

Church Matters

Keeping a link with the Sydney congregation



Living and Sharing the Gospel

June 2015

John Pemberton Retires from Preaching

After the May 9th service the Sydney congregation expressed its appreciation to **John Pemberton** for well over 20 years of preaching.

In the early 90's he began giving sermonettes, then split sermons, then sermons. John had recently decided that it was time to retire from this responsibility. **Rod Dean** commented "It takes a lot of mental, emotional and spiritual energy to prepare a sound gospel message and to sincerely present it to the edification of a congregation. It doesn't get easier. It remains a challenge every time. So we are always grateful for those who put themselves under that responsibility."

John has had many decades of service to the church in different ways. He was involved in the children's camp held in the old Tabernacle in its early years, then ran his own children's camp in the Collaroy Conference Centre in the 1970's (with the **Van Heere's** as cooks).

He began worship leading in the 70's, but it was known as "conducting hymns" at that time. He will continue as a proficient Worship Leader. His humour is enjoyed by the congregation.

He and **Robyn** were asking that something be provided in the way of Bible sessions for children, so **John Halford** suggested that they put something together, and from that began the Sabbath School sessions. This was before the YES lessons were available. When YES lessons were introduced, John was one of the teachers/tutors.



He and **Murray Morrison** ran the Touch Footy competitions. These were major events with teams from all over Australia.

Rod Dean said: "John has always shown a deep desire to present the word of God faithfully. He has read widely and checked what he was saying against sound teachers. And this was done during a time of great change and upheaval for our congregations. Yet John continued faithfully in this service. He has earned the respect from us all for a job well done."

John in reply acknowledged that coming into the church motivated him to study the Bible which he had never done before age 30. It was a profound change and one which continues to this day.



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We are now into the budget preparation period for 2015-16.

Overseas mission has been a major focus for our area. We wish to continue to support where God is working. This has required communication with various mission developers around the world to determine what are the priorities in their region and how we can share with them these responsibilities.

Budget Period

Back in 2012 **Joe Tkach** wrote:

We don't serve others to show them something about us, but to show them something about them. When we help the poor and outcasts we let them know that they do matter and that they are included in God's love, no matter who they are or what they have done.

We have to work sustainably. Because of changing local situations this means making adjustments so that each congregation is giving within its means.

We have also just completed our donations for this financial year:

\$3,000 from Wollongong and \$3,000 from Sydney was sent to **Kalengule Kaoma** to continue the development of the Kenyan school. (See article on page 2)

Wollongong has also put \$5,000 into the PNG fund to assist the next PNG trip in July. Blankets for the men's haus and cement for construction of toilets and showers have already been purchased. Canberra has also committed to pay \$5,000 this year and \$5,000 next year for travelling costs.

\$2,000 was sent from Sydney immediately to help **Deben Sam** in disaster relief in Nepal. A total of just over \$3,000 was raised from appeals in Sydney and Wollongong. There will be on-going needs since in the first quake 6 pastors' houses and 157 believers' houses and one church completely collapsed and 5 believers killed. There are more reports to be received. We haven't got the full details of the aftermath of the second quake.

\$3,300 has been sent from Sydney to continue the education of the children in Buduburam. Another \$800 has been sent for grain. The church recently had their 5th anniversary celebration.

Another \$3,000 will be sent to Nepal to support missionaries. That will complete the overseas mission budget for 2014-5.



The Fullness of God

Ulladulla 2015

"And to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."
(Ephesians 3:19)



At the centre of the Christian faith is a great reality about God. It is a reality that has been demonstrated to us in the coming of Jesus.

Gary Deddo wrote:

God is a fellowship kind of God—a communion kind of God. God is not just a lonely being floating out there from all eternity "looking for someone to love." God is the fullness of holy love, the fullness of fellowship and communion. Bringing it all together, we can say the Father and Son have their fellowship and communion in the Spirit.

This God of love, fellowship and communion is very different than an isolated individual God who can't love until there's something else outside of God to love...

There was a time when nothing other than God existed and the Holy Spirit was perfectly happy being the Spirit of the Father and the Son. The Spirit doesn't need us to be the Spirit. There was a time when there was no creation. At that time God was the fullness of fellowship in Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

This is why we can say with John, "God is love." And we can see what Jesus means and why he says he loves the Father and the Father has loved him from all eternity. It makes sense then that Jesus tells us that as the Father has loved him, so he loves us. And further, that as he has loved us, so we ought to love one another. No wonder then that the ways of the people of God can be comprehensively summed up in the two commands to love God and love neighbour.

It is this fullness that we see in Jesus. To understand our relationship to God now the early church put it this way:

The Holy Spirit is like light that shines. And the Holy Spirit shines light on the face of Jesus who has an actual, flesh and blood human face. And when the Holy Spirit's light shines on the face of Jesus, what do we see mirrored in the face of Jesus? The invisible face of the Father. Isn't that a beautiful thing?

When we finally are completed through the resurrection there will be no hindrance to participate in the fullness of the Father, Son in the Holy Spirit. Today we can enjoy the firstfruits of that life and we will be sharing that during this festival.

²⁰"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." (Ephesians 3:20-21)

This year again the Ulladulla festival will be held at the Highway Christian Church. However, it will start with a service on Monday afternoon September 28th at 3.00 pm and run through to Monday October 5th.

School Project

The school is in Manyera, (Migori district, Kenya) near the border of Tanzania and Kenya.

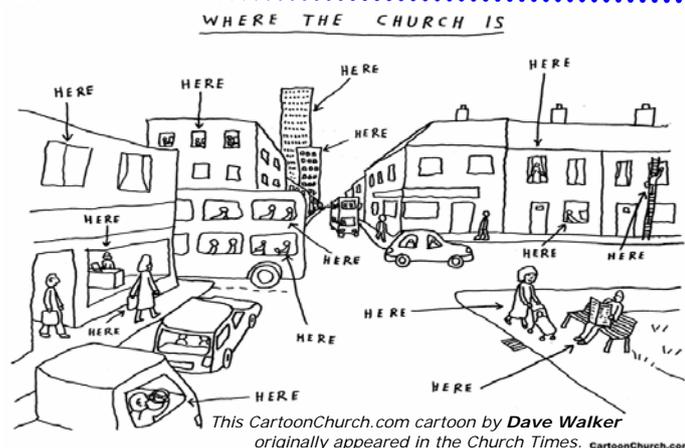
1. School Construction

School construction has been going very slowly. This was due to flooding, the builder moving away and insufficient funds. The builder has returned and the buildings are ready for roofing. These buildings will house six class rooms out of projected nine classrooms, staff room and computer room.



2. Orphans and widows

The primary school we are supporting is mainly made up of orphans. There are over 300 pupils from preschool to eighth grade. Besides educating orphans, the school feeds them once a day at school.



Among some guardians are a group of widows. These assisted widows include grandmothers and great grandmothers. Primary assistance is towards food supplements. Secondary assistance is clothing. Both widow and orphan groups are also assisted medically whenever there is a need.

Kalengule wrote:

Just a note to let you know that I am adjusting my travel schedule to Uganda in the middle of June. The adjustment is to include a short visit to Kenya. This proposed detour would enable me to check on the progress of school construction project.

Based on his report, this project will be included in our 2015-2016 budget.

... More on Web.