons. We used to love driving along the Blue Ridge Parkway in autumn and gasping at the brilliant red, orange and yellow hues of the foliage. After about six weeks or so, most of the trees would be bare of leaves and the harsh realities of winter would be upon us. Then came the spring with green shoots and leaves and flowers of every hue beginning to appear. How beautiful it was!

I was thinking recently about the symbolism of spring in relation to Easter. In the southern hemisphere this relationship is nonexistent. Even in Israel, where there are, in effect, only two seasons (summer and winter), the symbolism between new life appearing in nature as related to the resurrection experience of Jesus, is largely missing. It is a tradition which has been handed down from Europe and expanded in Christian belief in the USA. What then, is the central message of Easter for and beyond the post-modern world? I would affirm that the original message of Jesus was relational and

based on spiritual principles. It points to a way of life that Jesus lived and breathed. The earliest Christian writings (the letters of Paul) emphasize the spiritual, rather than the physical nature of the resurrection. This is particularly true in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (see 1 Corinthians, chapter 15). For some years now, I have talked about the "Easter Principle" that allows us to recognise that death and resurrection are everyday and every - minute realities in the midst of life. This does occur at the physical level, but post-modern physics now tells us the basis of all life is energy which is the foundation upon which the material (or physical) world is built. In religious terms we could refer to this as the Spirit which is the unseen element which undergirds all life. The Hebrews referred to this as ruach which can be translated as "spirit" or as "breath of life".


Easter, then, for me, points to the eternal connectedness of all creation. When Jesus proclaimed that he was "one with God", he was not making unique claims about himself; indeed on a number of occasions he reminded his disciples that they would do even greater things than he had. His relationship with the eternal was the model for all of humankind – Easter is a challenge for each of us to be resurrected and to emerge as the full spiritual beings that we are called to be. We are called to "die" to ourselves as individuals and to accept that we are undeniably a part of God and therefore a part of each other. When one of us hurts, we all hurt. We have a need for each other and for the strength that is generated when we operate as a coherent body. In the world in which we live, we are called to break down the barriers that divide us, individually, nationally and internationally.

The world we have known is disappearing at a rate never before known in human history. We are living in what anthropologist Victor Turner has described as a "liminal period" in which the hitherto accepted social rules and conventions are disappearing, but the new model is yet to emerge.

The resurrected Jesus calls us to be pioneers in establishing a new world order. We are to venture forth on our journey in courage, faith and love, not knowing what our results will ultimately produce. This is similar to the journey of early pioneers whom Alfred, Lord Tennyson describes in one of my favourite poems, Ulysses....

## Ulysses

Come, my friends,  
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.  
Push off, and sitting well in order smite  
The sounding furrows, for my purpose holds  
To sail beyond the sunset and the baths  
Of all the western stars, until I die.  
It may be that the gulfs may wash us down:  
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles  
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.  
'Tho much is taken, much abides, and 'tho  
We are not now that strength which in old days  
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are,  
we are:  
One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

The call of Easter summons me: will you join me on my journey? 

| THINK |  
USING THE SPIRIT

# TO FORM



# NEW CONNECTIONS

By Art Smith, *Council of Twelve Apostles*

**T**hat's the challenge from the Holy Spirit. In the northern portions of the Canada, Haiti, Mexico Apostolic Field, the vision is surprising and audacious!

Canadian church members find themselves in a culture of soaring secularism and cataclysmic change. By 2001 sociologist Robert Putnam, author of *Bowling Alone*, pointed out that people weren't joining things like they used to. Bowling alleys, Lions Clubs, and the like were declining. Churches, too. A Canadian expert on Christian mission, Alan J. Roxburgh, suggests the church is experiencing a "Great Unravelling." He compares it with the fall of the Roman Empire and with the Protestant Reformation.

Some of our "chief purpose" sounds familiar to church members. "Communities of disciples engaged in spiritual formation" or "compassionate ministry and action" describe many congregations in Canada. But talking about birthing and multiplying communities of disciples in a world where church member deaths

outnumber baptisms, where the fastest-growing demographic is "spiritual but not religious," and where church closures have reached epidemic rates, seems outrageous!

