

Pastoral Message

**CHRISTMAS
IS IT THE RIGHT DATE?**

Some mistakenly think that December 25th was the day Christ was born. The honest truth is that no one is exactly sure when Christ was born. The Bible doesn't say what the date was.

Did you know that the Apostolic and early churches did not even celebrate the birthday of Christ?

**HOW DID CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS ON
DECEMBER 25th GET STARTED?**

Many Roman Catholics would like to point to Pope Liberius, who in 354 A.D. decreed Christmas to be celebrated December 25th. In truth, it was the Roman Emperor, Constantine who declared December 25th to be Christ's birthday in the year 336 A.D. What was his reason for this? It was based on political pressure! Many zealous church members urged the decree.

Why December 25th? That day was already observed as a heathen holiday..."The feast of Saturn, birthday of the unconquered Sun." This pagan feast began two weeks of festivities which included feasting, drinking, abstention from work, special musical presentations and the exchanging of gifts.



You may remember that Constantine was the first "Christian" emperor of the Roman Empire. In 312 A.D., Constantine gave full support to Christianity and proclaimed it the official religion of the Empire. It was Constantine's desire to "Christianize" December 25th so that people would not have to lose a holiday and could honour Christ, the Light of the World instead of the pagan god Saturn and the Sun!

So Christmas revolves around a person, the Lord Jesus Christ. Christmas is a time to exalt Him and what He has done for the world, Christ is what makes Christmas special!!!



Consider why Christ makes Christmas important

The "Greatest Gift" of Christmas is Christ. Matthew 1:21 tells us why. - "...call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." Again in Matthew 1:23 we find that he was to be called EMMANUEL, which means "God with us." Christ was born of the Virgin Mary as God in human form to save us from the guilt, penalty and power of sin.

This is why the Apostle Paul referred to Christ as the "Unspeakable Gift" in 2 Corinthians 9:15.

Even the Apostle John tells us why Christ came. "The Father sent the Son (Christ) to be the Saviour of the world" and "For God so loved the world, that he GAVE his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." I John 4: 14 and John 3:16.

The doctor, Luke wrote "For unto YOU is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:1 1.

Christ is the ONLY Saviour! "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12

What makes Christmas important? It is the Lord Jesus Christ.

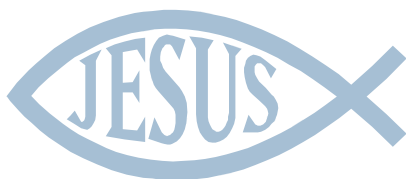
So we must honour and celebrate for Him on this given special day. We have to use it as the opportunity to share this great gospel among your people and also use it as a reverse effect. Whatsoever the unbelieving people celebrate this Christmas in the pagan ways, we can witness or share the true meaning of the Christmas to them. We may win them for Christ.

St Paul encourages us to do this. "Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:21

But I encourage you to use it at the Christmas time to do.

Christmas blessings,

Ps. Stan Grimmett



NEWS FLASH

(An excerpt from NZ flyer for Deaf New Zealanders)



Please join with us to meet Deaf Guest Speaker visiting Christchurch, New Zealand.

Ps. Laurence Hough

Ps. Laurence is a pastor and founder of Signs Church, an independent Deaf Church in Brisbane, Australia.

See <http://www.signschurch.org.au> for more information.

Friday evening, 5th December 2008

Meeting the Deaf People of Christchurch and Workshop Introduction

7.30pm to 9pm

Saturday, 6th December 2008

Workshop Theme: "Walking in the Spirit"

9.00am-4.00pm (all day)

Seaview Christian Centre, 111 Seaview Rd New Brighton, New Zealand

http://www.grace.org.nz/events/deaf_ministry_workshop



Signs Church

Report

September-December 2008

First of all, we praise God for His faithfulness and guidance during 2008. God has created us for His pleasure and for fellowshiping with Him. What He requires of us is our full-hearted worship and uncompromising faith in His Word. It's true that we live in an exciting period, a kairos time (G2540, Strong's), a season of opportunity, a strategic season to fulfil His plan.

