

The background of the cover is a close-up, artistic photograph of an hourglass. The top bulb is partially visible at the top, and the bottom bulb is larger and filled with dark sand. The narrow neck of the hourglass is in the center. The lighting is warm and golden, creating a soft glow and highlighting the texture of the sand and the glass. The overall mood is contemplative and timeless.

LIFE matters

Volume 1

Issue 1

FAMILY MATTERS

Now and then

TRUE FREEDOM

The problem of goodness

SINKING OR SWIMMING

Thriving in turmoil

CHANGING TIMES

you're Invited...

SON SEEKERS

children's ministry material

WHO: Children aged 4 - 12

WHEN: 11.00am each Sunday
(excluding School Holidays)



WHERE: Perth Christian Fellowship
189 Midland Road
Hazelmere
9274 3920

Please join us for a wonderful time of learning what the Bible has to say about your life today. At Sonseekers we build friendships, listen to Bible stories, play games, make fun crafts, eat yummy snacks, and find true Life.

Please contact us on (08) 9274 3920 if you have any questions. We hope to see you soon! We would love to meet your family and friends too. At Perth Christian Fellowship we have something for everybody!

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The problem of goodness



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A Christian perspective on global warming



Sinking or Swimming

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Editorial

This past decade has ushered in an incredible age of unprecedented change. Progress in human learning and achievement is exploding on every hand but where is it taking us?

In a recent TV interview former Australian Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, questioned how a society could advance so dramatically in technical achievement yet be so bereft of social sensitivity. A bleak commentary from one generally so optimistic in his outlook. It seems that recent advances in knowledge have not advanced our capacity to behave ourselves.

The bible says that 'righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.' How is it then

that we can begin to address this reproach, this 'bad behaviour,' as a society and ultimately as individuals?

This first issue of *Life Matters* seeks to address this question in some small way, featuring a number of articles by people who are finding new levels of peace and security proving God's power to change.

We trust you will be challenged and blessed as you read this publication.

Yours in Christ

Stephen Brett

Perth Christian Fellowship



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family matters

by Jenny Gale

Often I reflect about how life has changed in my lifetime in only 40 years. Back in my childhood there seemed a settledness in life. Families didn't seem to need to have it all to keep up in life. This was a view from the eyes of a child but it did seem life was so much simpler.

I remember clearly my childhood and the freedom that came with it. The hours as children we spent riding around the neighbourhood, trekking through the nearby bush, building cubbies high up in our neighbour's trees, getting dirty making mud pies. The endless baking with Mum perched on the bench eager to help in any way needed. We had a freedom to roam in and out of our friends' houses and always seemed welcome. Society seemed so much more open, much less stressed enabling time for relationships. As long as we came home for our dinner on time all was well.

I am now a mother myself and have three young children. I can't help but see how life is so different. I don't feel that my kids have the same freedom to simply be children. Technology is ever increasing and, though bringing many good things, can trap children to their computer screens, televisions and a life in-doors. I also feel the media can bring a call for our children to grow up far too

soon in their dress, social activities and mindsets. The fear and perhaps the incidence of stranger danger is far more prevalent causing us to guard our children carefully.

Society has changed somewhat, getting busier. I have realized as a mother that I need to be careful that the anxiety and busy-ness that modern day life seems to bring does not inhibit my family. I can't change the changing times but I can ensure that I give my children every opportunity to be children. That they may grow up in a settled home that provides them every opportunity life has to offer, not choked by the hectic pace that life can bring.

In this I have found I need to trust in the Lord for His provision for my family. I know that God has a plan and purpose for us. This is very settling in itself to know God has His hand on my family. That as life changes around me I know God cares for us.

Change is inevitable, bringing with it the good and the bad, but, the love of our Heavenly father is unchanging. This is a rock for me in uncertainty and in the busy-ness of life. His love is teaching me to live life simply, trusting in God, not swayed here and there by the winds of change.



TRUE FREEDOM

by Tim Maurice

IT IS FOR FREEDOM'S SAKE THAT CHRIST MADE US FREE. IF WE FIND THE LIGHT OF FELLOWSHIP, WE CAN BE FREED FROM THE DISTORTIONS OF OUR OWN DARKNESS. THIS IS TRUE FREEDOM.

