

TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Newsletter

Dear Friends,

Having just celebrated Pentecost and Trinity Sunday it would be appropriate to consider our corporate identity as church and congregation in general and in particular.

Our recent series entitled "City on a Hill" based on Philip Ryken's book of the same title, highlighted four aspects of the church's life and witness, viz Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship and Mercy Ministry. Whilst by no means exhaustive they underscore God's purpose for His church. The church is more than an organisation to be managed, though good administration is essential. It's an organism dependent on the life-giving presence of the Holy Spirit for health and growth.

Before the church engages in mission and evangelism or any other important aspect of ministry, the church is called to worship. Corporate worship is the life-blood of the church. Without the transforming presence of the Holy Spirit in our services on the Lord's Day, the church is simply another religious gathering or voluntary association. Little wonder then, that the evil one does his utmost to divide and disrupt the worship of the church, through mis-understanding and concentration on non-essentials.

Worship is a verb – something we engage in with whole-hearted devotion. It's not a passive activity with the 'privilege' of critiquing the 'performance' of others. Nor is it the prelude to the sermon as if the sermon were the main event. Granted corporate worship is different from one's personal devotions. However, there is a direct link between healthy, life-giving corporate worship and the personal devotions of individual members. If we rightly see worship as a response of gratitude to grace received, it cannot be confined to a Sunday 'service' but becomes a lifestyle where the quality of our everyday work is as much an act of worship as that which happens in church on Sunday.

Alan's letter:

Fellowship and Discipleship at Trinity primarily happen in Home Groups. Not only is this a time to reflect on and consolidate the teaching received on Sunday, it is also a place of pastoral care where we learn to care for one another and give practical expression to ministry and acts of mercy.

Finally mercy ministry is not dispensing aid to the 'deserving poor'. That would be merit rather than mercy. Because we ourselves have received mercy from God, we are enabled to be merciful. In the homeless, destitute, alcoholic and needy poor, we see a mirror of our spiritual condition outside of Christ. 'Needs met by deeds' – the best definition of mercy ministry I know - are not prompted by duty or guilt, rather gratitude and thanksgiving for God's great grace and prior mercy.

Please continue to pray that we might indeed be a 'city on a hill' reflecting God's light, truth and grace to a needy world.

Until next time
Your minister and friend

Alan



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Presbyterian Church in Southern
Africa**

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CHARISMA

Thank you!! All your hard work and generosity has meant that each child at the Charisma Drop-In Centre has a blanket, a jersey, a beanie and a scarf. They asked me to make sure that you know that they are extremely grateful.

We were able to deliver all the warm goodies on the day that winter arrived in earnest! It was a real privilege to visit the Centre and give them your gifts. Leith Polson came along in his bakkie to help us get everything there, and Nathaniel and Alan were able to be there too. Charity Sikazwe introduced us to two Tukkies students who are semi-finalists in the Miss Earth RSA pageant. They joined us for the afternoon and brought tea shirts for the children and 7 trees as a gift to Charisma. Handing out winter warmth, spending time with the children and carers at the Centre and planting trees made for a special afternoon.

Please pray for six of our children who have been accepted to attend a winter school organised by the Lux Mundi Church. It will be held at Pretoria University from 4th to 8th July. The children will receive tuition in maths, science and English. They will stay in the Pretoria Girls' High hostels, so this will be an "away from home" experience for them.

Sue Hay



TRINITY TALENT FAIR

Remember to diarise our Trinity Talent Fair on Saturday morning, 27th August 2011. It will be a combined Presbyterian / Anglican Fair and we hope that it will be something which EVERYONE will enjoy – young, old and in-between.

Those who would like to reserve a table, please call Ilse at the office on 012 348 9469. There will be no charge. We would simply like our Trinity community to have the opportunity to celebrate each others' talents and buy the fruits of each others' labour.

LETTER FROM GORDON HAY

A City on a Hill

Over the last five weeks we have run a series drawing on Philip Ryken's book *City on a Hill*. The subtitle to this book is "Reclaiming the biblical pattern for the church in the 21st Century". The 5 sessions focussed on: The church in "Post-Christian times", Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship and Mercy ministry.