Here are the few things that happened since the last report.

1. We welcome more new men into the fellowship and will baptise one by the time you read this report. They are keen to grow and get to know the Lord Jesus.
2. We conducted three workshops on Worship and more is planned for 2009. We hope that the participants will learn how to worship God in spirit and truth. We also taught on how to lead worship service as well as converting English songs into Auslan. We found another way (beside using drum machine) to use music in our regular services. God is worthy to be praised.
3. We welcomed two new persons to Signs Church Governing Council. Hans Peter and Karen Hollstein, formerly of South Africa had been appointed as Councillors. On a sad note, Fay Webb has resigned from the Council. She has been a loyal servant for us and we prayed she will be richly blessed in her new fellowship.
4. The building project is progressing slowly. The whole Governing Council has met with an architect recently. We confirmed we engaged an architectural firm to design several different sketches and with Ps. Laurence, negotiable with the Logan City Council regarding some regulation issues. We will post progress report on our website and when we approve the design, we will put it on the web as well as regular photo of construction. Log on to <http://www.signschurch.org.au> and go to projects webpage. All glory to God.
5. Since August, we conducted our verse by verse Bible Study every Wednesday night. The book we studied is First letter of John. Every Wednesday, we only studied 2 to 4 verses. When everyone present understood and is satisfied with the discussion, we move on to next verse. By now, we are still in middle of chapter 3. Some believers from other fellowships joined us and enjoyed the format. Sometimes, we have a time of prayer, testimony, and praise as the Spirit leads. Oh, wonderful, wonderful Word of the Lord.
6. Ps. Laurence was invited to conduct a workshop in Christchurch during the weekend of 5th -7th December. The workshop theme is "Walking in the Spirit." Also, upon Ps. Laurence's request Christchurch Deaf believers will organise their own Deaf service on Sunday night in the main church. Jesus is the Chief Shepherd, glory to His name.

There are a few more exciting projects or plans but since they have not fully been implemented, we will leave it until next report. Meanwhile, keep your eyes on our website for any news, update or announcement. If you wish to ask questions about this report, please email us on info@signschurch.org.au.

Our Vision: Bringing the Kingdom of God into the Deaf Community

Logan City Deaf Church

Report

Well so much has been happening this year but in August we had a big outreach weekend with Ps Rod and had 4 salvations. Then in October Ps Donna and Woon went to Kazakhstan to the Deaf Bible School where there were 37 deaf Pastors and leaders from Estonia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Korea.

It was a great time and especially encouraging to see what God is doing in Asia. The deaf there run churches in hard circumstances moving from house to house and living by faith because they don't have much. The church in Asia is under persecution and these deaf have come from difficult backgrounds. But there all love God and are doing very well with their studies.

We are encouraging our deaf to attend WDAG next year in Japan. The more we obey God the quicker we reduce the number of deaf in the world who have never met Jesus.



Ps Donna with Marite Taks (interpreter)



Ps Donna with students in prayer



Ps Donna with the students

Deaf Community Christian Church

Report

Praise the Lord we are well. In our church in Victoria, we see new faces every week and our church is growing strong in the Lord. This Sunday we will be having a Korea group who is coming to DCCC to perform drama. We are looking forward to meeting them.

Next month, we will have a very busy month for all of us with Christmas breakup coming up, bible studies, and have a Christmas dinner with our brothers and sisters in Christ. We will be having a meeting to discuss our plans for 2009.

I just got back from my overseas trip. I was away for 7 weeks. Many deaf people got saved and many returned back to Jesus.

I attended the DMI conference at Egypt earlier this year. It was a great opportunity to meet 240 people from 33 countries. There were so many people who attended the DMI conference. And the conference was a great success.

My wife and I wish you all Merry Christmas and Wonderful New Year 2009.

