

WCG Today

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SEP Australia 2010 hosted more than 90 campers, including teenagers from Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Fiji, Thailand and India (main picture). See summary page 5.

An exciting community

The excitement generated at SEP tends to turbo charge the start of a year for anyone associated with the camp, the campers or the staff. There's a joy and satisfaction that can't quite be described but it comes from that concept of "community" that is so central to our lives "in Christ" (which, incidentally, was the theme of this year's SEP). The particular form of community we experience can and does change throughout the year and depends upon our circumstances. Whatever the form, however, it offers us the opportunity to contribute to, experience and express the energy, the acceptance and love that is life "in Christ".

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JOHN MCLEAN

National Director (Australia)

“We find our
true being in
communion with
God and in love for
one another”

Living into our identity

On January 26th Australia stops for Australia Day – to celebrate our blessings, and reflect on our national identity. As one lady put it when interviewed, “Australia Day is about celebrating who we are and where we live, and making the most of every day.”

As we start another year, it’s a good time for us to pause and celebrate our spiritual blessings, and reflect on our spiritual identity in Christ. Who are we, really, and how do we make the most of every day?

The good news of the gospel orients us to frame the question of identity in eternal, cosmic terms. Not in self-centred hubris and arrogance, but in humility and grace. The first and fundamental question to ask is “who is God?” Only in answering this question can we fully understand and live into our own identity.

And God has chosen to reveal himself powerfully and primarily in the incarnation – in the Word becoming flesh. In the coming of Jesus Christ, we see who God is and what he is really like. It is only in knowing who God is and what he has done and is doing that we find answers to questions of our own identity.

Jesus came to reveal the “inside” view of the life of God. He came to reveal a God of grace, not a contract-God of punishment and legal obligation (John 1:14-18). In and through Jesus, God’s chosen self-revelation to us, we see a God of love, a God who has his very Being in communion – in the mutual indwelling of Father, Son and Spirit.

This God planned, in love, and before the creation of the material world, to adopt human beings as his children (Ephesians 1:1-5), to include them in this life of love, fellowship and relationship. The incarnation not only demonstrates the amazing entry of God into our physical world; even more astonishing, the incarnation makes possible our participation in the life of God. In seeing Christ, we can begin to see our own identity as forgiven, loved and cherished children of the Father. As people who, in spite of our humanity, God has taken the initiative to include in his circle of life – because he loves us and wants to be with us!

We see, then, that we find our true being, indeed our true humanity, in relationship – in communion with God, and in love for one another. As Jesus said, “As the Father has loved me, I also have loved you: abide in my love”, and “This is my command, that you love one another, as I have loved you” (John 15).

This flies radically in the face of a Western identity that emphasizes individuality, separateness. It impacts our notions of success and accomplishment. It fundamentally challenges the strident claiming of individual rights, and the perception of others as either competition in achieving our own “potential”, or seeing them as existing to meet our own needs or helping us accomplish our own goals and plans. It impacts how we live every day.

Our identity, every day, every moment – even our worst moments – is **in Christ**, not in our dress, address, bank account (or lack of bank account), house, car, or anything else that is material and temporary. Our identity is permanent, eternal. The good news of the gospel is that our identity is secure, existing in the love, care and communion of the Father through the Son in the Spirit. We find the radically amazing truth that our true identity as a human person is in love, in fellowship, in relationship – in communion with God, and in love for one another.

Please continue to pray for one another, and for all people. And as you are able, do what you can to help someone else. Pray for your local congregation, your most immediate expression of the fellowship of God. And please pray for your national and international brothers and sisters as well. We all need each other; we are all connected in Christ, members of that one Body. Pray for us all, that we might share in Jesus’ mission of creating other-centred fellowship and communion, according to his grace and will.

God, whose very Being is in communion, is in the business of creating and sharing communion. And we have the joy and privilege to participate in that every day.



Seventy-eight young Sri Lankan men and women graduated from the church-operated **Worldwide Educational Institute** in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Dec 6. WEI students study the English language so they can gain meaningful employment or entry to university courses. A general business class and another in Principles of Success, based on biblical principles for day-to-day living, are also part of their courses. Rick Shallenberger was the guest speaker at the graduation ceremonies this year.