Let's be honest. In recent years our congregations may have grown spiritually, in biblical literacy, and theological sophistication. But while our unity and tolerance have allowed us to embrace significant changes while staying together, we've done so from a posture of numerical decline.

Sometimes we've blamed ourselves. Sometimes we've felt like the World Church or mission center has failed us. But the reality is that we're subject to trends that are much bigger than our congregation or even denomination.

In Canada we're working hard to go beyond blame and to focus on becoming those birthing and multiplying communities of disciples. We know that ultimately the church will look differently than what we're used to. The journey will be surprising.

**W**e are guided by what we call our Canadian “Three-thirds Strategy.” We feel like we’re compelled to shift our focus from inside to outside, from ourselves to others, from the church to the unchurched. We want to engage that “spiritual but not religious” demographic. We’ve asked ourselves what it would look like if one-third of our time, talent, treasure, and testimony—or one-third of our overall resources—were focused on our existing congregation, another third were focused on creating connections and relationships with new people, and still another third were focused on nurturing new expressions of the gospel that the Holy Spirit shows us emerging from those new connections.

# 1

## Congregations in Mission

We’re building on the foundation of our legacy congregations. These are the centers where disciples are nurtured, and communities are renewed through missional focus.

A proven process called GROW helps congregations engage in mission, including creation of less-scary activities for invitation. Congregations set a short-term, highly attainable, mission-focused goal. Then they enlist a short-term team of committed volunteers to help manage the accomplishment, record progress, build excitement, celebrate success, and repeat.

From that foundation, congregations create a positive cycle of success and passion. Because GROW goals are mission-oriented, the process is a great way to engage the first third of the Canadian Three-thirds Strategy. To date, GROW has had more than 100 successful, measured Mission Initiative completions in 20 congregations. It’s easy to invite friends to participate in the goals themselves, or even into a small, short-term leadership role. We plan to keep learning from the GROW process.

In Canada, we’re also discovering the power of social-media tools for invitation. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Meetup.com, CouchSurfing.org, and more are leveraged in addition to things like flyers and posters on grocery-store bulletin boards. We’re listening to the experts among us on how to use these technologies best. But even where we’ve enlisted marketing and public-relations professionals, our traditional Sunday services barely are keeping up against societal trends that demand decline.

The church, though, is not a building, or a Sunday service. The church is community engaged in mission. As congregations embrace the Mission Initiatives, grounded in our Basic Beliefs and aspiring to our Enduring Principles, new expressions of the church can emerge.

# 2

## Creating Connection

In the second third of our strategy, member facilitators host regular activities that serve as “entry points” into sacred community. Connection groups avoid baggage that many associate with organized religion (churchy language, traditional religious spaces). Creating Connection groups are mission-oriented, but they can take any number of forms based on the talents and giftedness of the facilitator. Some of the first groups focused on meaningful conversation over coffee. Others are exploring spiritual practices such as meditation, yoga, drum circles, knitting prayer shawls, or even lectures on history, philosophy, and theology.

What are your talents and giftedness? What missional activity could you facilitate? Creating Connection groups now meet weekly all around the Canada East Mission Centre. Maps at each group location, as well as posters and flyers that focus on a shared identity (e.g., Enduring Principles) help grow a sense of shared identity.

# 3

## New Expressions

Diverse expressions evolve as disciples and seekers integrate to form new identity. The last part of the Three-thirds Strategy is supporting new expressions in our community. Just as the church was radically transformed five centuries ago during the Protestant Reformation, Christian renewal today requires us to translate Enduring Principles and mission in ways relevant in the 21st century.

Identity formation and the creation of a new expression of community do not happen overnight. Building relationships of trust and commitment equivalent to church membership requires time.

In Canada we’re using our tradition of reunions, camps, and retreats to build bridges with new seekers. Connection Retreats are opportunities for Creating Connection participants to experience a Community of Christ campground and a retreat format based on our traditions. Participants get to meet people from other Creating Connection groups.

Deepening relationships of trust and vulnerability between members and friends lead to emerging possibilities. As the Holy Spirit invites us into relationship and mission together, we should expect to experience transformation. Connection groups engaged in missional activities are not ploys to get new people into Sunday pews.