With God's richest blessing

Pastor Rod Chapman



Perth Deaf Fellowship

Report



“Reaching out with hands of love”

Hi everyone

At our November meeting Bernice Moorhouse shared about her great adventure traveling to Egypt for DMI's 4th International Conference which was held in Alexandria from October 1st - 5th 2008. 33 countries were represented by some 230 delegates. She brought along photos, maps, brochures and a small gift for each of us. One of the maps gave the full area of Jerusalem and it was fascinating to all of us. Thanks Bernice for sharing your great story.



We continue to meet on the first Friday of every month in the City and about every 8 weeks we also go out for dinner and enjoy some really good food and fellowship. We will be going out to Miss Maud's on Friday 5th December for our Christmas Party - it will be lots of fun. If anyone is visiting and would like to join us please contact me on 0439070953. Also just so everyone knows there won't be a meeting on Friday 2nd January as we will still be partying!!! We have continued studying about “Spiritual Growth”, sharing how God desires us all to ‘grow up!’ in Him, not to remain as babies. So far we have covered ‘Babyhood’ and “Childhood” and next year will continue with “Manhood” – it is great to dig deep into God's Word and apply it to our own Christian lives.

I am thrilled at the enthusiasm shown for the Bible Studies that we have done and the ‘homework’ that is provided. It really is encouraging for me to see the group growing in Christ as they put the Word into practice.

Please continue to pray with us, for all Deaf in Perth to come to understand salvation and forgiveness – keys to eternal life.

We take this opportunity to extend warm Christian blessings for Christmas – and remember it is His presence, not presents that is most important.

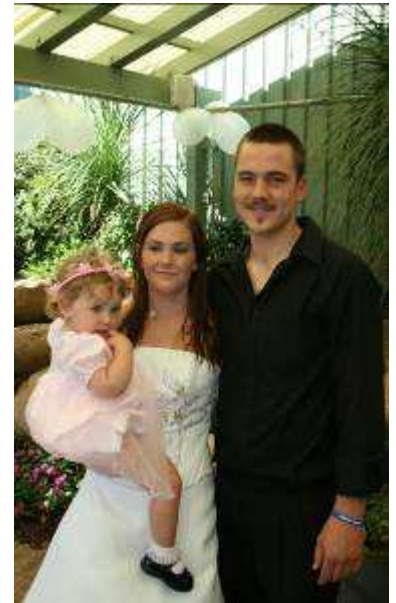
Blessings,

Christine
Leader

Christine's son got married on 18th October 2008. Brian and Kaitlyn were married in the beautiful garden of their Aunty Helen's house. The weather was a perfect 26 degrees and everything well off very smoothly. Pastors Tom and Jane Bond from New Life Christian Centre (Christine's church) performed the wedding ceremony.



Charlotte (19 mths), Kat, Grandma Bonny White (Christine's mum), Christine, Ross (Brian's dad)



Suzanne and Garry's Travels

May- August 2008 from Brisbane, Australia

I have always wanted to travel ever since I could remember but never had the opportunity until now. Finally our dreams have come true. My husband Garry and I flew to Singapore, United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland), France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, CZ Republic, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Greece and Dubai for our 3 months holiday (May to August 2008). It was a combination of our 25th wedding anniversary, our birthdays and visiting our brothers and sisters in Christ from the other sides of the world.

Prior to our trip, we made contacts with such a wonderful people from London, United Kingdom, Ireland, France, Germany, and Italy regarding our visits to their deaf churches and deaf ministries. They also have welcomed us into their homes with such Christian hospitality.

Garry and I flew to Singapore on the 24 May 2008 and stayed few days in a lovely hotel. We visited the China town and the Mustafe Centre (market place) where they sell beautiful silk shawls and reasonable price items. We visited the Night Safari (at night at 8pm to midnight) and rode on a small train through 40 hectares of rainforest. There were over 1,000 nocturnal animals and spectacular animals performing at night time. It was really an awesome experience.

Then we flew to Dubai on our way to London on the 26 May 2008 and catch the underground train to Piccadilly Circus and then changed trains to Charing Cross and met John Delvin and his friend. They meet us at the Charing Cross and took us to his home in Lee, South East London. We have been truly blessed by John and his lovely wife, Jean. They have made us feel very much at home. We have visited lots of places in London especially the Buckingham Palace, Windsor castle, Big Ben etc. We caught double-decker buses and visited lots of places around London.