The freedom to walk in the light and find the will of God is available to all who confess Christ. What then are the impediments? If we are honest, we will have to admit that the right to hold onto our own assessments of life is a right we desperately do not want to relinquish. It is the last kingdom we feel we have. There we can still retreat to the exclusion of all other voices. There it is that our own decrees reign supreme - our judgments, our ideas, our perceptions of God.

But it is not to that kind of castle that we are supposed to retreat. The name of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous run into it and are safe. Our only safety comes from running quickly, we might almost say recklessly, into the kingdom of light.

Our own darkness is too strong to be fought alone, for its roots are the very tissue of our consciousness. That is why redemption is not only a moral cleansing, it involves, as Paul said, the renewing of our minds. We must re-learn how to see with the eyes of love, to read people with a mind reborn. Otherwise, all we do is adapt the understanding of God into our inherited mindset.

'It is for freedom's sake that Christ has made us free.' We can all be free from the need to be vindicated in this life. There is only one who was justified in all that he did, only one who justifies all men; only one who is worthy to call himself and his actions 'good'. We, on the other hand, cannot produce a jot of goodness.

The only good is God. This is the shaft of light that must pierce our darkness. To acknowledge that Christ is my Saviour is not the same as laying aside my own view of life. The two should coincide. Very often they don't. Which is another way of saying that it takes us a long time to learn humility.

For it is humility — the complete abasement of our own assessments and thought processes - that opens the way to freedom. Even Christ, who was God in the flesh, had to humble Himself. How did He do it? The Bible says that He ‘emptied himself’ (Phil 2:7). He divested Himself of all personal rights. He only thought and said what the Father thought and said. Here is the sum of all fellowship

**The light of fellowship,
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carnal mechanism.**

and all light. The Son of God, sinless as He was, did not try to shine with the light of His own glory. He was motivated completely by the desire to reveal the glory of another.

This was the illumination necessary for Peter’s reconciliation. ‘When you were younger,’ Christ said to him, ‘you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished.’ When we are immature Christians, this is the way we walk - loaded with good intentions, but walking nevertheless according to our own lights. But then we are called to depart from living this way. Jesus went on to say to Peter what we all must hear: ‘But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and

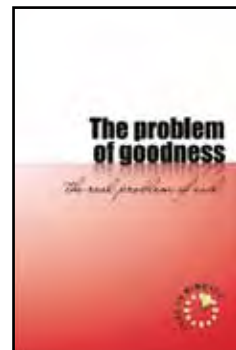
carry you where you do not wish.’ At some point we must grow up. The sign of maturity as a Christian is that we have relinquished the pursuit of our own life, having become content to reveal only the life of Christ.

Jesus may have been talking of the manner of Peter’s death, but His message reaches far beyond that physical death. We must all die to self completely and place ourselves in the hands of others—of Christ and of our brothers and sisters. Christ gave Himself into the hands of the Father and the Holy Spirit. The light of fellowship, which dispels our darkness, is the complete antidote to the insatiable demands of our inner, carnal mechanism.

This is freedom indeed. And this is light. By this will all men know that we are disciples of the living God. ■

Excerpt from ‘The problem of goodness’ by Tim Maurice.

The full booklet may be obtained from VisionOne.org.au.





GLOBAL WARNING

by Stephen Watson

There has never been a period in history that has seen such a focus on environmental issues as the present. A recent poll by the BBC World Service, the largest poll on environmental issues to date, indicates that 68% of people worldwide now believe that climate change is a very serious issue demanding immediate action by governments. What is the Christian perspective on an issue of such importance to so many people around the globe?

The Christian view of the natural world is perhaps summed up in Psalm 8 and verse 6 of the bible, which says 'You put us in charge of everything you made, giving us authority over all things.' The Christian believes that God has placed mankind in a position of both responsibility and accountability toward the use of the world's resources and the management of the environment.

This view is further articulated in Chapter 1 and Verse 28 of Genesis where it says "God blessed them and told them, "Multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. Be masters

over the fish and birds and all the animals." And God said, "Look! I have given you the seed-bearing plants throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. And I have given all the grasses and other green plants to the animals and birds for their food." God's intention was to provide for all his creation, people and animals, and to present mankind with the opportunity to exercise accountable stewardship of the natural environment.

