



Bell Press News

Christ Centred - Bible Based - Spirit Filled

BELL PRESS NEWS - JUNE 2010

Rod's Letter

Because so many people have asked about my health I thought it best to write something here! Not all of us can be everywhere all the time and so to those who were in Church on the 2 recent occasions where my health was mentioned (once in the Sunday "love letter" and the other a verbal report) please forgive the repeat.

I have had a recurring blood problem over the years- I lose IRON for no explicable reason. No apparent bleeding is found and no shortage of iron in my diet is evident. (Actually you can see there is no shortage of anything in my regular eating!)

Twice over the years I have had an infusion of iron dripped into me over a 6 hour period. And then: hey presto I'm topped up and ready to go.

As all this has not happened for 10 years and I am now 56 (57 in Sept) the current absence of iron has had an even more rigorous investigation.

The results are:

- 5 polyps were removed from my colon and in the specialist's words "nothing sinister"
- Some small irregularities in my stomach again, "nothing sinister"
- My cholesterol is slightly high as is my blood pressure - both for the 1st time in my life.
- My blood sugar hovers around a reading of "6" but the specialist says it should always be below 6.
- My iron count has fallen to a reading of "10".

All of the above and with Doctor, Dietician, Physician, Cardiologist, Gastroenterologist and Haematologist working together I must

- Lose weight
- Exercise regularly
- Take iron tablets for a longish while
- Take cholesterol and hypertension medication.

And a daily dose of Omega 3 fish oil - forgive me if I smell or become "fishy" or more oily than now.

Many of you (BPC members) have or are in a similar place - I hope we have cared for you as I have felt fussed over in this journey. I feel good and strong, not anxious at all and I am amazed at the cost of treatment and medicines: this is the 1st major type investigation we have known as a family and I wonder if the cost is "worth it". My heart certainly goes out to the millions worldwide who cannot afford health care.

I also want to take this opportunity as I did with the Elders on our recent EXCELLENT RETREAT to say: I do not and we need not fear death. And even an uncomfortable, painful, even messy death is "ok": it gets us to share the sufferings of Christ Jesus and to focus on what really matters in this life and eternally

Again thank you for your love. I am a very spoiled, blessed minister. Thank you.

Now please read out loud to yourself these words from Paul to the Philippian Church. He is in jail for preaching about Jesus and he is close to death. Like him I can say "it was good of you to share in my troubles" (Phil 4:14). And like him (now read out loud, please):

"I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you". Philippians 3:10-15a.

As ever with my love and loyalty.

Rod

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In the Family

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS WHO CELEBRATE SPECIAL BIRTHDAYS IN JUNE :

Mario Filippi turns 40 on the 19th

Dot Wheatley turns 60 on the 21st

Denise Jung turns 60 on the 24th

Valeria Ashbury turns 60 on the 27th

Cherry Lock turns 60 on the 28th

Judy Lambert turns 70 on the 19th

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Grethe and Braeme le Roux whose son, Jean Nikolaas, was born on 9th April—a grandson for Nico and Liz le Roux.

CONGRATULATIONS to Melissa Sineke who was recently crowned Miss KTC.

BAPTISMS:

Tjaart Badenhorst, son of Marelise and Karel Badenhorst and grandson of Madalé and David Newham, was baptised on 2 May.

CONDOLENCES to the family of Ann Perold who passed away on 22 April.

CONDOLENCES to Patrick and Jill van Eyssen and family on the passing away of Patrick's mother, Alice, on 20th May.

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Barnabas' Corner

Letter received from George Davies, who lives at the George and Annie Starck Homes.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for the wonderful support I received recently after experiencing an unexpected, severe heart attack.

Thanks to my daughters, Maureen and Beverley (on whose birthday this occurred) for urgently transporting me to hospital and attending to all the admission formalities. Their concern for my welfare, visits and conveyance back to Starck Homes after my discharge is much appreciated. Thank you too for the visits by Rev Rod Botsis and Tony Robinson, Mrs Jay de Villiers, Olga Blumfield and Jacqui Burger, as well as all the prayers on my behalf.

