



# conneXions

...growing God's family...

Issue 52

## An Easter Meditation | Scotty Smith



Lord Jesus, how timely, stunning and encouraging to know that the most repeated command throughout the whole Bible is "Do not be afraid". The angels spoke these words to startled shepherds at your birth, and you repeated the command to a devastated Mary on the morning of your resurrection, and now you speak these liberating words to my heart and conscience, "Do not be afraid!"

Because you are the First and the Last, Jesus, I don't have to be afraid of anything in between. You are God, and I am not. You will never say "Oops" about anything in world history or in my own life. You never "try" to do anything. You never have to scratch your head in confusion. You never have to resort to plan B. You are perfectly executing your sovereign will, from naming the stars to numbering my hairs. Glory!

Because you are the Living One, who was dead and who is now alive forever, I don't have to be afraid of judgment Day or this day. For your death on the cross is my judgment Day and your resurrection from the dead is my assurance of being eternally and fully accepted by God. Constantly sung over me by my Father, and all my brothers and sisters in you, is the most liberating of all lyrics, "There is now and forevermore NO condemnation for those who are in Christ!" Not only is there no condemnation, there is only full delight! Oh my goodness!

Because you hold the keys of death and Hades, Jesus, and to everything else, I don't have to be afraid to die, or to live. You have robbed the grave of its victory, you have removed the sting of death, and you have defeated the devil and all the powers of darkness! I don't have to be afraid of people. I don't have to be afraid of failing. I don't have to be afraid of getting old. Yes, yes, yes!



Place your right hand on me today in the gospel, that I might be freed more fully from my fears and live more fully to the praise of your glorious Name. Amen and Amen forever!

**Scotty Smith** is Pastor for Teaching, Preaching and Worship at Christ Community Church (Presbyterian), Franklin, TN, USA.

## Easter Services 2010

**Mount Gambier:** 7.30pm Thursday 2nd | 9.30pm Friday 3rd | 10.00am Sunday 4th  
**Allendale:** 11.00am Sunday 4th  
**Nelson:** 9.30am Friday 3rd | 9.30am Sunday 4th (Nelson times are Victorian time)

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### THIS MONTH'S HIGHLIGHTS

- Sunday 11th 10.00am Lord's Supper
- Monday 12th 7:30pm Board of Management
- Monday 26th 7.30pm Elders' Meeting (Session)



## From the Pastor's Desk

### Empty Bedrooms And New Seasons

So, all it looks like is a vacant room. (In need of a good clean and coat of paint)

It represents the close of one season of life and the beginning of another. Every change of season is accompanied by some loss or another. New seasons cannot truly commence until our losses are acknowledged and our changed situation is accepted.

Our family life no longer has Kat's daily presence, but her marriage also means our family life has expanded to include Ben.

We will see them often, but now they come as visitors to our home, just as we will go as visitors to theirs.

Margaret and I are now in a season of watching our children assert their own independence and grow in their own maturity. Their needs in their relationship with us are changing.

Every parent goes through a season where the needs of their children seem more than they can bear. We all know young mothers who never quite imagined that the joy of motherhood would mean that they'd

never be alone, even in the bathroom.

Then comes a season where their calls upon you lessen and you find yourself feeling that something is missing.

More losses, more new seasons.

Our four remaining at home children now have four bedrooms to share between them. This aspect of our new season seems to have very little immediate loss for them.

Perhaps like Margaret and me (and lots of others), when first married a couple have a home with their own bedroom, and a study, and a hobby room. With the addition of a baby, either the study or the hobby room disappear, with the addition of more children, the other room goes. You carry out your study and hobbies in your bedroom.



Part of me knows that as we enter new seasons of life in the future that we'll have more and more empty rooms to reclaim.

That will happen when our at home children are ready to enter their own future seasons.

We'll accept those new seasons as they come.

But not yet.

All it looks like is a vacant room, but it represents a new season.

As we reflect on the events of Jesus' death and resurrection we can discern the reality of a change of season in God's saving purpose.

All the promises that God had made to redeem a people and to provide a ruler for that people were fulfilled by Jesus.

The details of a promise that prophets and angels longed to fully understand were all carried out and completed when Jesus gave up His life to accept our deserved judgment and rose again.

We look back on the cross as evidence of our salvation. In the resurrection we know the reality of new life. Through the testimony of the Spirit we receive by grace through faith a Gospel of new life.

We live in a season of freedom and life, not a season of doubt and fear.

He is risen!

Gary.