Most Christian people today are acutely aware that selfishness, which the bible calls sin, has both directly and indirectly contributed to many of the environmental and social problems currently plaguing the world - of which climate change is just one pressing issue. Sin puts personal interest before love for others, and obedience to God's call to exercise accountability toward the natural environment. As a result of sin our society maintains a thin veneer of corporate and political accountability toward God's creation, which is often only just sufficient to mask the true intention of man's

sinful heart - to serve self-interest. A commitment to allowing the 'free' market and democratic political process to self-regulate toward favourable environmental and social outcomes will never result in man fulfilling God's purpose toward others and His creation - because the issue of sin is not dealt with.

Some have blamed Christian thought for many of the world's environmental issues, stating that mankind's 'authority' over the earth is resulting in its destruction. The closely aligned world views of naturalism and pantheism are offered by many as substitutes to Christian thought. In the pantheistic world view, all of nature is equal because 'all is god and god is all'. Mankind ultimately has no more value than the leaf from a tree, since it is the whole of nature that has meaning - while the individual details of nature do not have intrinsic meaning or value. In contrast, the Christian believes that although God is creator, the creation is not a quintessential part of His identity. While pantheism attempts to engender a care for God's creation, it still fails to deal with the issue of sin as the root cause for all exploitative and destructive behaviour.

So we see that the source of much of our ecological crisis lies in man's sinful nature and resultant abuse of his dominion. In contrast, there are many examples throughout Christian scripture of how God's people are to

live sustainably, treat the environment with respect, treat animals with care, and generally care for creation even where this requires extra effort. In short, God intends his people to relate to his creation with integrity, and without exploiting it merely for selfish gain.

At the same time, the Christian recognizes that the earth is not intended to be a place of permanent habitation. Putting aside issues of environmental exploitation, it is still as if the earth is 'groaning' under the weight of being 'subdued' by mankind. Man has certainly 'multiplied and filled the earth' according to God's mandate, resulting in a stretch of resources in many areas. While the environmental movement is concerned with trying to preserve the planet forever, the Christian recognizes that the earth is simply a place where God's plan is being outworked at this present time. There are many passages in Christian scripture which indicate that the earth, along with the entire created realm, will be consumed to make way for a 'new heaven and a new earth'. Rather than trying to preserve the earth forever, the Christian person maintains an attitude of accountable stewardship toward creation, all the while looking toward a new expression of God's creative plan for mankind through eternity. ■

A Senior's Moment Grace for Life

MARK BLAYDEN

Many people can remember times when, in great personal distress, they cried out to God and he answered. This might be called 'grace for crisis'.

If however, our only relationship with God is at the point of crisis then we have two serious problems.

Firstly, over time our attitude becomes one of presumption. Proverbs 13:10 tells us that the only thing that comes from presumption is strife. God does desire to give us grace but not on the basis of presumption.

The second point is that God actually desires to give us grace for living. Grace to be more than conquerors in this world, grace to face the tyranny of age and weariness of loneliness.

In Acts 13 we see the apostles encouraging Christians to continue living in the grace of God. Later we hear that we are to be heirs of the grace for life.

Christ laid his life down for us so that our suffering might become our participation with Him. This is true grace. Through this 'grace for living', when our race is run, we can boldly declare: 'death where is your victory, where is your sting?'

Hey Mums!

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By Taylor Watson

Just 4 Kids is all about fun, and the Bible. Here you can learn more about Jesus Christ, His disciples, and other cool stuff while playing games and doing activities. So grab your brothers and sisters, Mum or Dad and come and have fun together with Just 4 Kids!

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT WORD SEARCH

The Fruits of the Spirit are the qualities that God grows inside us. Try and see if you can find all of the Fruits of the Spirit in the word search below.

G O O D N E S S K S D E R P G
Z Z P E S J P V S M C L L A Z
F Q F A K E N E D O U K O T I
H K X J A C N F R O M O R I M
E T I C H E S I X J E A T E X
S S E N L U F H T I A F N N Q
Y Y J T D I E V O L C M O C B
G O N L J N Z F U S Y Q C E U
G E J B I T B N A J G J F R E
G X N A U I S S I N L S L M S
Z Y R X G Z I A S D T A E D K
N F C D O P U Q O F I I S X I
S A Q E P M Z E M E D H X H C
S A Z X O P Y E M X C R J E Q
J S C H O X P W K T E B O P X

Faithfulness

Goodness

Peace

Joy

Patience

Self Control

Gentleness

Kindness

Love

Next Edition: Crossword



SINKING OR SWIMMING

by Jeff Baldock

“Come gather ‘round people
wherever you roam
And admit that the waters around
you have grown.....
Then you’d better start swimmin’ or
you’ll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin’”

Bob Dylan’s famous “The Times Are A-Changin’” predicted the massive social changes of the mid and late 20th Century. He warned that a flood of change would soon overtake us. We should start to swim or we would sink in the waters of rebellion, change and challenge that were rising.