Mr Delve shares his story:

(Jean and John Delve right)

Garry & Suzanne's visit to London United Kingdom

Garry & Suzanne Timms of Brisbane Australia, have been staying at our house in Lee, south east London, for a few days. It has been a privilege to get to know them. It was lovely to have fellowship with them and it was as if we had known them for a long time. In fact I had never heard of them until Suzanne sent me an email to ask if they could possibly stay at our place for a few days. A friend of ours from Estonia recommended that they see us. Naturally, we gave them a warm welcome.



On Wednesday evening 29th May 2008, we had our weekly house group meeting for deaf people. The group is one of about 20 house group meetings under Kings Church (hearing) in Catford. Garry gave his testimony very powerfully of how God converted him from a rotten life. I could not believe it because his character is now as gentle as a lamb. I wish I had known about this before, as we could have made arrangements to have an outreach service for unsaved deaf people. Never mind, God knows best.

Perhaps you might like to know a little more about our group. About 20 to 25 deaf people go to Kings Church every Sunday morning; with the aid of interpreters we join with the whole congregation and we also have our own deaf service once every month.

Anyway, I am sure Garry and Suzanne enjoyed fellowshiping with us (hope so!!!) God Bless them. John and Jean Delve



Garry and I visited Garry's Uncle and his cousins in Coventry which is roughly one and half hour's drive from London. Garry has not seen his uncle and cousins since he was a little boy. We stayed with Garry's uncle in Coventry. His uncle showed us the places where his parents lived in England.

They took us around the places where Garry stayed when he was a little boy.

(Garry is in the middle row)

We drove to Derby, UK and visited Robert and Katrina Foulkes. We met them before when they were in Australia for the Australian Deaf Pentecostal Conventions. It was great catching up with them again. They took us to the Derby School for the Deaf where Garry used to attend when he was a little boy. After that, we drove up to Edinburgh where we spent a few days in Edinburgh, Scotland. We really love the place especially the city where it is surrounded by the mountains. We visited the Edinburgh castle and the Queens palace.



After that we drove to Stafford Upon Avon, where William Shakespeare was born. After that, we visited the Bleihem's Palace where Winton Churchill was born and raised. After spending a few days there we drove south to visit the Stonehenge and Bath before flying over to Dublin, Ireland.

We stayed with the lovely couple Michael McCabe and his wife, Debra, with their son Zachery at their home, Cavan Ireland. We really enjoyed fellowshiping with them. They took us to their church in Dublin and met other deaf Christians there. We really enjoyed the Sunday service. We travelled all over Ireland and visited lots of places. We spent many hours sharing God's word.

We then flew to Paris, France and met Christelle (H) at the airport. And drove us directly to AOG where the French deafies have their own regular bible study groups. Christelle introduced us to them. It was a great meeting. We shared God's Word that night and had a great fellowship night. We spend most of our time fellowshiping with the French Deafies for the week. We learned French signs and we were getting better at communicating French signs. Praise the Lord!



We stayed with Valerie (CODA) who kindly offered us a place to stay. Thank you very much for having us Valerie. We had a good week in Paris, visiting lots of places such as Eiffel Tower, Arc de Triomphe, Concorde and other places. Christelle, Morgane and other deafies really took us around and we could not have done it without them. We really had a great week, fellowshiping with each other and even witnessed other Deafies for Christ at the shopping mall.



Suzanne at AOG - Paris



Fellowship with the French Deafies

30 Years of Deaf Ministry. How It All Began?

I found a book that was written by Pastor Pat who wrote the history of our Deaf Ministry at Mt Gravatt AOG (now Garden City Christian Church). Pastor Pat shared her version of the story by explaining how the first Deaf Ministry began in 1978.