### Our Mission Statement

— *why do we exist?* —

**Glorifying God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
by growing His family through  
Biblical teaching, prayer and loving relationships  
locally, nationally, and internationally.**

### Our Vision Statement

— *where are we heading?* —

**As a Gospel driven church  
we aspire to establish  
15 self-replicating growth groups  
across the church  
by 2012.**

## Book This Date

Friday 18th - Sunday 20th February

2011 Church Camp  
at Karnkendi, Nelson

More information will follow

## Financial Update & Board Report

No Financial update for February as the Treasurer was on holidays and also had computer problems.

## Board Election Results

Jeroen Zwijnenburg & Deb Thompson were both elected to serve on Board for the next two years.

### Direct Giving

If you wish to give using direct crediting from your bank account rather than cash, this church's account details are:  
 Mount Gambier Presbyterian Charge  
 Account no: 00900574  
 Bank: Commonwealth Bank  
 Branch: Mount Gambier  
 BSB: 065 504

Remember this church in your will. Your bequest will assist advance gospel ministry in the years ahead.

## Coming in May!

Another weekend of ministry with  
 John Mackay  
 of Creation Research



"Building a Christian Worldview"

Friday 28th - Sunday 30th  
 May

More details to follow.



## Before the Throne of God Above

James Davidson;  
 Noel Cusack;  
 Pearl Hellyer, Hannah Thompson,

Frank Mitchell, Fred Nash, Margaret Ware, Ina Earl; Mary Jeffrey; Brian & Betty Clayfield; Albert & Perle Harvey, Gladys Jones, Elaine Harfull, Jayne Pritchard, Vi Fraser, Blake Vause, Emmie Thompson, Ned & Joan Morrison, Don Cooper, Rod Wilmot and Heather Touzel.

Continue to uphold our church mission partners:

- Matthew, serving in west Asia..
- Cameron & Carmel Mackenzie, Flynn Patrol (SA), Presbyterian Inland Mission.

- School Christian Pastoral Support Workers: especially Matt Eudy (Yahl Primary School).
- Mission Partners/APWM national office: Bill & Jenny Lutton.

Also intercede for:

- City of Mount Gambier and the District Council of Grant.
- Australian Government: Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Leader of the Opposition Tony Abbot.
- Converge International chaplains: Heather Baker, John Deer and Ian Touzel.
- Mount Gambier Christian Centre (Pastor Nigel O'Reilly).

## Around the Congregation

**Stephanie Gail Fox was baptised on March 14**



**Ben Loef and Kathryn Ware were married on March 20**



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				<b>1</b> 1 pm PWA 7.30pm Service of Psalms & Readings	<b>2</b> 9.30am Good Friday service 9.30am (Vic time) Nelson: A. Fox	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b> NE, AL: A. Fox	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> 10am Lord's Supper	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 1.30pm Care & Concern	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
	7.30pm Board of Management					
<b>18</b> NE, AL: I. Touzel	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 9am Woman's Growth Group	<b>21</b> 10am Coffee & Craft 7.30pm Ladies Fellowship	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> 10.30am Bible Study	<b>24</b>
						7pm Youth Group
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> 7.30pm Session	<b>27</b> 9am Woman's Growth Group 1pm Pleasant Tuesday Afternoon	<b>28</b> 10am Coffee & Craft	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> 10.30am Bible Study	

# God's Mighty Work in South America

| Don Galardi and Michael Horton

Pastor **Don Galardi**, the minister of the Community Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Owosso, Michigan, USA has visited countries as diverse as Russia and Peru in the past to do missionary work. But his recent visit to Colombia proved to be nothing like he had originally expected.

During his 13-day stay in Colombia, Galardi found Christian leaders were working to make Colombia the center of religious reformation in Latin America. In the past ten years, Miami International Seminary (MINTS) has built 37 seminaries ...He was most surprised by the widespread religious fervor - incomparable to that in North America.

"I think that the Holy Spirit is doing a special work right now in Colombia," Galardi said. "I think he's at work in the United States and around the globe, but there's certain regions at certain times where there is a major move and all you can do is look at it and say this must be a God thing."



**Medellin, Columbia, one of the cities Pastor Galardi visited.**

Throughout his trip, the pastor worked as a guest lecturer through Gospel Through Colombia and MINTS - both of which are profoundly impacting the development of a protestant church in Colombia, according to Galardi. The local pastor visited seven different Colombian cities, and lectured on the Sermon on the Mount for both religious and lay people.