‘NEW EXPRESSIONS  
EMERGE AS WE LET THE  
SPIRIT FORM US  
TOGETHER INTO SALT,  
LEAVEN, AND LIGHT IN  
OUR COMMUNITIES.’




## Disciples and Seekers

We’ve experimented. We’ve had successes and failures. We’ve struggled to learn what success even looks like. But today we’re finding new energy in relationship with hundreds of new people. We’re finding that church can happen anywhere.

In fact, some congregations are rethinking how they use their assets, selling traditional church structures and moving to storefront spaces with curb appeal that appear safer to the “spiritual but not religious.” Many are adaptable for multiple uses.

New Expressions emerge as we let the Spirit form us together into salt, leaven, and light in our communities.

## Three-thirds Strategy

- Coffee and Conversation Groups
- Advertise through social media, particularly Meetup.com.
- Meet in a safe, neutral location like a coffee shop or food court.
- Avoid religious jargon.
- Avoid domination of groups by church members.
- Meet weekly at a consistent time.
- Feature tables with puzzles, adult coloring pages, and popular magazines with articles on spirituality.
- Center on a meaningful question (search for “meaningful questions” on the Internet). Use a new question each week.
- Be honest about church affiliation in social-media ads and by facilitators, but don’t focus on it.
- Build authentic relationships and see where they go. 

# Reminiscing... **early** **days in Korea**

By Beryl and Ralph Ferrett

Our family moved to South Korea in August 1962. The family consisted of Greg 7, Paul 6, and Kathy 4. Peter was born 6 months later at the local hospital where we spent a lot of time over the years with Greg's burst appendix, and Peter's meningitis etc.

Seoul was a city that had been ruined during the Korean War. Much of it was dirty and full of refugees who had fled from the Communist regime and become stranded when a truce was announced.

A congregation had been established, mostly young people, and they all spoke English quite well. The first church members had been contacted and baptized by a young American GI who was stationed there during the war. We held meetings in the home of Brother Lee Hae Jun and his wife for a while, and it was here that we had a number of baptisms (including Greg), in their back yard, in a large rectangular tank.

A block of land had been purchased by the church in Yon hi dong, a suburb of Seoul. This is where we lived, in one of the three residences, the (Les) Gardner family and a Korean family who worked on the property. Our children attended Seoul Foreign School which was walking distance from home. We (R & B) spent the first two years studying the Korean language at the nearby university. Kathy and Peter were fluent in Korean as they played with the children from our Korean worker's family. We hired a tutor to give language lessons to the older boys but they weren't too keen to study! The church building was constructed on this block and was officially opened in September 1963. Downstairs were offices and a small meeting room. The upstairs meeting room was where a crowd gathered for the opening and continued to be used as weekly Sunday services filled the building. The church was well used for all kinds of activities both day and night. The winters were bitterly cold, and two large oil burning stoves (often becoming red hot) were the

source of heating. Christmas time it was "standing room only" for all the local children and at one time the church was used as an emergency shelter for flood victims from local low lying areas. In later years a Korean kindergarten /pre-school was established.

In early 1963 Pak Chi Song joined the church and was employed as a ministerial assistant. He was ordained an elder and later a seventy. He and Miss Lee Soo Ja married and they made a strong team. They were thrilled to attend World Conference. Like many of our early members they eventually left Korea and moved to the USA to live permanently.

A number of baptisms were conducted in the church font; located under the rostrum. A notable occasion was when a thick layer of ice had to be broken before the candidates could enter the water. Other interesting baptisms occurred in country areas, from time to time, in whatever water container was available.

In 1965 the Gardner family moved to Hawaii and we were left as the only "foreign" family. Apostle Neff was keen to have an indigenous church. This was a challenging and time consuming task being the only World Church representative in Korea. Elder Pak had several centres operating, and Ralph had the rural health clinic programmer to organise. The story of Esme Smith's role in this clinic is a story in itself which needs to be told. The clinic was in the village of Magok some two to three hour drive from Seoul.