Not many people understood or know the significant events that occurred in our history and how it all started. I thought it would be a timely reminder to share our past history by giving thanks and honour to our heavenly Father through Jesus Christ.



Here is an excerpt of Pastor Pat's story when she was a head deaconess of Mt Gravatt AOG in 1978.

Several factors led to the birth of the Deaf Ministry at the Mt Gravatt AOG. It is a ministry born of faith in God, His guidance and much prayer.

For several years Pastor Klimionok had a strong desire for deaf people to be saved and come to fully integrated into the life of the church. Two young deaf men (**Pauli and Kari Tick**), the sons of church members, were attending services spasmodically and both pastor and Mrs Klimionok began praying that these young men might be able to participate fully in the church services.

Soon after, a church deacon had a burden for deaf people and he has a vision from God that the deaf would be saved and be a part of our church. About twelve months before the deaf work commenced he began to pray earnestly for such a ministry. At the same time a deaf Christian man had also begun to pray. It was his prayer that God would rise up a leader for the Deaf.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the world, a deaf evangelist (**Paul Miles**) had a vision of Australia.



He heard an audible voice telling him to go to Australia. For three years he fought this command until God once again spoke to him. With the promised support of faithful Christians he prepared to visit Australia



For some time a group of deaf Christian (***Deaf Christian Fellowship***) had been meeting together regularly.

Two of these people began attending the Sunday evening services. At this time it was learned that a woman in our congregation had mixed with deaf people as a teenager and could sign and communicate with them and together with Pastor Klimionok the possibility of commencing a deaf work in the church was discussed. A staff member was assigned the task of

commencing this ministry in August of 1978.

It was decided to have a fellowship tea on a Saturday evening. Four people attended and that evening two deaf people accepted Jesus as Saviour. It was an exciting time in the Lord.

The deaf were being visited in their homes, and hearing about the Lord Jesus Christ. At a second fellowship tea eight deaf people attended – the original two, the two new converts, and four others. That night those four were saved. The following fortnight the same pattern was repeated. This time sixteen deaf came – the first eight and the eight new ones who that evening made a first time decision for Christ.



Many factors were taking place behind the scene as this new birth was breaking forth. There was much prayer, including all night prayer meetings in the church every Friday night. Deaf workers spent four days in prayer and fasting, while for three hours each morning (from 4 to 7am) the leader of the group sought the Lord waiting on Him for His Word. Finally God spoke and the magnificent words of Isaiah 35, accompanied by Jeremiah 31, were given as God's spoken word for this work.

It was a time of revival. Wherever Christian Deaf and workers gathered, prayer, testimony and rejoicing was heard.

Following this the deaf Christians previously mentioned wanted to come and join the deaf converts at the Mt Gravatt AOG, and it was unanimously decided by them that that group should disband. Sunday morning services for the deaf began in September 1978, in the downstairs hall at Mount Gravatt.



This proved unsuccessful, however, and after several weeks it was decided by the Deaf that they should move upstairs for both Sunday Services.

Within eight weeks fifty deaf people were attending the fellowship Praise the Lord!

To be continued in the next newsletter

Garden City Deaf Ministry recently celebrated 30 years of Deaf Ministry by inviting special guest speakers to the reunion. Nearly 240 people attended this special event.

Please refer to the website www.gardencitychristianchurch.org.au for more information

Photos of 30th Anniversary of Deaf Ministry at Garden City Christian Church



Pauli and Kari Tick



Ps. Stanley & Barbara Grimmatt



Rev. Laurence Hough



Pat Erlandsen & Lyle Holland



Rev. Reginald and Mrs Klimionok.

Bible Reading: The Birth of Jesus

(Luke 22:2-20)

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. 2(This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.)3And everyone went to their own town to register.

4

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. 5He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. 6While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 7and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.



The Shepherds and the Angels

8And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”\

13Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

14“Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

15When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

16So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 17When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 19But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.



*On behalf of ADCN Executives and the
Deaf Churches and Ministries in Australia,
we wish you a very Blessed Christmas and
Happy New Year.*

May God's richest blessing be with you all.