READ MORE: <http://www.argus-press.com/articles/2010/03/01/news/news1.txt>

**Michael Horton** of Westmister Seminary California, Escondido, CA, USA awrites of his recent visit to Brazil...

This invitation came from the Presbyterian Church—specifically, Universidad

Presbiteriana Mackenzie (Mackenzie Presbyterian University) founded in 1870 by an American Presbyterian missionary.



**Mackenzie Presbyterian University**

I've known the circle of brothers who invited me for a while, since they were involved with one of the earlier

trips. In fact, Augustus Nicodemus Lopez was my interpreter for a conference. Today, he's the chancellor of Mackenzie, a 45,000-student university in the heart of an urban area roughly the size of New York City.

Although the missionaries that Calvin sent from Geneva to Rio (the first Protestant missionaries in the New World) were killed by Frenchmen who returned to the Roman Catholic Church, today Reformed theology is making a huge comeback.

Lots of people—especially younger generations—are embracing the doctrines of grace.

The Presbyterian Church of Brazil is a confessional denomination: with over 700,000 members. That's A LOT more members than all of the conservative Reformed and Presbyterian denominations in the US. There is a new Reformation spreading down here. In fact, the Presbyterian Church of Mexico, a sister church of Brazil's, has 1.5 million members and growing. There is also something afoot in Africa (there more confessional Reformed Christians in Nigeria than North America), and Asia (especially South Korea). Many Pentecostals in these countries are becoming attracted to the Reformation.

Here in Brazil, I'm speaking at a pastors' conference this week at the University, with about 700 people in attendance. The response could not be more encouraging. It is a privilege to be a part of the ministry of such courageous, generous, and clear-minded reformers. We have a lot to learn from our sister churches abroad!

— [www.whitehorseinn.org](http://www.whitehorseinn.org)

## Church Directory

### Pastor:

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### Assistant Pastor

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### Session Clerk:

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Mount Gambier SA 5290.  
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### Secretary, Board of Management:

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### Church Office

Hours:

Monday: 1:30pm - 4:30pm  
Thursday: 9.30 am – 12.30 pm;  
Friday 11.00 am – 12.30 pm &  
1.30 pm – 3.00 pm.

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### ConneXions Editor:

Ian Touzel

**Editorial deadline:** 3rd Sunday of the preceding month.

**This Church seeks to comply with the Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000 at all times. A copy of the Church's Privacy Policy is available on request. If you do not wish to consent to being identified in this or any other Church publication please advise the church office accordingly.**

### Sunday Services

Mount Gambier, Allison St.  
10am—including Sunday School and crèche during school term.  
5:30pm—Evening worship

#### 1st and 3rd Sundays:

9:30am (EST)—Nelson

11am —Allendale

#### 5th Sunday

10am—Family Service and a 'bring & share' lunch at Mount Gambier



# Mission News local | national | international

## Mackenzie News 14/2/2010

Hello to all my Family and Friends, I do hope you all had a great Christmas and New Year. I had a great time as my Nan & Pop (Daddy's parents) and Uncle Duncan came to stay with us for Christmas!  
It was great celebrating Jesus. birth and eating lots of yummy food and opening presents.  
I was so exhausted at the end of the day; I fell asleep on Mummy and Daddy's bed.



### Guess what! I have a baby brother:

**Howard Alastair Mackenzie**

Born: 5/2/10, 5:51am

Weight: 4kg or 8lbs14oz



Length: 51 cm  
While Mummy was in hospital, my friends, the Hitchins, took care of me for a while, I do love going to their place very much. I am

very much excited that my Nanna & Poppy (Mummy's parents) and Nan & Pop (Daddy's parents) will come and stay so I can show them my baby brother. Daddy has been going out on patrol by himself this year as Mummy had a really big tummy and couldn't fit in the PIM truck anymore!  
So Mummy and I give him a big cud-

dle and wave him off. We both miss him lots but I know God is looking after him.

Daddy says he covers more distance and visits without us because he can go from daylight to dark, but he comes back very tired! He told me some stories from his latest patrols: he met some extended family of some contacts and was able to leave a Christian book with their grandchildren. He also said that God intervenes with timing, allowing contacts to be at home when he visits. He also got to help out at a station for a few days, which was very worthwhile. Daddy prays with many contacts and continues to ask God for opportunities to tell them about Jesus. The other exciting thing we did in January: Daddy took study leave and we went to Victor Harbour for the CMS Conference. I made lots of friends in the crèche while Mummy and Daddy went and sang and learned lots of things in the Bible, from 1 Samuel.