The summers in Korea were hot, the winters cold, and we remember the beautiful spring and autumn colours.

August (summer) brought the rainy season, and we found problems with mold in cupboards etc. We lost a number of coloured slides. Winter brought ice and snow, and our "compound", being on a steep hill, presented difficulties driving up with a trailer load of oil for the heaters.



# Breathe New Life



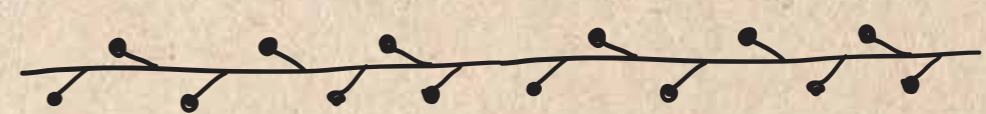
by Alice Granleese

I count myself lucky to have children who love nature and the outdoors. Most children are naturally curious and fascinated by the environment; frogs hiding in the letterbox, collecting eggs from the chooks, seeing the moon in the night sky; and they love seeing us show our awe and interest. As we approach Easter, it is somewhat daunting to try to explain to children some of the darker themes of the season – betrayal, torture, death. But presented with the phrase, Breathe New Life, I am reminded to look at things through the eyes of a child. A butterfly emerges from a chrysalis; leaves change from green to red then yellow; sun shafts and a rainbow burst through dark clouds after a storm; our world is full of continual transformations! We can use these 'ordinary miracles' to talk to children about Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

chocolate Easter eggs and hot cross buns? (The latter question I'm sure will be the most exciting!) Understanding their ideas helps us to deepen their knowledge through discussion. We can remind them that we also transform many times in our lives, and new life can be breathed into us by God when we are ready to brave enough to shed our old self or ways.

Jesus was a man whose life embodied courage, honesty, love and kindness. He died because the leaders at the time did not like what he was doing or saying. However, Jesus knew God would always be with him and so gave himself up to show the people his love for them, God's love. Jesus chose faith, not fear; love, not violence. In giving up fear and accepting death, he was transformed and became one with God. The Easter story reminds us that God is always with us, loving us, especially when we feel alone or lost. When we trust in God, we are transformed and made anew. <sup>AH</sup>

It is essential to first find out what children think – what is the story of Easter? Why is it important? Did Jesus really come back to life? Why do we eat

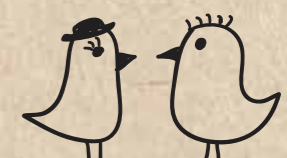


## Stories about love, sacrifice and transformation

- The Giving Tree – Shel Silverstein
- The Selfish Giant – Oscar Wilde
- The Happy Prince – Oscar Wilde
- The Hungry Caterpillar – Eric Carle
- The Rainbow Fish – Marcus Pfister

## Activities

Making an Easter tree inspired by the story The Egg Tree  
– Katherine Milhous

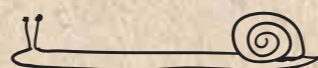


Ralph's testimony is "I experienced many situations; most foreign to my way of thinking, but found that if I thought and acted as Koreans might – miraculous things resulted. In one case, a witch had died and her spirit was trying to find another being to inhabit (a common belief was that witches never really died but the body of another person, in which she had just been living, would be left and the witch-spirit would continue "ad infinitum" moving into one body after another). A church member called elder

Pak and I to pray for his friend. As we entered the home of the victim we saw her shaking violently. We administered the consecrated oil and offered a prayer for her to be released of this evil.

She quickly settled down and began attending church the next Sunday and every Sunday. Her old beliefs were abandoned and she decided to become a Christian.

Our Korean experience has given us a great appreciation for those who are different from us. We love our Korean friends and we love our friends here. We now understand God's love for everyone. His Spirit is working in lives throughout the world." <sup>AH</sup>



# BREATHE NEW LIFE

## The Sydney Project

A Community of Christ Sydney Network Project to re-invigorate and re-imagine the mission of the church in Sydney.