NEPAL - progress and setbacks

By Rod Matthews

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.” Few of us have had this experience in a severe form. And maybe we even brought it on ourselves. But admitting to being a follower of Jesus Christ can bring dire consequences in some parts of the world. It did to **Bal Bahadur** and his family, and the entire congregation he leads in the remote village of Dolakha, east of Kathmandu, Nepal in the foothills of the Himalayas.

Our ministry partner in Nepal, **Deben Sam**, sent an urgent email Jan 20 telling us that four days earlier a mob of ethnic religious leaders and their followers had attacked a small congregation established there within the last year and burnt their “cottage of fellowship” to the ground. They had badly beaten the believers and driven them from the village with threats of what would happen if they met together again or spoke of their beliefs. Mr Bal Bahadur and his family fled to Kathmandu to bring the news to Deben Sam and seek temporary shelter and safety. Deben has been able to rely on us to provide some material assistance so he can support them in their time of trial.

Deben Sam serves a scattered fellowship of several small congregations in Kathmandu and many more in rural Nepal. In the summer months he travels extensively visiting rural congregations and encouraging the local pastors and believers. (Sounds familiar, doesn’t it?) In Kathmandu he and his brother-in-law, **Raju**, supervise the operations of a medical clinic we started as a joint

project to provide free basic medical services to the poorest people working in the brickyards on the outskirts of Kathmandu – people who cannot afford to even have their children medically checked when they have injuries or childhood diseases.

Mohan Jayasekera, West Australian pastor and Sri Lankan national director; **Rick Shallenberger**, pastor of the Cincinnati congregation in Ohio which funds the clinic; **Steven Becker**, youth leader in Perth, WA (accompanying us due to his personal interest); and I made our annual trip to meet with Deben and several other ministry leaders in Nepal in December.

As a result of our partnership Deben had arranged for the translation and printing of two publications of ours into the Nepali language – the Discipleship Course, and a book entitled *Basic Christian Beliefs*. We were delighted when upon arrival Deben showed us printed copies of *Basic Christian Beliefs*. Already he has distributed hundreds of copies through the churches in the fellowship he leads, and as a result of requests from other pastors who came to hear about it. There is a very limited range of Christian literature in the Nepali language.

In the small building the church rents for meetings, Deben’s sister looks after six little girls who are orphans from his home area in eastern Nepal. It is wonderful how much a small group of people can accomplish with God’s guidance and local support. When we join the respective resources that God has given each of us, then it is a testimony to the Body working together and the glory goes to God.

Tassie Festival ’09

By Geoffrey Miller

About 20 people enjoyed the Tasmanian festival at beautiful Camp Clayton, Ulverstone, Oct 19-26. Tasmanian pastor, **Philip Hopwood** brought the scriptures to life with a remarkable and encouraging journey through the book of Philipians.

Camp Clayton added its own relaxed spirit to the festival. Delightfully modern and comfortable, the friendly staff were obliging, spontaneous and happy. The quality of the food was good and the quantity was a challenge that defeated most. The beautiful weather and a four minute walk to the beach compensated a little for any culinary indiscretions.

Activities included a full day excursion to beautiful Stanley that was enhanced by a picnic lunch on the beach. The hardest climbed the famous Nut and completed the circular walk around the top, enjoying the breathtaking seascapes and farmland views along the way. The remainder browsed the quaint historic village and enjoyed the coffee shops.

God blessed this festival in a warm and unified way with the joy of Christianity very evident there. We give all thanks to Him for a splendid experience.

Hampers for the homeless

By Pam Rice

For several years Dandenong (Vic) congregation has supported the Frankston Crisis Centre by supplying 100 hamper bags each December.

Usually we would purchase goods from monetary offerings but this year, to be more inclusive, our pastor **Al Kurzawa** suggested a food offering.



Deben Sam and **Rod Matthews** in Kathmandu (above) and Deben Sam (at right) with his brother-in-law, **Raju** and a pharmacist in the medical clinic Deben started for brickyard workers on the outskirts of Kathmandu. The clinic is funded by the Cincinnati, Ohio congregation with additional funding from members and congregations in Australia.

Over October and November members purchased items like noodles, muesli bars, biscuits, small tins of tuna or fruit, lollies, small drinks, etc. which was all brought to church on December 5 and arranged on a long series of tables. After the sermon, adults, children, teens and elderly all participated happily in filling the bags from the goods on the table. As a result 120 bags were quickly filled. 2009 is the first year the whole congregation has been so personally involved in providing and packing the hampers.

