



# Deo Gloria Family Church, Kzn

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*We are an affirming and inclusive church.*

## Newsletter December 2006

### From Pastor Deborah's Desk...



By Rev.  
**Deborah Bell**

#### Reflection

Well, yet another year has come to an end.

As we look back at 2006, my question is: how much time have we taken to assess how this year has been for us? Did we allow a few nostalgic moments to keep us in a "daydreaming" mode for 30 seconds, or did we really reflect on the year and the role we have, or haven't, played in the church and our greater community for God's glory?

We could easily talk about people who have blessed us, I am sure. But the question is; who have *we* been a blessing to? What have we done for others that is purely from God's agenda and not simply because it suited us and our own agenda at the time?

I want to encourage all of you to think upon 2006 and ask yourself some questions: "What can I do differently in 2007, that I never did in 2006?"; "What did I aim for, that I never achieved in my ministry areas and in my spiritual growth?"; "How many people did I lead to Christ in 2006?", for example.

You see, I believe that we must assess where we have come from, to understand where we are going. We cannot just say, "Let's see what happens for 2007".

God already has the plan, the question is this: are we going to search it out and live in that plan this year? An agenda has been set out for your life by God.

If you walk in it with everything you are, you will be prosperous and successful. More than that, you will bless other people, because of the overflow of God's heart in your spirit.

Every year we naturally will say, "I hope this year is a good year." This year will be a bumper year for you, but for that to happen, your role is to follow God's

agenda, not your own. It is to hear from heaven, to understand what God's will is for your life, to be there for the brokenhearted.

The responsibility of ministering falls on all of us; it is not just the responsibility of the pastor. This is an every-member ministry. We do this together!

**Isa 60:1-5 "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. (2) See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you.**

**(3) Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. (4) "Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the arm.**

**(5) Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come.**

#### What's in store for 2007?

Besides many lesbian and gay weddings... I have some keywords to give you, which I recently shared with someone else, that I believe are so relevant for us for this year. They are: **explosive, everything and go**. I have added this in, because God has been speaking deeply to my heart about where we need to be as a church in 2007, to get where God wants us to be in the future.

2007 is going to be a year of incredible explosive spiritual encounters in our church and mission. God is going to move at a great pace in 2007, and is preparing our hearts for what is in store.

God is calling us as a body to live our lives on a deeper level in the Spirit.

We are being called to give our *everything* to God.

Whatever you are *not* willing to sacrifice to God must be exactly what you *do* sacrifice to God. God is going to

require us to sacrifice in 2007, more than we ever have. But God requires a people with pure hearts to sacrifice; no hidden agenda, no alternative motives; simply, "Yes, Lord, I will do it for You." No conditions, just, "yes."

You are such precious people and you are so special to God. Every one of you has something unique to offer God's people, that no-one else has. That's why God's plan is different for every one of us, because we have all been created so differently. But our common goal is to bring the gospel to our nation. That is our major purpose.

#### Hands On

I believe our greatest challenges for 2007 will be the "hands-on" ministries that we know God wants us to start this year. God is going to require us to walk where we have never walked, to touch those we have never touched, to pray for those in need and to learn how to have hearts like Christ; filled with compassion and love for those that are poor in spirit, and those that are hungry.

**"God requires a people with pure hearts, who are ready to sacrifice *everything* to do whatever God asks of us, no matter what the cost."**

In the past, we have donated money to HIV/AIDS orphanages, but this year God is calling us to go into HIV/AIDS communities and be with those in need. Christ is calling us to walk where Christ walked and to serve others in a spirit of humility, just as he did.

#### "What was hidden is being opened up."

I believe the prophetic word that was spoken over our church is about our church now being ready to be known among the nations.

"What once was hidden is now being opened up and exposed for the world to see".

*(continued...)*

## From Pastor Deborah's Desk... (continued)

God has taken the "lid" off our church and the time has come where our church and the anointing will move in power like never before.

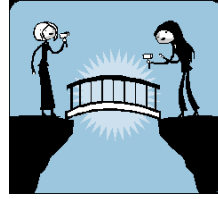
God is going to do new and powerful things among us and through us, and that is why it is so important for us to be on a spiritual level that meets the standard that God needs, in order for us to do what God is calling us to do.