If you live in Sydney and would like to know how you can participate in this process you can email [enquiries@cofchrist.com.au](mailto:enquiries@cofchrist.com.au)



Anne Bonnefin talks to Lisa Hoelzl - Project Coordinator of Breathe New Life - The Sydney Project

Anne: **People in Australia may have heard about your appointment as Sydney Project Officer but maybe they don't know much about you. Can you tell us a bit about yourself? What do you do?**

Lisa: I lecture at *Torrens University* in branding and interior design. I have my own art practice and business called the *Bakehouse Studio Marrickville*, NSW. Above my studio my husband Scott and I run an Airbnb. I'm a mother of two teenage girls Mimi and Eliza who were recently baptised into Community of Christ. I also love making ceramics and running Open Studios from my studio, which is an old bakery and where I offer my local community a place to come and be creative.

Anne: **So what compelled you to want to take on the Job of Sydney Project Officer?**

Lisa: I suppose I like challenges and it seemed like a very challenging project. For my children's sake especially, I would like to see the church in Sydney continue in whatever form is possible. I have only just begun the research process, so we don't know what that is yet. I'm very interested to find out how other people would like the church to express itself into the future. My experiences with Community of Christ to date have been very positive, mostly in terms of kids camps, reunions and Weekends of Wellness (WoW). Working on the steering committee with yourself, Robert Thompson and Marshall Leaver on WoW has been very exciting because I'm a firm believer in the spiritual power of creativity to transform people's lives. I can't help but be influenced by these kind of experiences. Participating in these events has made me personally more involved with the church because it accords with my values.

The job also seemed suited to my particular and eclectic skillset. You don't come across jobs that often that offer you the opportunity to use all your skills. My past experiences of Interior Design and National Marketing Management for *Herman Miller Australia* will hopefully come in useful for this project.

Anne: **Can you tell us briefly what you have been asked to do?**

Lisa: I have been asked to research, define and cost, possible new expressions for the church in Sydney. My scope of works has five stages. The first one is research - meeting with congregations and members of the community to understand what they think is needed and how they see the church. What they love about it, what they'd like to do differently or build upon. We are attempting to survey people who don't attend regularly and people at congregations such as The Open Door who aren't all official members. I am also researching new approaches that other communities around the world are exploring. However I get the feeling that there are little pockets of fabulous activity happening around the church in Australia too. For instance, when we collated the research questions recently it was surprising how few people commented on WoW. I don't know if that is because it is so different to everything else we do that people didn't actually associate it with church? Maybe it hasn't hit their radar yet. It seems to me that

the success of the church depends on people's involvement, participation and interest in outward focused community projects in order to attract a wider audience.

The second phase is evaluating the research findings and our Sydney population: who is still active in the church and where do they live. After we evaluate the research, then we can begin to articulate some alternative strategies. The difficult part will be agreeing on one of them or a combination of them and then of course comes the budgeting.

Anne: **What has surprised you so far?**

Lisa: Well it surprised me that almost everybody feels a lot of love for the church, the church community and what it stands for, while at the same time, there is a feeling of deep and urgent need for change and growth.

**How do you think this process is challenging individuals and congregations?**

The challenge for me personally so far has been timing. Although I was appointed in December, I was away on a preplanned family holiday in January and then recovering from some surgery in February. I'm working as a contractor and have been allocated 36 days to get project done. Research is going to take up a lot of that time.

Challenges for the congregations are to accept change. Some people seem more than ready for radical change, others would prefer past paradigms to be re-established. Many older members regret not seeing the younger people at Sunday church anymore, when in fact they are there, just not on Sundays or within the old bricks and mortar. Ministries such as WoW, Tunes4Tots, Youth Groups and Community Plus are held at many days and times, some physically and others online. These fantastic initiatives are providing multiage, flexible time slots that suit the needs of today's complex and widely spread communities.

Agreeing on a final strategy will be another challenge. My objective is to present inspiring options founded upon evidence-based research so that we can all buy into and own the ideas that best suit the growth of the church in Sydney into the future. I think that is really my mission. I'm just a catalyst. I'm here to gather, collate, analyse and synthesize the collaboratively developed thoughts and ideas of engaged members of our church.

