



Deo Gloria Family Church, Kzn

www.deogloriakzn.co.za

We are an Affirming & Inclusive Church

Christmas Newsletter 2005



From Pastor Deborah's Desk

Jesus came to set the captives free!

In Isaiah 61:1 the prophetic Word of God declares that God will set the captives free, heal the broken-hearted and bestow on us the oil of gladness instead of mourning.

It is my prayer that this newsletter will inspire and encourage you.

Well, it is almost the end of yet another awesome year. Hopefully we don't only get older, but wiser too!

2004 was the year of B&B's & A & G's

We saw how God has taken many of us, from a place of mourning to a place of newfound joy and peace. Our vision theme for 2004 was: the year of "breakthrough and blessing" and "application and growth"!

Applying God's teaching in the Word to our lives brings breakthrough and then blessing because applying God's Word means we are obedient to it and that has to lead to blessing.

Growth always requires some sacrifice and times of testing & reflection and wow, when we have come through that fire, we can see how our faith has been proved genuine! We may feel the heat, but we don't get burned when we apply God's teachings and obey God's voice.

These times are times of growth for us. The Bible teaches us that these are times when we really mature and develop our faith.

We must remember & know that God always has plans to prosper us, not to harm us (Usually we harm ourselves more, by trusting in our own plans somewhat more than in God's plans for us)!

Our theme scripture for the year was:

Jeremiah 29:11&12 "I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out -- plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for. When you call on me, when you come and pray to me, I'll listen." (The Message)

Our Vision theme for 2005 has been: "The year of the Harvest"

God has been preparing the hearts of God's people for the harvest. We all know the scripture in Matthew 9:35: "The harvest is great, but the workers are few."

It is our task and mandate as a church to tell the world about Jesus, to bring in the lost and to make disciples.

We have emphasised this year how important it is to not just bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world, but to teach that the gospel message Jesus teaches us is one of inclusivity and equality. As Jesus treated all people with equality, so must we as the church today. God's *agape* love does not discriminate... but ours does!

This love of Christ brings the message that the gospel is a gospel of liberty and freedom in Christ; not to do what we like in sin, but to follow in the attitude and life of Christ and be obedient to God's will.

This gospel of love teaches me that ALL are welcome to enter into a relationship with Christ, that ALL may be saved.



(Gal 3:28-29) "In Christ's family there can be no division into Jew and non-Jew, slave and free, male and female. Among us you are all equal. That is, we are all in a common relationship with Jesus Christ."

Also, since you are Christ's family, then you are Abraham & Sarah's famous "descendants," heirs according to the covenant promises."

Yes, Christ has come to change our hearts, *not* our fingerprints.

We are a church calling the harvest of *ALL people*, lesbian, gay, or straight. We welcome women and men equally, married/life partners or those that are single, to pursue the blueprint that Christ has planned long ago for each person's life.

God is bringing in the harvest: the harvest of God's people!



The Big Easy

Jesus never taught that it would always be easy, but he did teach that our faithfulness would be rewarded. The gate is narrow and few will enter the road of God. This is because those that do enter, will experience persecution and rejection, as well as challenges, because they carry the name of Christ.

The "pot of gold" we strive for, is not money or real gold, but it is a crown of glory. As Christians we have God's grace, simply because Christ has paid the price for our sins on the cross.

Home group

"Being Real" has been the theme for our home group this year. This has really challenged our level of intimacy with one another; learning to trust one another on a deeper level with sharing both our strengths and our weaknesses and not being afraid to drop the barriers of our prideful carnal nature, which guard our hearts in a distorted kind of way. Rather we have been learning to clothe ourselves with humility, learning to share our brokenness as well as our joy. We also started a new series on "Homosexuality & the Bible". This deals with the "clobber" texts used against gay & lesbian people. Our goal is to bring people to wholeness in Christ, just as God created every person to be. Knowing the truth sets us free!

"Christ has come to change our hearts, *not* our fingerprints."