### Networking with other churches

In 2006, we had our first conference. God's Spirit began to move in new and different ways. God was taking us to a new dimension in the Spirit.

God is going to use DGFC as one of the churches in South Africa to be bridge-builders with other churches. As churches, we are much more powerful together in unity, than on our own. We need to come together.

We have initiated contact with other churches in South Africa, namely in the Pretoria and Johannesburg regions. We believe that in 2007, DGFC is going to be instrumental in bringing these



ministries together, so that we can pray for our nation and seek God's vision for our nation, together!

### Conference in February 2007 at the Glory Tabernacle, USA

Marietjie and I will be attending Glory Tabernacle's annual conference in the USA in February 2007. We believe that this conference is going to be the "launch pad" of revelation that God is going to reveal to the nations for 2007 and 2008.

We know that we will come back with a deeper vision for our church and great revelation of what lies ahead for our mission and future, and with what God wants to do in South Africa.

### Guest Preacher

I will possibly be preaching at Glory Tabernacle in California, USA on the 25th February 2007. Please keep this day in prayer, as I believe God is going to use this trip and the preaching to open the doors for our church, and for our spiritual linking up with the USA.



## DGFC's First Conference: "Revival in Our Land"



by Rev. Deborah Bell

*Revival In Our Land Conference held on 17, 19 & 20 August 2006*

What an awesome experience this conference has been for us. I don't think anyone will be the same again. Praise God! God is so awesome.

Our first meeting with Rev. Sandra Turnbull, and her team of five from the Glory Tabernacle's EMI missions arm, was just amazing. We fell in love with everyone almost instantly. Only Christ's love can do that! We were in one heart, mind and spirit. We knew that this time together in the Lord would be the start of a new move of God in our lives and hence in our church. It would also be the start of some amazing relationships that were formed with one another, for what God has in store.



Rev. Sandy and the team brought with them a double portion of God's anointing of glory and power — that's why their luggage was so heavy! We needed this deeper anointing of God's glory, in order to be ready to move with God to a higher level, so that we could get into the position God needed us to be at as a church, for the future plans and purpose of God for our community and nations.



From the start of the talk by Rev. Sandy at the home group evening, the Spirit began to minister to people's hearts.

We were so excited and overwhelmed at the life-giving words that were spoken into people's spirits by Rev. Sandy and the entire USA team, that we could not stop talking about it. In fact, we are still talking about how awesome it is.

The Saturday teaching on healing was amazing. God restored people who had been in bondage by 3rd and 4th generational curses and set people free from the principalities of the enemy that try to oppress and destroy us.

People were loosed from every dominion of darkness, and the oil of gladness and joy was restored in so many lives.

Who can help but give God glory when one sees such divine intervention of God's love for us, through other people.

Then we just couldn't wait for the Sunday. The church was buzzing and Rev. Sandy's message was spot on and, needless to say, it was full of revelation for all of us and for where God is taking us in the future.



The glory of God shone around her as

she spoke and then invited people up after the message to be touched by the Lord.

The gentleness and love of Christ touched people in great power and brought healing and restoration once again. It was powerful; what an experience!

There was a continual presence of God that touched us all so deeply during the entire duration of the time that Glory Tabernacle and EMI were here with us.

We also know that their team were constantly in prayer over our nation, not only while they were here, but also



many months prior to even coming to South Africa, as they prepared their hearts to hear from God for this trip.

The fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit was poured out during the entire time that Rev. Sandy and the EMI team were with us.

God gave us revived hearts and new vision through the Holy Spirit. We could truly cry out, "Christ in me, the hope of glory." God is so good and God's mercy endures forever.

There is such a unity of God's love that is poured out when the anointing of the Holy Spirit touches people's lives this way.

# Ministry News

## Intercession - My Kingdom Go



by **Marietjie Geldenhuys**

DGFC has a vibrant prayer ministry, which Pastor Deborah often refers to as the backbone of the church. We are a group of ordinary people longing to do extraordinary things for Jesus Christ, to bring glory and honour to God.

Our vision is to bring about radical transformation amongst our church, community, nation and the world, through the power of prayer. This desire requires us to constantly measure ourselves against the plumb line God sets for intercessors in the Bible.