Anne: **So you see the biggest challenge is agreement: coming together and really working as one?**

Lisa: Yes and perhaps balancing your own personal vision with what you're prepared to offer and with what other people are prepared to do. That is, surrendering your opinions to the ideas of other people who are willing to put those ideas into practice. A challenge also is to stay open-minded - to be open to new Ideas and to compromise your own position for the greater good.

Everybody has agreed that what they love about Community of Christ is the community it creates and its ability to help people in need in our local communities. So whether congregations are combined may well be dictated by who we want to help and where we need to be to address particular human needs.

Anne: **Is it about giving people a vision, a really clear vision that people can hold onto?**

Lisa: Yes - and be inspired to participate in it.

**How will it make a difference?**

I hope it is going to make a difference to how the public see the church. To give it form and shape and visibility. A lot of people are saying the church is publicly invisible. Many of the Sydney churches are not in places that you would notice, and they are not places many would feel proud to invite friends and colleagues to visit. This has perhaps created a more inward than outward looking perspective.

Anne: **What does the future look like?**

Lisa: Oh its a bit soon to say. Isn't it?

Anne: **Can you say generally?**

Lisa: Ok so the future is a community that's proud to tell people who they are, where they go to meet, what they do and to invite participation of their friends, colleagues and fortuitous encounters with strangers or people in need. It's a community that strengthens its reputation for reaching out to people in need and helping communities outside of its own walls in ways that make a difference to other people's lives and their own lives. But at the same time re-interprets what church is and can be, without losing what it has been and is. AH



all

ALL ARE CALLED

Photo by Jon Tyson on Unsplash

By Ben Smith, *Australia Mission Centre President*

The recent news of tragedy and trial in our society has me thinking constantly about the role we play in the world through our discipleship journey. Violence is perpetrated all too often by those who claim to be messengers or servants of The Way, and yet it is clear to others of us that those actions are an obvious mutation or a misinterpretation of Jesus' teachings.

Our thoughts and prayers are simply not enough in these times. If we are to be the hands and feet of Christ in our world, we must join together to be at the forefront of work to bring justice to victims of these abuses, but further, we are called as a people to bring change to unjust systems which perpetuate more of the same. I believe we're in the midst of a revolution, where our children are finding their voice and providing a rebuttal in a way we should be proud.

Doctrine and Covenants 163:3c says "There are subtle, yet powerful, influences in the world, some even claiming to represent Christ, that seek to divide people and nations to accomplish their destructive aims. That which seeks to harden one human heart against another by constructing walls of fear and prejudice is not of God. Be especially

alert to these influences, lest they divide you or divert you from the mission to which you are called."

We are called to exemplify the way of Jesus in the world, and through our principles and actions we will guide our communities to understand the Spirit of God in new ways. Imagine if perpetrators of child sexual abuse were fully aware of the love God has for them and were surrounded by a loving and supportive community prior to committing those crimes? Or if those who violently take the physical life away from another were aware of the joy that comes from unity in diversity? Or those who continue to plunder the earth of resources for personal gain had a deep conviction of the sacredness of creation?

Our call is not to simply build a church, our call is to share with the world a new way of being – a way that will change the world and build a peaceable kingdom. I often get asked 'how do we grow the church?', and I would love it if that question shifted to 'how do we be the church?' – because I believe if we truly become who we are called to be, we will experience an expanding presence of disciples in our community. Now is that time. **AH**

# ENTERING SILENCE

By Anne Bonnefin

Entering Silence is a form of prayer. It doesn't really matter how you pray but the attitude in which you pray. "Be still and know" is an instruction to let our minds rest from the busyness of life and to spend time listening to God within. Entering Silence is to go expectantly into the presence of God.

To begin it is helpful to have an attitude of handing over to God all that is concerning you at this time. Allow your body to relax and let go. Silence is to the soul and mind as food is to the body; it nourishes our very cell structure.

inspiration of God. For some this inspiration comes as keener vision or hearing more accurately and seeing more clearly. For others we hear God speaking to us in the voice of another or in life's circumstances.

Find a place that is free of distractions where you can sit undisturbed. Adopt a comfortable position so you can allow any concerns of your body, mind or surroundings to be at rest.