From Pastor Deborah's Desk continued

Bible College

These last two years, we have accomplished major goals for equipping people in our church to be lay leaders and disciples, who are equipped to know the Word of God in a personal way, so that they can tell the world who Jesus is.

We have structured our teachings in a practical way, so that people have a deeper knowledge of the makings of a godly leader, and the commitment and accountability involved. God is looking for people who are ready to say "YES!" to do whatever Jesus calls us to do.

Our Vision

It has been our goal for the church this year to make the vision a reality in the hearts of all members. Bringing God's plan of glory closer to the hearts of the people, which outlines the purpose and greater plan of God, and how we can be used to bring this about. This includes those that have been marginalised in our community and women who still experience deep oppression.

Over the last two years, 2004 & 2005, we have emphasised the role of the vision in sermons and at our home groups, through courses like "The Vowels of Mission" and through really interactive practical teaching from the Word of God.

Next Year — 2006

We have exciting plans! We are starting **ALPHA Adult** and **ALPHA Youth** in February next year!

This is for newcomers to the church and for those that would like to know more about who Jesus is and have questions such as "Why did he die? Why should I read the Bible? Who is the Holy Spirit? How does God guide us? Does God heal today?" Alpha is for all. The Youth & Children's Ministry will be a big focus for us next year as the youth are our future.

We are going to have a jam-packed year of teaching in 2006! Come and join as we learn more about the wonders of God and God's amazing love.

The year of 2006 will also be a year of growing our ministry areas. One of our focuses will be the HIV/AIDS ministry.

It was really the grace of God that made the way for us to start our Bible college last year. This year we have doubled in participants and we look forward to what God is going to do in 2006.

NB DATES: On 24th December at 21:30 will be our Christmas Midnight service. Call us for details!

A Message of Hope



Prayer Theme for December: HIV/AIDS

Lord, we pray for people in the world who suffer from HIV/AIDS. Be with their caregivers and family members. Protect and strengthen the thousands of children whose parents have died of HIV/AIDS. Encourage churches, communities, and governments to work together in confronting the HIV/AIDS crisis.

DGFC on Intercession

Prayer - The Forgotten Gift— By Marietjie Geldenhuys



Jesus taught us in the Word how to pray (I have chosen the version in Luke 11), but how many of us remember, or care to remember, what these words really mean to us in

our world today?

We can recite the Lord's Prayer with great ease, as this is a prayer we were taught at a young age. However, do we know what the words really mean? Do we know what Jesus is trying to say to us? Are the words a personal message from God, or empty memorised words?

To speak with our Heavenly Parent is a privilege that we should cherish and hold onto every moment of every day. But to cultivate a living relationship and intimacy with God takes time. A living relationship with my Maker is paramount and I should do everything possible to ensure it stays that way – no matter what the sacrifice.

The word in Isaiah declares that God wants us to utter worthy words, not worthless words. God does not want us to be like the Pharisees in our prayer lives, but is interested in the sincerity of my heart and your heart. Luke 6:45 declares that out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth will speak.

Is your heart filled with worship for God or is your heart filled with worldly treasures?

What is holding us back from entering into a living relationship with Christ? What is preventing us from seeking out the deep truths Christ wants to reveal to us through an intimate prayer life with Him?

Prayer is truly the forgotten gift, as we are a people who so often seek to gratify our worldly natures and pleasures.

We need to see to believe. We live in an instant age, where we rely on the 'instants' of all things!

God makes it possible to wait... for the perfect time, the perfect moment, the perfect season. But we can only know the perfect will of God if you and I have a living relationship with Christ - daily seeking to speak with Jesus, sharing with Jesus; sharing joys, sadness, fears,

When we do not know what or how to pray, the Holy Spirit intercedes on our behalf!

Prayers guided by the Spirit are not borne out of selfish ambition, selfish gain or impure motives, but reflect a relationship of intimacy with Christ - where the will of God in our lives is paramount and where our prayers are in line with God's will for our lives.

It is God's desire for all believers to experience fullness in prayer. You and I are worthy of speaking with the Most High as we have been bought with the ultimate sacrifice – Christ!