His anthem was certainly a song for and of its times.

But change has always been upon us. Today, technological, legal, moral, ethical, physical, cultural, and religious change is happening at a rate probably faster than in Dylan’s time.

Some change can readily be accepted and even sought out. Some is not so keenly anticipated and may even be

feared. Some change is for the better. Some is for the worse – depending on your point of view.

Two things are certain:

1. Change will occur, much of it not of our making, and most of it beyond our control.
2. We will be affected by these waters of change. Whether we try to hide, or whether we fiercely work to protect our personal and family borders, changing times will impact our lives.

Any amount of planning, effort and self-control can never insulate us. So, how do we find reality? How to survive – even thrive – and grow in maturity from what’s being experienced?

The Bad News, I’ve discovered, is that my effort will never be enough of its own. I may try to control everything around me, but that will only lead to frustration and defeat.

The Good News is that, while I can’t do it by myself, I do have Someone Who loves me and has prepared a

way for me to not only survive but to thrive.

As a Christian I know the wonder of truly swimming in the midst of turmoil and the unknown – but not in my own strength. When I've attempted to survive, using whatever tactics help me to allay my fear of loss of control, I soon become exhausted from trying to keep my head above water. That sinking feeling begins in

The turmoil and pain of living are not removed. But here is grace, power, and capacity for joy and life that cannot be found elsewhere.

the pit of the stomach, and I feel like I'm going under for the third time.

Conversely, I know from deep experience that there is a place of peace and rest in the midst of turmoil. It's only found as I trust in the Love of God – a God who nurtures, provides and cares beyond my capacity to fathom, but not my ability to experience.

This is not some monastic experience, lived in fantasy, withdrawn from reality. Nor is it masochistic – the greater my pain, the 'better' I must be!

Life as a Christian is all that it claims to be when I get out of the way –

when there is less of me and my life is directed to another - to Christ.

Then I'm living as I was created to live. I don't lose my identity; I'm not some sort of 'spiritual robot'. I am being the person I was created to be. The turmoil and pain of living are not removed. But here is grace, power, and capacity for joy and life that cannot be found elsewhere.

“So far, you have faced no trial beyond human endurance; God keeps faith and will not let you be tested beyond your powers; but when the test comes He will at the same time provide a way out and so enable you to endure” 1 Cor 10:13 (REB).

But it's not all just about God and me. This is because the gospel is not about me receiving His life only for my own personal journey, making me a better person, handling change more maturely and growing from it.

Godly change enables me to receive and share with others the one life which is His. This happens as I give myself to Him and His people (Romans 12:1), lay aside my independence, and identify with other sons of God.

This then is the full provision of God's change process. ■

That's personal

by Joslyn Brett

'Truth is stranger than fiction' the old adage goes. I've heard it said that this is why it's harder to believe than the lies that reassure, secure and, even if just in our minds, protect us.

Whether it's someone telling me something about myself that I wasn't aware of (or worse, something I didn't want to know) or even an encouraging word from a friend (telling me that I do look good in that dress), if someone is challenging a long-held belief I will struggle to 'buy that truth'.

As women, our "truth" is usually the catalyst for the emotional roller coaster we sometimes find ourselves on. Life "happens" and no amount of discussion will convince me of the truth – that I don't need to worry about my job, the kids, the house, next week, next year, and the list goes on – I won't change my mind on what is the "truth" for me right here and now. And the roller coaster ride, with its highs and lows, can last for some time.

When I reflect upon my early years as a Christian I can't help but notice my emotional immaturity. Granted, I was young, but thinking about it, I never matured in this area, even with the passing of twenty years.

I grew up "in church" knowing that God can do anything, constantly praying for change in my life. And, while I firmly

believe that "nothing is impossible for God", looking at the changes I see in my life proves to me that the only thing that brings true change is His Word (or truth) being made flesh in me.