### Ezekiel 22:30:

*"I looked for someone to stand up for me against all this, to repair the defenses of the city, to take a stand for me and stand in the gap to protect this land..."*

There is definitely a difference between a person who is called an intercessor and a person who prays. Any person can pray, but not all praying people are intercessors. A true prayer warrior's passion is evident in the life and heart behind the prayer.

Being faithful to a consistent time of prayer is a challenge in our daily living, where so many things in our modern world compete for our time and can easily take precedence and squeeze out "God time." Our prayer life is only as powerful

as our knowledge of the character of God. How do we get to know the character of God? By drawing into God's presence!

The following quote by Alan Redpath aptly demonstrates what our attitude should be, if we wish to find our intercessor's heart:

*Before we can pray, 'Lord, Thy Kingdom come,' we must be willing to pray, 'My Kingdom go.'*

The year 2006 was one of preparation and challenge, as God propelled us into uncharted spiritual waters after DGFC's first conference in August. We sought God's face afresh and allowed God to enlarge our territory and hearts, to pray for all of God's people, to the ends of the earth.

Every intercessor experienced growing pains, and God clearly was busy with a sifting process, to ensure that we would be found standing in the gap and on the city walls, covering our pastor, our church and others, in prayer.

Highlights were the breakthroughs received during times of prayer and fasting, our prayer walks, the self-exploration activities and the intimate sharing amongst us.



In 2006, we also saw God setting up a network of six sister-churches, 4 local and 2 abroad, who would support one another in prayer. What a mighty work of God this has been, and we know that this work will continue in 2007, to serve a great purpose in extending the kingdom and reaching people with the news of Christ, to the ends of the earth.

Prayer is powerful, and looking back over 2006, we can see that God moved powerfully in people's lives, brought breakthrough in situations, and as we allowed God to mould us, the gifts of the Spirit started flowing more freely; prophecies were given, the word of knowledge increased and people were able to minister to, correct, support and encourage others.

We know that God requires sacrifice in a new way from the intercessors and we trust that God will make us faithful in the task which God has set aside for us this year.

As we wait upon God with expectant spirits, we know that an explosion of God's glory is sweeping the earth and DGFC's intercessors want to be a part of this great move!

### Isaiah 62:6 (The Message):

*"I've posted watchmen on your walls, Jerusalem. Day and night they keep at it, praying, calling out, reminding God to remember."*

## Home Group - A Life Worth Living



by **Gert vd Linde**

Is life worth living?

This year saw the start of not only a new Bible study course, but also a second home group in Montclair.

The home group in Sunningdale had grown up and needed to spread its wings. With the start of the new course, the Lord guided us to a second meeting place. This resulted in home groups being held at both the north and south of the city.

The study at both home groups is the official follow-up to the Alpha course, "A

*Life Worth Living*", also prepared by the Rev. Nicky Gumbel. It is a course based on the book of Philippians and explains how it is possible to live the Christian life positively, practically and joyfully in an easy-to-understand manner. This course deals with "new" Heart, Purpose, Attitude, Responsibilities, Friendships, Confidence, Ambitions, Resources and Generosity in such a powerful and simple way, that you cannot be unaffected at the end of each session.

The answer to



the opening question is very simple: In Christ, and with the great camaraderie of our home groups, the joy of the Lord is our strength; life is not only worth living, it is worth rejoicing about!

### Heb 10:25 (NLT):

*And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near.*

# Same-Sex Marriage Debate Workshop

by Rev. Deborah Bell

## The Workshop

The workshop was generally much more positive than I expected and it was great that the forum allowed comment and questions from everyone, giving equal ground to those who wished to speak.

I feel that at least 4 out of 8 speakers were positive and this made the conference take on a much more "soothing" climate of fairness, as well as the observer groups who tended to be made up of quite a lot of gay and lesbian people too, which made for a pleasant change. The stance was around, "Is same sex marriage ethical?"

## No Debate

Clearly, for us there is no debate on this issue and it was more a question of how

quickly the bill would be passed. Just as heterosexual couples that happen to be Christian feel that marriage is the right thing to do from an ethical perspective, gay and lesbian couples that are Christians feel the same way. Most that I know desire to marry as they believe this is the right thing to do, both ethically, and morally in the eyes of God.



