

LIFE matters

Volume 1

Issue 2

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?
Finding your place

A QUESTION OF IDENTITY
Filling an identity gap

THE SOURCE OF TRUE IDENTITY
Giving to discover

FINDING IDENTITY



A stylized graphic of a sun with rays in shades of orange and yellow, partially obscured by a white and yellow cloud. The background is a solid orange color.

What love is this...
Good Friday Meeting
2 April at 9.30am

Come celebrate with us
Easter Sunday Meeting
4 April at 9.30am

come, celebrate life...

A graphic of three dark blue crosses of varying heights and widths, set against a blue background.

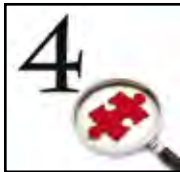
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A Question of Identity

Filling an identity gap



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Editorial

To look for something, it's necessary to look in the right place!

But secondly, it's important to look with eyes that see what is real and what is not.

At this time, many in our society look here and there in an intense search to discover true identity. What has always been freely available and clearly before us, can often be what is seen last.

In this 2nd Issue of 'Life Matters', published by Perth Christian Fellowship, we explore the human need to understand and know who we are; the important search for identity.

For those who share their experiences and thoughts in this issue, the miraculous has happened!

Self-focused desperation to 'find myself' has been replaced with a settled understanding of 'who I am' as individual identity is found and established in Christ, and consolidated and outworked in the church.

We trust that you will be challenged and blessed as you read this publication, as these are not theoretical words, but expressions of life found and lived day-to-day.

Jeff Baldock

Perth Christian Fellowship



a question of identity

by Jenny Gale

I was struck recently by an ad on the television that said 'life is full of questions'. I thought to myself, "this is so true". From the minute we are born our parents, extended family and friends question "who will this child be?" and "what will they be like?". Then, when we are old enough, we too ask "who I am?" and "who will I be?". We begin the quest to find our identity and where we belong in life.

I often think that I have asked more questions in life than others. As a small baby I was put up for adoption, as my birth parents felt unable to take on the responsibility of a baby at that time in their life. So I was adopted into a new family. A family that loved and cared for me deeply. A new life had begun for me.

I remember having a lovely book called 'Why was I adopted'. It gave many good insights and certainly helped me, as a child, understand on a superficial level what being adopted was all about. I had a happy childhood and have a wonderful relationship with my adoptive parents.

But still there were many unanswered questions within me.

I felt a gap existed deep within me that I could not fill. I lacked a true sense of belonging and settledness in who I was. I have gone through life sometimes unaware

of these things, but at other times they have been ever before me not to be shaken away easily. Unfortunately, I do not have one of those fairytale stories that you see on TV of a great uniting of parent and child - a joyful reunion was not to be for me. This left me with many unanswered questions and a residual feeling of rejection that is common for an adopted person to feel.

There was an answer for me. I gave my life seriously to Jesus Christ in my early 20s. This has been, and is, the pathway for me to find out who I am - my true identity. The main thing I have learnt is that I can never find answers to the question of who I am in my own striving and understanding - I have a name and a place that has been predestined by my Heavenly Father for me. It goes far beyond that which is simply earthly. It is here that I am finding a place to belong and a life to live. I have held dear a scripture found in Psalms in the bible. '...I am fearfully and wonderfully made... My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place... your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.' (Ps 139:14-16)

As I continue on in life I still have the thought that I wished maybe things had been different. But now I can know that my life has been, and is, held in the hands of my Heavenly Father. There is no other place I would rather be found. 3



who do you think you are?

by Stephen Brett

This question can be posed with very contrasting motives. Perhaps aggressively, to put us in our place or conversely, encourage us to find our place.

Either way WHO is our focus here. Who represents the sense we have about our own identity. It's this sense of identity that governs the way we think and subsequently the way we behave. The Bible says "as a man thinks in his heart so he is." (Prov 23:7) The pattern of our behaviour pretty much reflects what we think of ourselves.

While it is not as definitive as this, we can, in the main, divide human responses into two categories. There are those who wear their heart on their sleeve so to speak, so it's not too difficult to see where they're coming from. What you see is what you get we often say. But is it? Sometimes a colourful exterior is just compensating for feelings of underlying insecurity.

On the other hand, feelings of inferiority are what dogs the so called strong silent type. He guards his opinion lest it be rejected.

These are basic common responses to most of us and the effects of our compensations trigger all sorts of negative reactions which essentially become part of our culture – some one else has to pay. This then becomes a lifestyle issue, born out in our incapacity to relate one to another. So I'll be offended when I'm rejected, angry when I lose control, ashamed when I fail, envious when I'm beaten and so on.

The overriding consideration in our response is how will this affect me. We become desensitized to the needs of others. We see this on a much broader scale in our society.

Whether it's a global banking executive rorting the system, the misdemeanours of a sporting icon, an



unaccountable politician, violence in a school yard and so on, what remains apparent is someone else has to pay.