I pray the good Lord's blessing on BPC and all those caring people.

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History of the Womens Fellowship

In the early days of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa women played a minor role. Only men were ordained as ministers and elders. Women only attended as wives or observers at General Assembly. In 1904 Mrs Andrew Brown approached the wife of the retiring Moderator Mrs James Gray. They felt that women could use their time more profitably for the benefit of the whole Church. Mrs Brown had had experience in the Women's Guild in Scotland. She felt that women could work for Church Extension and Missions. The first meeting was held in the vestry of St John's Church, Pietermaritzburg. Many of the Fathers and Brethren who made up General Assembly were very unhappy at the idea, but the Rev James Gray smoothed the way.

At the General Assembly held in Cape Town in 1906 the Women's Association was formally approved and welcomed as "The Women's Association of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa".

1908: The General President reported to General Assembly. 35 branches were formed. The first Annual General Meeting was held in 1909 in conjunction with General Assembly. From 1947 each General President has been presented to the Moderator in the closing session of General Assembly and set apart for her task.

Although the Women's Association continued to hold their Annual General Meetings in conjunction with the General Assembly, the connection remained informal. From 1933 the Women's Association General President presented her report to General Assembly, but this was only by invitation.

In 1986 largely due to the efforts of the late Pam Traill, the Women's Association became a committee of General Assembly and the General President's report became part of the Assembly papers and was debated. The Women's Association continued to meet at the same time as General Assembly until 1993. Mavis Dewar, General President 1993 - 1995, negotiated with members of the Executive Commission to separate the Annual General Meetings from the General Assembly. In her final year as General President Mavis organized the first Annual General Meeting and Conference at Kingsmead College, Rosebank, Johannesburg.

In 1911 the black branches were affiliated to the Women's Association. In 1916 the first black woman delegate attended the Annual General Meeting. In 1948 various constitutions and bye laws used by black branches were standardised and translated into Xhosa, Sotho, Sindabele and Shona. Their uniform was also standardized at the same time, black skirt and black

stockings, a white blouse with black under collar and white hat. The metal badge introduced in 1932 formed an integral part of the uniform.

Myra Smuts was the first General President to bring a black member on to the General Executive. During 1972 – 1975 Louisa Rathebe was the first black Vice President. Early in the 1980's Drew McLuckie, General President 1983 – 1985, managed to bring the members of Zambia in to the Women's Association. In 1991 – 1993 Georgina Phenja became the first black General President of the Women's Association.

The first coloured branch in Parkside, East London, constituted in 1932. In the Western Cape the multi-racial Kensington Women's Association was constituted in 1960. The implementation of the Group Areas Act resulted in some members being moved to Heideveld and Bridgetown. The Bridgetown Women's Association was constituted in 1961. In 1967 Miss Jean Wilson was appointed by the Cape Town Presbytery as a missionary to the coloured people in townships. Her work and example strengthened the witness of the Women's Association.

A "contacts" committee worked to minimize the divisions of the apartheid era. They maintained fellowship and gave practical help such as money for transport of members to quarterly meetings and Bibles in Xhosa and Afrikaans for new Women's Association members. In those dark days of apartheid the Contacts Committee of the Women's Association played a very important role in going into the townships and the coloured areas to meet with the coloureds and blacks. Mrs Jess Sheath of Mowbray played a very important and unifying role in that era.

1956 – 1958: During the presidency of Mrs Tess Munro work among the Indian Community was begun. Mary Dunwoodie, Presbyterian Representative (PR) for Durban, together with Mrs Reim (whose husband started the Indian work) used to go to Merebank where they met in a garage to teach the women about the Bible and the practice of the Christian Faith. In 1966, when Mrs Dunwoodie was General President, she constituted the first Indian branch at Merebank.