We need to be aware that two concepts play a major role in the current "patterns of this world": **relativism** and narcissism. Relativism is summed up by one writer: "We believe that each man must find the truth that is right for him. Reality will adapt accordingly". You have your story, I have my story, but there is no divinely ordained story that ties it all together. **Narcissism** is reflected in unbridled individualism and radical selfishness. Paul knew that we would face these times. (See 2 Timothy 4:3 and 2 Timothy 3:1-4)

Churches struggle to be "relevant" in these times. This often means that they become willing to sacrifice biblical principles for popular success – relativism. They crave acceptance of secular society – narcissism. The danger is that the church loses its very identity as the church. Rather than confronting the world the church gets conformed to it. It no longer stands as a city on a hill but

sinks to the level of the surrounding culture. The church needs to be a teaching, **worshipping**, caring and growing church. We considered Acts 2:42-47.

Ryken points out that in times where the prevailing mind-set is relativism and denial of universal truth the way to respond is by remaining devoted to the apostolic teaching of scripture. What God has appointed for the salvation of sinners and for their subsequent growth in grace is the preaching of the gospel, together with the teaching of biblical doctrine. "This is God's plan for the church. It also happens to be the perfect anti-histamine for a culture that is allergic to truth."

We looked at worship: what we do in response to what God has done for us. Ryken suggests that Colossians 3:16-17 provides perhaps the shortest complete definition of Christian worship: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him". These verses set the parameters for the proper worship of God: the content of worship comes from the Bible; the goal of worship is to give praise to God; and the basis for worship is the saving work of Jesus Christ. True Christian worship is Word-communicating, God-glorifying, and Christ-confessing.

We looked at **fellowship**, and the vital role that meeting with our brothers and sisters in small groups plays. This can be in groups such as home fellowship groups, the worship team, the team doing flowers or the youth group. The teaching received in church on Sundays is vital but limited by the time available. The form of the service is also not interactive and there is accordingly limited opportunity for discussing or clarifying any issue arising from the teaching. It is also possible to be a regular attendee at church but have very little interaction with any of the other members. In these times of every man and woman for himself/herself combined with an attack on any claimed absolute truth we struggle to find our identity. The answer to the questions of "Who am I?" and "Where do I belong?" is "I belong to the Body of Christ of which I am a member". Christianity involves a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Saviour, but it is not a private religion. As we come into a relationship with Christ we are brought into community with fellow Christians and with His church as members of Trinity.

After looking at worship and fellowship we looked at **discipleship**. Often we think of our Christianity as an important part of who we are rather than everything we are. God does not want just a portion of our schedule; He wants us to serve Him all the time. Narcissism places us at the centre of a circle in with segments representing different aspects of our life (family, work, recreation etc.) in which we may allow God one of the segments. We are called to place God at the centre of the circle so that He radiates into every segment of our life. We focused on Romans 12:1-2 - Eugene Petersen paraphrases this passage from Romans as follows: "1-2 So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted

to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out." Paul tells us not to conform any longer to the pattern of this world but to be "...transformed by the renewing of your mind". The transformation comes through the supernatural work of His Holy Spirit. Discipleship is not a self-help programme for improving personal spiritual performance: the transforming change comes from God."

Lastly we looked at **Mercy Ministry**. The prophecy of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25: 34-40 does not teach salvation by works. The essence of the passage is that God wants us to show active compassion through service. This is one of the surest signs that we have been saved by His grace. It is evidence of our gratitude for the grace that has been given to us.

While there are good reasons for showing mercy Jesus gave us the purest and truest motive for mercy – "Do it for Me." Ministry of mercy requires the identification of needs as well as a commitment to meet the needs in the compassion of Christ. This often seems an overwhelming and impossible task. The needs are so great and never-ending that we feel as individuals, and as a congregation, that we can make little impact. We must never be put off by this feeling. We should move to identify needs that we can meet.