A scripture card is included, and a tag is attached to each bag, indicating who it is from.

NZ women's get-togethers By Maureen MacDonald

"We had a very enjoyable weekend in Invercargill in mid-November. It was wonderful that 17 ladies mainly from the bottom part of the South Island were able to get together on the Saturday for a very uplifting day. "I truly felt it was women in Christ meeting together!" said **Kaye Evans**. "It was just the way I envisioned it – women

talking together in true fellowship. No one felt left out, we had a lot of fun and everyone had positive comments about the whole weekend. It seems to me that God is well pleased when his people come together in loving friendship."

The weekend also included spending time on Sunday in fellowship with other members, sightseeing and helping out in the Southern Light Centre on the Monday. They are doing such an amazing work – it is quite inspiring!

[Australian Women's Conference 2010 – see back page.](#)



Dr Kristy McLean

Kristy McLean graduated December 2009 from the University of Queensland with a Doctorate in Sport Psychology. Her thesis was: "Motivating the motivators: The Development of the Coach Motivation Questionnaire" with particular reference to sports coaches, but with ramifications for all who are involved with aspects of motivation. Well done Dr McLean!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Births

Cameron and Julie Hay of Ashburton, New Zealand are delighted to announce the birth of twin boys, **Aaron John** and **Jamie Bruce**, born Dec 1.

Deaths

Mary Quinsey of Brisbane East, Qld (formerly Sydney, NSW), a deaconess, died Dec 22.

Jon Napier of Adelaide, SA, died Jan 1.

Don Masters of Caboolture, Qld, died Jan 13.

Ewart Briggs of Bathurst, NSW, died Jan 21.

Celebrating 99 years



Gorden Cashel

Gordon Cashel of the Eagleby, Qld, congregation turned 99 on January 25. Born in Wellington, NSW, in 1911, Gordon "is an amazing person who can recite endless poems and recount all his war stories with names and dates," said pastor Bill Sidney. "He is one of those Aussie characters who served his country very well." Mr Cashel and his wife, Gwelda, have been married for 52 years. They have three children (Gab, Andrew and Melody), 11 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

2010: Hope you brought your appetites

By Carissa Warren

The trouble with writing an SEP report is that there's just so much stuff to include. And it's all good stuff; there aren't any gristly bits you can leave on the plate or unnecessary salad garnishes to ignore. It's all mouth-wateringly good and finished way too soon. A point which a certain group of campers were overheard summarising after camp ...

"We need SEP every year."

"We need SEP twice a year."

"We need an SEP school so we can have it every day!"

The anticipation of returning to Morisset, NSW, after two (long) years, plus the excitement of welcoming so many brand new campers (about half of the total), created a fantastic buzz even before camp had properly begun. It was great to see the "newbies" (or "fresh meat" as one seasoned camper joked) embracing the SEP spirit and experiencing everything for the first time. And it was equally wonderful to see the older campers stepping up, showing younger ones the ropes and proudly carrying on the many camp traditions.

One special aspect of this camp was its distinctly "international flavour". We were blessed to have almost 20 campers attending from outside Australia: ten from New Zealand, six from Fiji, two from Papua New Guinea and one lovely young lady from India! It was fantastic to be joined by this wonderful group and hopefully future camps will see that number grow.

Of course, there would be no campers (or at least no surviving ones) without the SEP "Crew". From the dorm Leaders on the front line, to the extended dorm family members who keep them sane. The incredible dorm chaplains ("Chappies!") who spend countless hours designing the daily discussions – including translating Colossians into text message form ("JC is all + cares 4 all")! The tireless kitchen staff who take the metaphor of camp as a delicious meal, add seasoning, mix, bake and dish it up as a reality every morning, noon and night. The laundry team who selflessly do one of the most essential jobs at camp, especially considering the need

to smell clean in certain activities (*see "dance class" below). The worship team who give their all for such an integral part of camp, and also guided every dorm through their own worship session. The media team who sacrifice sleep to produce The Rusty Nail and organise the fabulous slide shows. Security, who admittedly may have had more issues with staff creeping around after-hours in camouflage suits than with the campers themselves. And of course camp directors Kwan Borden and Al Kurzawa with their countless hours of planning, coordination and general awesomeness!