The constitution adopted in 1983 removed all racial tags and discriminatory references from its pages. Theoretically this paved the way for black leadership. Further encouragement was needed and this came in 1989, when the Annual General Meeting voted that there should be two Presbyterian Representatives for each Presbytery. This brought an influx of black women onto the Central Committee. At last they had equal status and a truly non-racial Women's Association became a reality.

In 1999 the Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa united with the Reformed Presbyterian Church to form the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa. The Presbyterian Women's Association united with the women of the Reformed Presbyterian Church known as the Women's Christian Association and became the Uniting Presbyterian Women's Fellowship. After this uniting process, with the exception of two branches Bellville Uniting Presbyterian Women's Fellowship and St Columba's Uniting Presbyterian Women's Fellowship, Port Elizabeth, all the "other white branches" around the country have formed Fellowship groups under their church sessions contributing to the Dr Jane Waterston Medical Fund or the Retired Ministers Christmas Gift Fund as they deem fit.

Cynthia Pina
President
Bellville Women's Fellowship

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A View from the Pew

I had such a lot of pleasure in London recently. I was invited to be a guest of the organisers of the World Cheese Awards and to judge at the event.

After seventeen years it is now the biggest cheese competition of its kind in the world and this year it attracted 1100 different kinds of cheeses from Americas, Canada, Oceania, Europe and even from the Canary Islands.

Never before has a South African judged at this competition, or SA cheese taken part, due to the very strict health regulations of the European Union, but after numerous petitions they allowed me to enter 25kg of cheese for the event. I took some cheeses, which I thought, stood a chance to win medals and what a lovely surprise, we came home with two Gold, one Silver and four Bronze Awards. Needless to say the winning cheese makers are over the moon as some of them have beaten the very best icon cheeses from France, Switzerland, Denmark and USA. This is not an advertisement for the winners' cheese, and I get no commission for it, but I've got to mention that Fairview Cheese from Agter-Paarl, Klein River Cheese from Stanford, Fynboshoek Cheese from Storms River and Chrissie's Country Cheese from the KZN Midlands were the medal winners. I was also lucky to serve on the final panel to select the world champion, which turned out to be a goats' milk Camembert from Normandy. A wonderful cheese full of the smells of goat, old soil, grass and horse stables! My personal favourite, a blue mould cheese made from the milk of Brown Swiss cows, wrapped in chestnut leaves and washed in a weak bourbon solution for six months, came third in the final judging. Judging was done blindly and I thought it to be a Spanish cheese only to be told afterwards that it was manufactured by the Rogue River Creamery of Oregon in the good old US of A.

Apart from this gastronomic and stink experience I also had the pleasure to meet with, and deliver parcels to the children of family and friends now living in London. I had the pleasure to spend a whole Saturday in the bookshops of Charing Cross Road, ate the best whitebait ever, and attended the wreath-laying

at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday. Lekker man, lekker. The wreath-laying, on an overcast Sunday morning, was a moving experience with a march past by 10 000 ex-servicemen, led by the 103-year-old William Stone. His only comment afterwards was that he was "listing to port" due to his 12 medals, but that his hipflask with rum, in his right inside blazer pocket, kept him on course. `n Man so no my hart! (For the benefit of followers of the Royals in the congregation I can report that the Queen and Phil are looking good but their offspring, in attendance, appear to be older than them!)

I enjoyed it all and had a lot of fun. "A man is richest whose pleasures are the cheapest" Did I feel guilty about having so much fun? No, because pleasure points to God. There is such a strong correlation between pleasure and happiness, pleasure and health, and between pleasure and optimism, that we owe it to ourselves to allow us a broad range of pleasures. Unfortunately the last decade or two were all about performance rather than about experiencing pleasure. It was almost a case that pleasure was not a right but something you earn through hard work. A little vacation from real life.

Many core pleasures such as humour, as well as mental, emotional and spiritual pleasures, are God-given "inside" pleasures, which we should explore and enjoy. The alternative is to seek "outside" pleasures such as material gain and consumerism for which there is no conclusive evidence that it brings real pleasure and happiness. I firmly believe that pleasure-motivated people are less likely to be demanding, jealous and intimidating, but more fulfilled and generous towards others. It is a matter of simply having "more" to give.