Allow your mind to center your attention on the presence of God. Think about the nature and mind and love of God. Consider the wisdom of God and how all things were created by God's creative power. Become aware of the presence of God just as you are conscious of light or warmth and turn your whole attention to the infinite nature of God.

Take time to listen...God is within you, beneath you, above you, surrounding you. Listen, wait and watch until you recognise the presence of God. The Spirit of God can only reveal that which your being is ready to receive.


In the light of God you can learn what the will of God is for you as well as a clearer understanding of your life and purpose. Your work is to be receptive to the



### Five Steps to Silence

1. Begin by sitting comfortably. Allow your body to be relaxed and your mind to be present in this moment. Remember this is a time to commune with God. Breathe in peace.
2. Have an attitude of open-mindedness before God and what God wants to reveal to you.
3. Allow your body and mind to be still to listen to God's presence.
4. Be thankful that the presence of God is within you; that God's love is expressed and being formed in you.

Entering Silence is only a means to an end. In response to the Spirit we move out into life renewed with a desire to let all of our actions and interactions 'be guided by the Spirit.' (Gal. 5:25). So the things of God find their divine purpose in us.

6. Take time to pray the Mission Prayer as you leave your time of contemplation: **God, where will your Spirit lead today? Help me be fully awake and ready to respond. Grand me the courage to risk something new and become a blessing of your love and peace. Amen** 

# April + May EVENTS

## April

- 5 - 7 Bendigo KinCarer's Community Camp
- 6 - 13 World Conference
- 7 - 10 Kallara Children's Camp
- 19 - 22 Easter
- 19 - 22 Perth Family Camp

## May

- 18 Saints Care face to face meeting
- 24 - 26 WoW - Victoria

## June

- 7 - 10 Mission Centre Conference
- WPH Community Centre, Sydney

## Life Events

### Baptism

24 March - Sarah Crittenden baptized by Julie Crittenden and confirmed by Kass Unger and Helen Taylor at Green Cathedral

### Blessing

24 February - Noah Palmer blessed by Candice Care-Unger and Jenny Meurant at West Pennant Hills  
17 March - Henry Robinson blessed by Candice Care-Unger and Kass Unger at Coronation Park, Kiama

### Marriage

30 March - Marriage of Lyn Lander and Sue Palmer at the Green Cathedral

### Death

31 January - Janna Tegelaar, Korumburra, aged 93  
3 March - Paul McPherson, Wingham, aged 62  
13 March - Norma Moxham, Taree, aged 97



## Weekly Online Gatherings

- 1st Sunday - 7 April — Reflect and Connect
- 2nd Sunday - 14 April — Chat and Catch-up
- 3rd Sunday - 21 April — Online Gathering
- 4th Sunday - 28 April — Book Club

<http://zoom.us/j/511265447>

Contact: [aturner@cofchrist.com.au](mailto:aturner@cofchrist.com.au)

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West Pennant Hills NSW 2125

Name	
Street	
Suburb	Postcode



...An invitation to pilgrimage—  
a journey of individual and community  
discernment, discovery, and of becoming.  
Our pilgrim heritage guides our journey. It is an  
exciting faith adventure, still unfolding.  
Whether we gather for World Conference in  
person or in spirit, all are invited to step across  
the threshold of the now, to shed  
ourselves of personal agendas, and to journey  
anew into what can be.

—Janné Grover, "A Journey of  
Becoming," May/June 2018 *Herald*

### **Stay connected to 2019 World Conference through social media.**

Event images, videos, and updates will be posted on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/CommunityofChrist.RLDSChurch](http://www.facebook.com/CommunityofChrist.RLDSChurch)), Twitter (<https://twitter.com/CofChrist>), Instagram ([www.instagram.com/CofChristofficial/](http://www.instagram.com/CofChristofficial/)), and YouTube ([www.youtube.com/CofChrist](http://www.youtube.com/CofChrist)). Worship and some gatherings will be live streamed on [www.CofChrist.org/live-webcast](http://www.CofChrist.org/live-webcast) and on the Community of Christ Facebook page. The event hashtag is #conf2019.