We cannot contrive a good sense of identity or legislate to introduce higher levels of sensitivity in our society, so what is the answer, if indeed we want one?

Part of the human condition is that life can emerge out of loss. This is the nature and process of all seed life... 'except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die it remains alone, but if it dies it produces much fruit.'

The 2nd century Bishop of Lyon, Irenaeus is noted for saying that 'the glory of God is a man fully alive.' A man fully alive is a man full of the glory of God. For us the definition of glory in this context is identity fully expressed in line with who we are meant to be.

Interestingly, the Bible says that there is no glory (no expression of true identity) without suffering. (Rom 8:17) This is where we could lose interest. What does suffering have to do with me regaining a sense of identity?

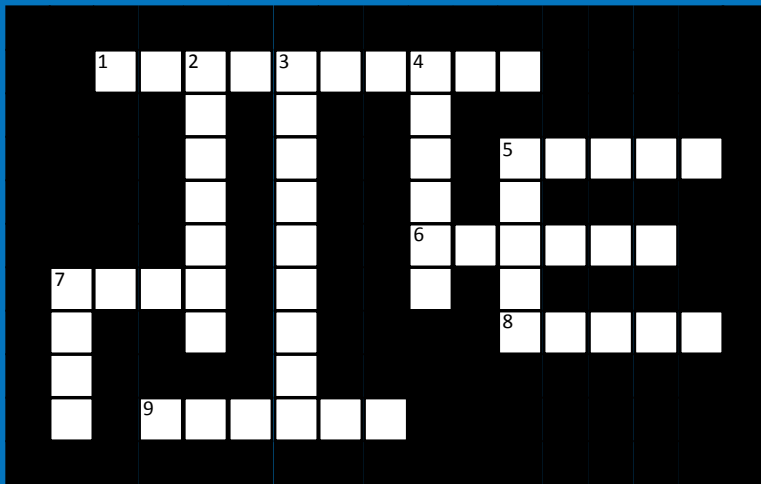
Part of the human condition is that life can emerge out of loss. This is the nature and process of all seed life as John 12:24 affirms, 'except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die it remains alone, but if it dies it produces much fruit.'

Jesus Christ emptied Himself, died on a cross and was buried in a tomb. We too empty our flawed sense of identity, our insensitivities, in fact our whole fallen nature including our offence, shame, envy and control that we spoke of earlier, and by faith in Him we bury them.

We are now free to identify with the essence of all true identity which is Christ's life, His risen life. We now share this life and express it to others through our new found identity. This is the 'who' we are to be. ■

by Taylor Watson

Jesus' Disciples Crossword



ACROSS

1. Jesus nicknamed him 'Peter'.
5. Son of Alphaeus.
6. The brother of Simon Peter.
7. Also called Thaddaeus.
8. _____ the Zealot.
9. He is always listed fifth.

DOWN

2. First book of the New Testament.
3. The disciple who is called Bartholemew.
4. He had his doubts.
5. He betrayed Jesus.
7. The disciple who Jesus loved.

See page 13 for answers.

Next edition: Code Cracker

Family Matters

by Becky Hall

It seems to me that being a mother of young children is one of the busiest phases of life. Most of us are trying to juggle work outside the home, run a house, care for our children and 'give a bit back' to the school or local community, not to mention keep in contact with our friends and family, maintain a meaningful relationship with our husbands and fit in a bit of exercise so that we will have the energy to do it all again next week!

It can be easy to be caught in the trap of spending our days simply thinking about what we have to do next and then lying in bed at night and worrying and wishing – worrying that we didn't get enough finished at work during the day, wishing that we'd taken the time to sit and play Lego or Polly Pocket when our child asked us to, worrying that we haven't supported them enough with their school work and wishing that we hadn't got so angry and wasted the night fighting with our husband over a silly thing like the bench not being wiped down.

Sometimes I stop and think of the whole history of the world, all the mums that have lived and laughed, cooked and cared, worked and worried, and come and gone before. The 70 or so years that each of us is given is just a fleeting moment, just a little window of time and then it's gone and so are we. It fills me with the question, 'Why are we

here?'" What are we supposed to find as we journey through our days.

Isaiah 40 says, 'All flesh is grass and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades.' This is the cycle of life to which we are bound, but there is something more.

Psalm 139 tells us: 'You (God) formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You for I am fearfully and wonderfully made ... Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.'

God has a plan for us and it gathers up every facet of our life – all that we can do and say, from the practical to the profound.

I do not need to lie in bed at night filled with uncertainty or striving. I can know how and what to give priority to. I can be settled and at rest, even in the complex busyness of life. The Lord knows me. He knows my strengths and weaknesses; my abilities and shortcomings, and His plan for my life can form and shape me into exactly who He named me to be, not just for this life, but for all eternity. Then I will not be as a 'fading flower', for Ecclesiastes 3 says "Whatever God does, it shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it."

Do you know what God has planned for you?