People who are not pleasure-motivated might well suffer from anxiety, guilt and pessimistic thoughts. Spiritually such people might also deny themselves the pleasure of enjoying quiet moments of reflection, from counting their blessings or feeling a sense of reverence.

Alexander Lowen said: "Without the feeling of pleasure, happiness is only an illusion." So what should we do to have more pleasure? - to go on a "pleasure cruise" as the shipping companies advertise it. Most importantly I think we have to welcome it, almost relax into it. It is probably easier said than done, but it can be done. Here are four helpful hints:

Be excited about life. Pleasurable excitement comes in the form of mental stimulation, being emotionally charged and in our case, to be spiritually revitalized.

Stay open and relaxed during, difficult times, which will help you to look on the bright side of things.

Be true to yourself. Nobody knows better than you what feels good to you and what doesn't. Nobody should tell you what feels good or not. The only real truth is your subjective truth.

Don't let scary thoughts dampen your potential to have pleasure. Cultivate courage because that is what will counter anxiety. Show courage against fear and anxiety.

I wrote earlier about core pleasures, and for me spiritual pleasure is the most opening, most liberating pleasure. It starts with the simple contentment of peace of mind, a sense of belonging and faith in the future. All this starts by knowing in our hearts that we are part of something great and good, the love of God. The love of God is a powerful pleasure and the total safety it brings, very reassuring. Under the love of God we don't feel alone and we can face all the potential problems and dangers. Another pleasure is that we are in contact with other people who share our love for God, people who can provide one another with solid emotional support in difficult times.

Sjoe, did I make a heavy case out of a light subject! and I probably dug up more gravel than pearls by digging so deep, but all I wanted to do was tell you about the nice pleasurable time I had while you guys stressed in front of the TV, watching the Stormers lose to the Sharks!

Listen to what the Chinese say: "One should be as careful in choosing one's pleasures as in avoiding calamities." That's all I did!

Regards to all you good people of BPC.

Kobus Mulder

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Housing Committee Report

It's a great privilege to be able to report back to you all on what has been going on with the Housing Committee over the past few months.

Firstly we have received several applications for Wendy houses and have approved five of these so far this year and the houses will be erected shortly. That means that five families will be together again as families and living in warm safe homes thanks to the generosity of others. You may have wondered what happens to the money collected in the 'rooi blikke', well, there you are, we erect houses for folks that need them! So if you've got a blik somewhere at home please dust it off and get your friends and family to help fill it and if you ain't got one please pick one up from the table at the back of the church and make a start. This is a project that makes a massive difference to the lives of needy families but does need a lot of funding to be successful. The five houses mentioned were funded mostly from other sources but that money is running out and winter is upon us. Enough said!

Secondly thanks to a VERY generous sponsorship we have been able to do some renovations to four houses in local townships to improve the quality of life of two of our Presbytery's Ministers, a very sick lady and lots of children at Nolita's crèche. We have moved walls to add space, gutted and rebuilt kitchens, upgraded bathrooms, installed hot water systems, ceilings, laundries and loos, plumbed and plastered, painted and paved but most of all pleased the people of our Presbytery! Practically perfect don't you think?

Thirdly thanks to another super generous donation we are going to do another Habitat For Humanity build from September 13th to 17th! All of you who were involved in the last build will remember the war cry of "dagga, dagga, dagga, Oi Oi Oi!!" with a smile as you remember the camaraderie, the new friendships and the wonderful satisfaction of seeing the house grow from nothing before your eyes! September is not far away so please think about spending a day you'll never forget working with a crowd of like-minded Christians building another house for another family. Looking after the poor, it's what our Lord wants us to do.

There are so many more families out there who need our help. God bless you for your hard work and generosity so far this year. Let's keep up the good work!

Bob Harrison,
For: Housing Committee