Then there are the activities and the dedicated staff who ran them. The brilliant dance staff who taught a whole new generation to spin, glide and boot scoot. Not to mention the delicate art of "aeroplaning" to SEP favourite "Dive". Plus the smorgasbord of outdoor activities like softball, swimming, basketball and cricket. For those with more adventurous tastes there were also the Giant Swing, Leap of Faith, Rock Wall and High Ropes Course. Another real highlight this year was the addition of waterskiing sessions. A huge thanks must go to the waterskiing crew who donated the equipment, time and enthusiasm needed to provide it as an activity.

Some essential skills were also added to the activities menu, including cooking classes for the gentlemen and mechanics lessons for the ladies. And jewellery-making with beautiful beads was a cherry on top.

Finally, there are those unforgettable, unexpected bursts of flavour: camp "moments". Whether it's boy dorms treating their sister dorms to special picnics, or campers cheering each other on to face their fears and take the Leap of Faith, finding "Pengu" (our tag and relocate camp mascot) in unexpected places, or seeing every person in the worship hall link arms to sing "Amazing Grace". These are what make SEP priceless.

To and from everyone who took part in SEP 2010, thank you for the prayers, support and involvement. Although we might be full for the moment, by the time the next camp rolls around we'll definitely be back at the table and hungry for more!

Transition to national youth ministry team

Al Kurzawa, pastor of the Dandenong and Morwell congregations, has taken on the coordination of our National Youth and Family Ministries, including SEP. **Kwan Borden** has decided to pursue a Masters in Counseling degree, with a long term view to a personal goal of his, working with at-risk teens. We thank both Kwan and Jo for the wonderful work they have done over the past years. Their empathy, and relational skills, are greatly valued.

Kwan will continue to serve as an elder in our fellowship. He and Al have worked closely together in recent SEPs, including the running of the very successful camp this January. Al and Kwan have put together a national youth team to help plan and coordinate youth ministries nationally. The team will meet with Al in Melbourne in February to



Al Kurzawa

Kwan Borden

discuss responsibilities and plans for the coming year.

Our thanks and prayers are with the Kurzawa and Borden families as they take on this new chapter in their lives. Please join us in praying for Al and Kwan in their new roles, and for the new youth team as it begins working together with Al supporting and coordinating youth ministry activity around the country.

National Women's Conference 2010



Tammy Tkach
Guest speaker

All welcome!

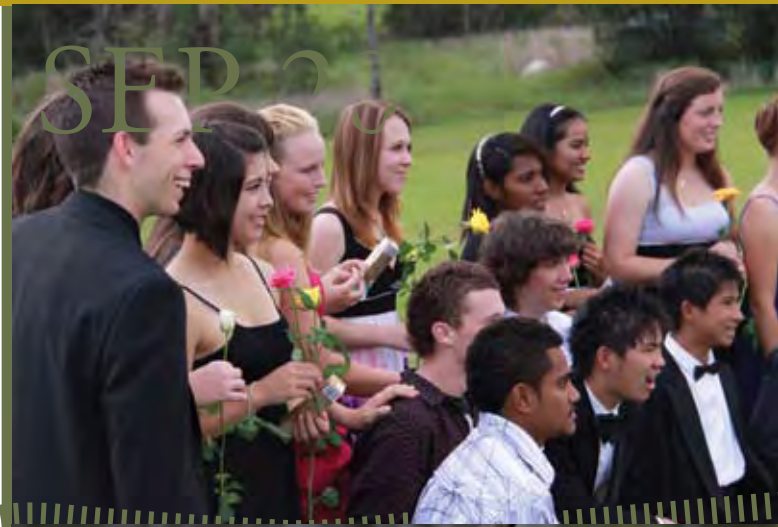
Come to the beautiful Gold Coast and join ladies from all over Australia for an uplifting, encouraging and refreshing weekend!

Be inspired by the worship and presentations, and enjoy the fun, food and wonderful fellowship! We'd love you to come, so please fill out a [registration form](#) or [register online](#) www.wcg.org.au

We look forward to seeing you there!

Date: Friday 21 to Sunday 23 May
Venue: Greenmount Resort, Gold Coast
Cost: \$270 (includes triple share room and all meals)

*Life Together
In Christ*



More scenes from SEP 2010

Events Calendar

February

5-7 New Zealand Women's retreat at El Rancho Waikanae Christian Holiday Park. Guest speaker Ruth Matthews

March

5-7 Australian pastors' retreat, Gold Coast, Qld

May

21-23 Australian women's conference, Gold Coast, Qld

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