We sing a song that has the line "I'm ruled by revelation, not fooled by false emotion" which has been my testimony as to the difference I see between who I was, even five years ago, and who I am now. Believing the truth of His Word, despite how I feel (while the melodramatic voice in my head tries to tell me to believe the lie I've "known" to be the "truth" all of my life), has been the thing that has brought emotional maturity – not praying for the Lord to "make it better" without any initiative on my part to see change.

Looking back, I cried a lot – and interestingly, most of the time in church. I think I saw crying as a more spiritual response. However I see now how my constancy in believing His (God's) truth is a significantly more godly response.

My emotional "ride" involved a lot of crying and sadness. And the journey to the "truth" involved more of the same, however it was a series of moment by moment decisions – not always making the right one, but persevering despite failures - which led to finding reality.

And while it's not that I've learned to suppress my emotions or that I no longer get upset by life's circumstances, I've come to realise that I don't need to be dictated to by my emotions – I can respond to situations based on the truth of who I am in Him (God), knowing that I'm accepted.

Who we are

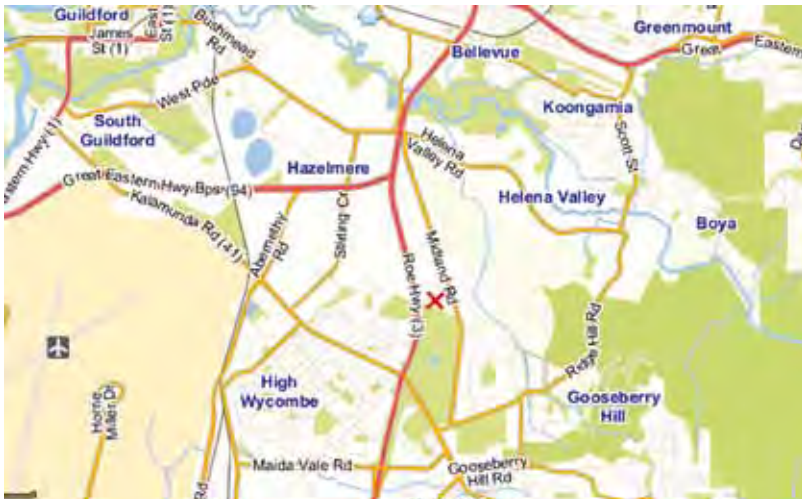
Perth Christian Fellowship is a community based group who meet together to share in the hope of the unity of the body of Christ. That hope is expressed in the broader sense by our close ties with a stream of Christian Fellowships across the country including an active connection to churches in Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia and Pakistan.

We believe that God has a plan for everyone and that the gospel is able to restore each person to that plan by embracing the message of the bible. Every individual is encouraged to express themselves in fellowship, prayer and worship in song for the building up of the church as a whole.

We value family life, believing that God seeks to bless every home and see each individual established in the Life of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and to see that Life overflowing to the Church and the wider community.

You are most welcome to join with us.

Communion Service every Sunday at 9.30 am
Perth Christian Fellowship
189 Midland Road, Hazelmere



A place for you at PCF

Communion Service

9.30 am every Sunday

Our Sunday Communion Service is an opportunity for all to gather and express the life of Christ in Word, Testimony and Song. We have no restricted membership and invite all who believe in Christ to participate in the communion elements with us.

Bible Study

11.15 am every Sunday

Our bible study sessions run weekly on Sunday mornings. In this time we look at historical aspects of the bible and their practical application to our daily life, with a view to encourage each one in walking the life of a Christian.

Sunday School

11.00 am every Sunday

Our 'Sonseekers' kids programme runs every Sunday during school term. All kids aged 4 to 12 are welcome. We learn about people in the bible and build friendships through games, songs, creative craft and exciting stories.

Home Group

7.30 pm on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month Maida Vale & Gwelup

Home Group meetings are run as a context for families to participate in a further expression of the communion life we share. The emphasis at these meetings is on "breaking down" the communion word to facilitate a more complete understanding and application.

Christian Women's Fellowship

7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month

Christian Women's Fellowship is a group of women of all ages committed to Christ. Our vision is to see every woman at the heart of church and family life, sharing and finding genuine friendship together. Our gatherings are an expression of the unique life of faith and fellowship that we share together as women.

Coffee, Craft & Chat

10.00 am every Wednesday

Ladies of all ages are welcome to join us for craft, sewing, knitting or just a chat. Morning tea is provided and for those with young children there is a playground.

Phone 9274 3920 for more information.