A Senior's Moment "Getting Older"

by Ruth Gale

Have you ever looked in a mirror and wondered who that person is looking back at you? After a moment's reflection you realise that person is you. After another moment's reflection you wonder how you got to this place in such a short time.

We all know we are going to get older but nevertheless it does creep up on us with its changes and challenges.

Some changes are good. If we are fortunate enough to have grandchildren we can enjoy their unconditional love, and delight in who they are without the responsibility of bringing them up. We may find time to do things we haven't had time to do before. However, some changes are not so good. We notice physically we are not as strong. A few aches and pains appear.

As we reach 65 plus, the word 'retirement' looms large. For some, this can be a liberating time. For others, depending on circumstances, finances, and temperament, it can bring a time of adjustment that can be difficult to accept. We no longer have the social interaction of working, the satisfaction of doing a job and doing it well and the knowledge that we are making a contribution to society. In a world that almost worships youth; where technology is increasing at an enormous pace; where wisdom and experience

does not seem to be valued; where older people are being reminded that there are too many of us and we are becoming and will continue to become a drain on our country's finances, we can begin to wonder what value we have and what we can offer the world in which we live.

As I have been thinking on these things for myself, I have been reminded that the scripture tells me that God has a plan for my life and that the plan is a good plan. I am God's creation and when He created me He did so with a specific job for me to do during my life - a plan that only I can fulfil; a job that only I can do; a plan that will not be complete until I am taken from this world. So whether I am active or become inactive, there is a purpose for my life.

I have also been reminded that God watched over me as I was being formed in my mother's womb and He has promised to watch over me until my old age and grey hairs. He also tells me that the very hairs on my head are numbered, that He has my name engraved on His hand - that He will never forget me even if everyone else does. I am valuable in God's eyes.

Someone has said "We are significant not by what we do but by whose we are."

I can be confident then as I face these inevitable changes in my life that no matter what my age or my circumstances, my identity is firmly fixed in this God who created me, loves me and watches over me.

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
289 Midland Road
Hazelmere 6055
08 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!

the source of true identity

by Jeff Baldock

At this time of Easter, the thoughts of Christians turn to the sacrifice which Jesus, the Son of God, made for us. On the cross of Calvary, He knew physical and emotional pain; the torment of dealing with the weight of the sins of all mankind laid upon Him and separation from His Father as He died. From the wound in His side, blood and water flowed and a new and living way was opened.

Covenanted before time began, Jesus' sacrifice and shedding of blood on the cross of Calvary enables each of us to not only know redemption and freedom from our sins, but to love and relate in true identity - as we were created to be.

Christ's example in giving Himself to the will of His Father and sacrificing Himself so that we may find life shows how we

too can enter into His life and find true identity.

We each have a specific identity (or name) and that identity is only discovered and apprehended by giving. We do not gain identity from another person (this is emotional dependency), but neither can it be found in isolation (independence). Each of us finds life as it is 'lost' (just as Jesus did) ie laid down in order that it might be taken up in a way that is 'of God'. This is where God is found - accepting His provision of salvation; knowing Him and the fullness of His love; and entering into His life.

The more we try, as a society, to focus on individual rights and the pursuit of 'what's right for me', 'what's in it for me', and 'what about me', the more ego-centric and fragmented we become. Relationships are easily discarded and many have hundreds of 'friends' on social media but struggle to relate face to face without external stimulants.

Identity can only be described by relationship. This is how it is within the



Godhead, for each is known and seen in relation to the other. In fact, each is only seen as He is honoured, elevated and revealed by the other.

We only have life as we give it away. It is not found in self-focused striving to 'find myself'. Rather, it is in self-giving that we participate... in the same dimension of life and love as God Himself.

As we lay our lives down for others, so we are able to understand what love is, for it is manifest – made real; made alive – in us as we give. Just as blood is the fluid of life in the human being, so God's love – made available by the shedding of Jesus' blood on the

cross - is the conduit of life for us, enabling us to grow into full God-given identity.

We only have life as we give it away. It is not found in self-focused striving to 'find myself'. Rather, it is in self-giving that we participate/commune in the same dimension of life and love as God Himself.

As we believe in Jesus Christ, the shedding of His precious blood, His provision for us on the cross, and His divine naming of identity for us, then we are able to love one another. This is not an optional extra, but a command of the Lord for us.

'There's power in the blood...in the life giving blood of the Lamb.' ■



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.

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.

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.

Home Groups

7.30 pm on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month Maida Vale (08 9454 4345) & Gwelup (08 9243 7267)

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.

Phone 08 9274 3920, or email us at ask-us@pcf.org.au,
for more information.

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 6055
Phone: 08 9274 3920
Email: ask-us@pcf.org.au



Hey Mums!

Here's the Perfect equation...

music + kids + story = fun!

**...and coffee + couch multiplies
fun for mum**

PCF PlayGroup



COMING SOON in 2ND Term

Please Phone Jennifer 0414 515 630



189 MIDLAND ROAD, HAZELMERE 6055

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CHRISTIAN
FELLOWSHIP