Use the forgotten gift of prayer and experience a new life in Christ.





DGFC on Worship

Power through Music - By Branden Cox



The Joy of the Lord is my strength!

Music has been around for a very long time. A prime example of someone who loved music is David.

hearts and to bring us into the awesome presence of God. God reveals God-self to us through music and prayer.

The gentleness, the love and the warmth that God surrounds us with is immeasurable.

We know his character all too well and even if we don't, all we have to do is to look at the book of Psalms and gain some insight into this man's love for God.


When we're feeling worn out, depressed, or angry, the best advice that you can give yourself right at that time is to praise God. Find a place where you can be alone and just lift and pour out your heart to God. God longs to hear your praises in both the good and bad times. No matter what Spiritual season we are going through, God promises to never leave us nor forsake us.

In Psalm 150, being the last scripture Psalm, David speaks about every form of worship: singing, dancing and playing instruments, all unto God, because of God's excellent greatness.

Let us all have a heart like David, one that searches after the deep truths of God and after God's own heart.

Music has long been a part of my life, ever since the age of 15, when I first gave my heart to Christ. Music, speaking of the love and wonder of God, has spoken to my heart on many occasions; so has the Word. God's Word through music has the power to restore our

It is my privilege to serve God and to serve you through the ministry of Praise & Worship.



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"The gentleness, the love and the warmth that God surrounds us with is immeasurable."

Lingering in the Dwelling Place of the Lord - By Tirone Nel



"How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD Almighty!" (Psalm 84:1, NIV)

and convict me. Perhaps God wants to bring a fresh word, for someone else or possibly for my own circumstances. The Lord showers God's perfect love down over me.

Sometimes when I meet with the Lord, I find myself tempted to rush into and through God's presence. I'll tell God how great God is, plead for the forgiveness of my daily sin, and present my requests before God, so that I can lift up prayers for others and for myself. I may mean every word I say, but I'm not giving God very much time to talk back. In actual fact, I'm basically just 'checking in'. But God reminds me how wonderful it is just to linger in the glory of the Lord, in God's dwelling place. The Lord gently beckons me closer. My spirit becomes attentive to the Still, Small Voice. God may want to reveal more of God's character to me. Maybe God wants to expose un-confessed sin in my life

God speaks - my heart yearns to respond. Sometimes I may ring out a chorus of God's worth, in celebration and thanksgiving, or perhaps humbly sing a song of pure intimacy to the Giver of life. I need to express in song what it is on my heart to tell God. Maybe it's a song we sing at church, or from a CD. Maybe it's a spontaneous song of words that just rise up out of my spirit. It is my small - even insignificant - offering to God.

God calls us into the stillness of the presence of the Lord, to just simply be. God knows our fears, our insecurities, our hopes and our dreams. We can bring all of those before the Almighty in this secret moment as we lay ourselves bare God knows our hearts - in

fact, God knew us long before we were even created, and yet still chose to send Jesus to be presented as our sins on the cross, so that we may be reconciled with our Maker. So we can, with great confidence and peace, know that we can be ourselves and, with all of our flaws, all our blemishes, we can commune with our all powerful Creator God. In moments like these, our hearts are fuelled with an overflow that calls us forth, enabling us to do our Heavenly Parent's will, by the grace of God alone.

"Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you." (Psalm 84:4, NIV)



Christmas and Why we celebrate it! Written by Ralph Orr



It is true that certain customs attached to December 25 are practised in a pagan spirit by many people. No one knows the exact date of Jesus' birth. But this lack of knowledge does not diminish the value of celebrating his birth, any more than not knowing when Christ will return diminishes the value of celebrating his return.

the angels sang for joy (Luke 1:46-55, 68-79; 2:8-14, 28-32, 38).

Jesus' entrance into the world was a cause of great rejoicing and celebration, because it made possible human reconciliation to God. At his birth, people who loved God rejoiced in praise, and even

Love, not command, is what motivates many Christians to celebrate Christmas. They love their Saviour and they love their families. Christmas provides an opportunity for them to express both. To harshly judge those who choose to practise their faith in this spirit of devotion conflicts with many New Testament principles.