We requested that you provide feedback and thoughts on the series and the teaching that has taken place. Thank you to those who have already provided their inputs. Some of you may still be thinking about the series and some groups are still meeting to discuss the last sessions of the series. Please mail your thoughts and inputs to me when available. gordonhay@tci.co.za

Gordon Hay – Session Clerk

JESUS LOVES YOU

On Saturday the 18th June a joint healing seminar was held for the Anglican and Presbyterian congregations led by the Rev David Hutt.

David opened his presentation with the words "healing and salvation are from the same root", "nothing will happen to me outside the will of God", "primary healing is our relationship with God", "be reconciled with God" and then asked us to answer the question – "am I OK with God?"

The challenge for us was to examine our church life to determine whether we:

- Recognise healing as being holistic, focussing on healing the broken relationship between man and God caused by sin;

- Develop disciples rather than members through inclusivity rather than exclusivity;
- Recognise that our authority rests in the Word of God and that through this we have authority;
- Accept that authority implies obedience; and
- Acknowledge that Jesus is in our Church.

Fundamental to the teaching is that God loves each one of us, believes in us and wants to heal His people.

David emphasised that we understand that:

- Jesus paid the price (atoned) completely for our sin both committed and will commit;
- We have faith in God and must develop within that faith;

- We have a God that heals but we must play our part through proper diet and exercise;
- We must be obedient to God's will living a good clean life; and
- Faith never waits to believe, we must just do it!!

The empowering role of the Holy Spirit is important in the healing ministry and David took us through the various aspects of Holy Spirit's empowering:

- When we are born again, nothing will separate us from Christ, we are in a relationship with Christ, so be careful not to put things of men in the way!!
- We should constantly, even daily, be filled with the Holy Spirit. We are conduit pipes for the Holy Spirit to others.
- The gifts of the Holy Spirit are to restore the church to what it should be. Pentecost empowers us to be witnesses for Christ.
- In response to Jesus' purpose to make disciples to change the world we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to make disciples.

Critical emphasis by David is the healing of relationships through the following steps:

- Forgiveness: God's forgiveness is unconditional because of what Jesus has done for us at the cross. However there is a close connection between our forgiving others and our experience of God's forgiveness. We make sure there is no gulf between me and another person – do it today!! Don't have an

unfinished conversation. We need a contrite heart, filled with remorse wanting to make right but not knowing how. The Jesus within me is big enough to do it.

- Repentance: Go back to before as if nothing had happened. Do something about it.
- Restoration: First there must be forgiveness and repentance for restoration to take place.
- Renewal: flows from forgiveness, repentance and restoration.
- Love, peace and joy: the beautiful outcome.

Having set the scene David took us through a practical teaching on Christian counselling prayer and anointing.

A practical demonstration related to his analogy of a Christian being either a bucket or a pipe. A bucket receives preaching and teachings until they overflow. A pipe is a conduit for the work of Jesus through the empowering Holy Spirit to make disciples in obedience to His will.

In conclusion David reminded us that Jesus said "If you love me you will know me". For Jesus loves you.

The concluding question and challenge "Will others see Jesus in me?"

This seminar was followed by a blessed joint church service on Trinity Sunday the 19th June, at which service Rev David Hutt preached the sermon and led the congregation in prayers for healing.

Malcolm Brown

SENIORS' FUNCTION

Our winter Seniors' Function is scheduled for Saturday 23rd July - A time to get together for fun and fellowship. Let the office know that you will be coming! Tel 012 348 9469

WEDDING:

Albie Oelofse and Anne Gurney were married at Trinity on the 14th May. It was a very special celebration. Congratulations to you both! Albie and Anne have both been part of the worship group for many years. After they had taken their marriage vows, they joined the group as Mr and Mrs Oelofse to sing one of their favourite songs.



A FOND "TOTSIENS"

Sally-Rae Upman was a sparkling part of our Trinity Family for many years. In the last while she was involved in our youth ministry as well as our singing group. Recently we said 'totsiens' to her as she left for New Zealand and a job in the film industry there. Of course we were sad to see her go, but she went with our prayers and our love. We enjoy news of her from her Mom, Rene Walker and know that those she meets in New Zealand will be blessed.