Just before the baby was born, Daddy stayed home to look after Mummy. Instead of patrolling, he spent time doing maintenance on the truck, welding part of the tray, servicing, swapping tyres, and fixing the fridge (it wasn't keeping his food cold).  
Some new things I am doing now: I can do wee wees on the toilet, I ride my bike lots, I play with my dolly in a pram, I cook with mummy lots (I get to lick the bowl, yummy).  
May God bless you!

*Love from Jacinta*

### Mummy and Daddy's prayer points:

- Praise God for safe arrival of Howard.
- Praise God for good rain in the outback.
- Pray for Cameron as he goes out on patrol, for safety and opportunities to tell people about Jesus.
- Pray for the Barrier Hwy Patrol that Cameron and his Dad, Alastair will

undertake in March.

- Pray for the Flinders Patrol in March.
- Pray for the Coober Pedy patrol that Cameron will undertake in March with Rev Peter Palmer from Catacomb Church, Coober Pedy.
- Pray for opportunities for ministry with upcoming events in May re Gymkhana events at Yunta and Nonning

## Matt Eudy

### Christian Pastoral Support Worker, Yahl Primary School

We've held off from immediately beginning the programs from last year due to how the class rooms reorganized. Because each class has several grades within it, plus a new teacher on campus, we thought it prudent to gain an idea of the general feeling and needs of each class. I've already begun work with one student who has social trouble. The cooking program is back by popular demand, although the child who originally inspired the program has moved on. I'm taking advantage of the time to work out some new ideas and programs.

Another change to our school is a blind child, we are discovering his aptitude still, he referred to me as his best friend once...

In the mix I am planning a year-long program on pets & animals in reference to our responsibility to them. The goal is to encourage empathy for others, team work, and responsible habits. I'm also trying to organize a mail box for kids to drop notes to me-I'm rather embarrassed I've neglected this detail so long.

One last goal for the year is to arrange for some sort of presentation to come in, any advice or helpful anecdotes on this would be appreciated; or even maybe working with another school to share costs.

# Are We Still Responsible for Sins for Which We May Be Genetically Predisposed? | Justin Taylor

The key to answering this question—which usually arises in discussions about homosexuality and Christianity—is to insist (with the Bible) that genetic *dispositions* are not equal to sinful *determiners*. Our individual makeup and background provide the *context* for sin and may fuel the craving for sin but never alleviate the *responsibility* for our sin and the *requirement* that we imitate God’s holy character.

Ultimately, we are all equal in Adam, though our sins can take various forms. And we may all be equal in the sin-free, sin-conquering Christ, where the ground is level before the cross where he bore God’s wrath and won the victory over his enemies.

Here’s a helpful word from Tom Schreiner [Professor of New Testament Interpretation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, USA] giving a brief New Testament overview on this question of sin and responsibility:

*Even if some sins could be traced to our genetics, it would not exempt us from responsibility for such sins. The Scriptures teach that all human beings are born into this world as sons and daughters of Adam, and hence they are by nature children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3). They are dead in trespasses in sins (Ephesians 2:1,5), and have no inclination to seek God*



*or to do what is good (Romans 3:10-11). We come into the world as those who are spiritually dead (Romans 5:12,16), so that death reigns over the whole human race (Romans 5:17). Indeed, human beings are condemned by virtue of Adam’s sin ((Romans 5:16,18). Such a radical view of sin in which we inherit a sinful nature from Adam means that sinful predispositions are part of our personalities from our inception. Hence, even if it were discovered that we are genetically predisposed to certain sinful behaviors like alcoholism or homosexuality, such discoveries would not eliminate our responsibility for our*

*actions, nor would it suggest that such actions are no longer sinful. The Scriptures teach that we are born as sinners in Adam, while at the same time they insist we should not sin and are responsible for the sin we commit. We enter into the world as slaves of sin (Romans 6:6,17), but we are still morally blameworthy for capitulating to the sin that serves as our master.*

**Justin Taylor** is Editorial Director at



Crossway Publishers and an elder at Grace Community Bible Church, Roselle, IL, USA. He is married with three children.

## The Fuel, Fire Furnace and Heat of Worship



The **fuel** of worship is a true vision of the greatness of God;  
 the **fire** that makes the fuel burn white hot is the quickening of the Holy Spirit;  
 the **furnace** made alive and warm by the flame of truth is our renewed spirit;  
 and the resulting **heat** of our affections is powerful

worship, pushing its way out in confessions, longings, acclamations, tears, songs, shouts, bowed heads, lifted hands, and obedient lives.

— John Piper, *Desiring God*, page 82 (emphasis added).