The fact that non-Christians or even some Christians celebrate Christmas as a secular holiday or in a profane way is not a reason to avoid Christmas.

Any holiday can be misused. The problem is not the date, but the behaviour.

Be encouraged to observe Christmas as a celebration of a very important event in our salvation: the birth of Jesus Christ.

Christ should be the centre of the celebration. Christians who do celebrate Christmas should be seeking to honour Jesus Christ (Romans 14:5-6).

John 15:7 *"If you remain in Me and My Word remains in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be given you!"*



Our Vision & Core Values

Vision

To bring all people to the knowledge of Christ's love and saving grace, including gay and lesbian people.

To minister the Rhema Word of God into people's hearts, as we receive it from Scripture and from the Holy Spirit, teaching the message that the liberating Gospel of Jesus Christ is about freedom, as Christ came to set the captives free.

To extend the Reign of God on earth according to Scripture, through every-member ministry, teaching, training and appointing members of the church so that they may be equipped to carry out the inclusive vision that God has for this church.

For God so loved the world, that God gave God's only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16, King James Version)

Clean hands & a Pure Heart – by Brigitte Petrick



Psalm 24:3-4 - Who may climb the mountain of the Lord and enter where God lives? Who may stand before the Lord? Those who have clean hands and a pure heart.

Upon reading the above scripture, I was SO reminded of just how short we fall, and how often we forget that God is actually a Holy God and needs to be feared! Not that "ooooohhhh" feared but a respected kind of fear. We often think that we are so holy! We do everything that is expected of us as Christians. We say our little prayers, which normally consist of a HUGE shopping list of what we want and need and demand from God. We even do church every Sunday, and maybe we show up at home group every so often. Then we think, I've done my bit, I showed face, put in my minutes or hours, now let's go home and do what I want to do. Now let me tell you, when you really read and meditate on the above verse, there is such conviction, or should be conviction, in our hearts. WHO may climb the mountain of the Lord???? Well, only Moses from the millions of Israelites made it up the mountain, even faithful Joshua had to wait halfway down the mountain! WHO may stand before the Lord? Those who have **CLEAN** hands and a **PURE** heart! Phew, we fall so short.

I feel sad in my heart that I fall so short. I want to please God and give God my

Our Core Values

- Reaching the Lost, including Gay & Lesbian people
- Living by the authority & Biblical principles of scripture
- Influencing Community Values by living what we learn
- Personal and Corporate Prayer & Worship
- Making Disciples through every member ministry

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (Romans 8:1, King James Version)

first fruits and the very best that I have, but in all honesty, I fall short. I allow so many worldly things to get in the way and I get removed from the clean hands and pure heart state so easily. It just takes one person at the office to gossip and then, there it is; an impure heart, unclean hands. Actually it is even in the very small things, those ones that go almost un-noticed that we so easily stumble.

I want to make this part of my prayer life, to ask God to give me a pure heart and clean hands. To flag even the small areas where I'm not doing this and the areas where I fall so, so, so short. I'm surprised that I have the nerve to get into the Lord's presence sometimes and not realize how unclean I am before our Holy God.

I continue to pray that the Lord will do a work in me, change me from the inside out and to memorise this scripture so that it will be a constant reminder of God's holiness.

Deo Gloria Family Church wishes you & yours a blessed &

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Weekly activities

Mondays: Counseling &

Phone a friend for Christ

Tuesdays: Music Ministry & Intercessory Ministry

Thursdays: Home group –

Time of teaching and fellowship

Saturdays (once a month)

Bible College - Equipping

& Leadership training

Sunday services @ 18h00,

48 Gordon Rd, Morningside, Durban



Food for Thought

"You can stay as you are for the rest of your life, OR you can change to Jesus." - Pastor Deborah

DGFC on Weddings



Congratulations to Tirone Nel and Justin Unwin, who were joined together in Holy Union by Rev Deborah Bell on the 24th of September 2005.

Merry Christmas