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## What Not to Say to Those Who are Suffering

the context of a secure relationship. When in doubt, skip the question all together.

Replace it with something like this.

“How can I pray for you?”

Here is a hard working question. With it we are coming beside those who suffer, we are reminding them that God hears, we are asking them to consider the promises of God to them, and we are saying that they are going to be on our heart. If we get an answer such as “pray that God would leave me alone” or a roll of the eyes – something that suggests either anger or spiritual indifference – then we can propose something that is a promise of God, such as comfort or the knowledge of God’s love and presence.

Even better than “How can I pray for you?” we could pray for the person on the spot. “How could I pray for you now?” And after that comes the most important part – we follow up. When we pray for someone we keep praying and we pray until we have witnessed God on the move.

And I didn’t personally say the one about the legs. I am guilty for many other unedifying comments, but I didn’t say the one about the legs. A “friend” said it. Really.



**Ed Welch** currently serves as counselor, faculty member and director of the School of Biblical Counseling at the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation

and as professor of Practical Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, PA, USA.. He is married to Sheri and they have two married daughters.



# What Not to Say to Those Who are Suffering | Ed Welch

"It could be worse. Imagine if you broke both legs."

We have some odd ways of cheering each other up.

Most of our bone-headed comments to suffering people are offered with passable intentions, and most of those comments are judged by their recipients as misguided rather than malicious, but it sure would be nice to improve our record of encouragement in the midst of pain.

We could all generate a Top Ten List of words we spoke or received that make us shudder when we think about them. Here is one that, I suspect, makes a lot of lists.

"What is God teaching you through this?"

Hmmm. This is orthodox. God does teach us in our suffering, and he is working all things together for good. We agree with C.S. Lewis when he writes that pain is God's megaphone to arouse a deaf world. But the story of Jezebel and her entrails being food for the dogs is orthodox too. We are after orthodoxy that is relevant, pastoral and edifying.

Consider a few of the possible problems with this question.

- It tends to be condescending. If you heard this question from someone, you probably didn't hear compassion.
- It suggests that suffering is a solvable riddle. God has something specific in mind and we have to guess what it is. Welcome to a cosmic game of Twenty-Questions, and we better get the right answer soon; otherwise, the suffering will continue.
- It suggests that we have done something that has unleashed the

suffering.

- It undercuts God's call to all suffering people, "Trust me."

To briefly respond to these four problems,

- Suffering compels us to modesty. Scripture gives us a number of insights into human suffering, but no insight is exhaustive. The mystery in suffering reminds us that we are still like children who don't understand how good parents can impose difficulties in our lives. In light of the mystery, humility is natural and necessary. For those who speak to suffering people,

**Faith is our calling in suffering - faith in Jesus Christ. This is not a mindless leap into the unknown. It is a turn of heart, away from us and to Jesus. In our suffering we want to remember that God is, indeed, good and compassionate.**

humility before the Lord is expressed in humility before the suffering person.

- We over-interpret suffering. I am speaking with a person now who has gone through horrible suffering in her life, and "What is God trying to tell you?" has been the question everyone asks. She has wondered for years why she doesn't have an answer yet. All she can figure is that she is too sinful to get it or God is not giving out the answer key - so she is alternately guilty and frustrated. Job in the Old Testament and the man born blind in the New Testament (John 9) should keep us from endless speculation about God's precise

intent. Neither one was supposed to get what God was teaching them.

- Focus on a sin-suffering nexus to your peril. Granted, the question might not assume that the suffering person is in sin. The question might have been intended more positively, as in "How are you learning about the Lord in this?" But unless there is an absolutely clear connection between a person's sin and suffering, and it is obvious to every believer on the planet, then we shouldn't make the connection and do everything we can to keep the suffering person from making the connection. Most of us see more of our sin during our suffering - I know I do - but that doesn't mean our sin was the cause of the suffering.
- Insight can work against faith. By that I don't mean that we should be mindless stoics in our suffering. But when our primary goal is to discover a personal message about a specific deficiency in our lives, then we are resting in our human understanding rather than the plainly revealed character of God. Faith is our calling in suffering - faith in Jesus Christ. This is not a mindless leap into the unknown. It is a turn of heart, away from us and to Jesus. In our suffering we want to remember that God is, indeed, good and compassionate. Jesus' incarnation and his voluntary suffering culminating with the cross are the undeniable evidence. Then we trust him.

Some have heard the question, "What is God teaching you?" and, though not especially edifying, the question wasn't discouraging. If so, expect that this question was not the first one asked, and it was asked in

*Continued on page 7*