## Being Different does not make it wrong

Being in the minority doesn't make us wrong or unnatural, but simply a different sexual orientation. This is who gay and lesbian people are intrinsically created to be, just who they are.

I am white and therefore I am in a minority race group, but my rights are protected, just the same as anyone else's

(thank the Lord).

For those that continue to use the scriptures out of context to support their fears of homophobia or the possibility that they will compromise their faith by giving gay and lesbian people a voice, I want to say that the time has come to listen. We are, and will, continue to break the silence. Our stories have a place and need to be heard.

We are your brothers, your sisters, your neighbours, your colleagues, your mothers and fathers and your friends. As was said by someone, "We are somewhat invisible at times, but that does not mean that we don't exist". Oppression can never stay underground. There comes a time when people say, "enough!" *Our hearts will not be silenced!*

- Workshop held on 4 August 2006.

# Official At Last!



After several years of waiting, couples have been able to be officially married in the eyes of the law by

Rev. Deborah Bell of Deo Gloria Family Church, KZN.

Same-sex marriage was legalised in South Africa on 30 November 2006 with the Civil Union Bill having been signed into law.

However, same-sex partners were initially unable to be legally married by their church ministers and had to wait in line to apply at Home Affairs.

This has since been resolved, much to the jubilation of lesbian and gay couples wishing to be legally recognised as life partners through their local church.



Rev. Deborah Bell says, "This is an historic moment for all of us. As committed Christians, all the couples here have been married in Christian ceremonies and had their relationships blessed in a Holy Union, but it is such a blessing to give them a marriage certificate."



# Baptisms - 31 December 2006



# Church Cleaning Day - 16 September 2006



Deo Gloria Family Church has an annual event on the calendar that gets us all excited about cleaning!

We meet together on a Saturday morning and we all get stuck in to clean

the church! Cleaning the house of the Lord is one of the greatest blessings and brings such unity amongst God's people. I think the most amazing work on these Saturday mornings is that while we are cleaning the house of the Lord, the Lord does a cleaning deepinside our hearts too.

This year was no different and as we were challenged by Marietjie to come in

something *yellow*, so we had a very sunny feeling all morning! The Lord created such an atmosphere of unity while we cleaned. It's truly an exhilarating day on the church calendar, not to be missed!



# Devotionals

## When God Comes Knocking



by **Brigitte Petrick**

Have you ever had that feeling that God came knocking and you were too scared to answer?

Well, I have, and I've often run the other way, rather than answered the door. What is it that we are so afraid of?

I've asked myself that question way too many times. I've yet to receive an answer! What I've learnt is that the sooner you push through and answer the door, the better it is. But I guess we as humans don't like things easy. We always like taking the *long* way around. Hence the Israelites going around the same mountain for years and years and years and years. Apparently it was an 11 day trip, makes you think hey? I often say to myself, I'm *not* going to go around the mountain, not again anyway. Then when I look again, there I am, going around and around and around the mountain! Finally, I've decided to answer the door and see what is on the other side!

### Luke 9:23 (The Message):

**"Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat — I am. Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Following me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self."**

You know, we can serve God, faithfully, honestly and with all our hearts, but *never* completely fulfill our purpose. That is because we are only as close to God as we choose to be! We only allow God in up to the point where things can get a bit rocky and hard, then we just shut the door and say, "Lord I serve you as best I can, but I can't do the rest, it is just too *hard*".

I think that is where I was. I worked through some very painful things in my life, things from my past that haunted me, and they were hard to deal with, but they didn't compare to the complete

submission God required of me. So, although they were hard in a sense, they were doable. I was playing it *safe*; doing all the right things, saying all the right things, but a part of me, *deep* inside was still my own special place where nobody, not even God was allowed. *The place where I still felt like I was in control!*

I'll be honest; it scared the living daylight out of me. Just the mere thought of answering the door; I was petrified! I was so scared of giving up more control, that I was almost paralysed with fear. The thought of saying, God if you never bring me a partner I will be content, God if I need to watch less TV and pray more, I'll do it. Lord if you speak, let me listen and *do!* People, I was scared, but this was it! Somehow in my inner soul I knew that this was it, I had to get through that door and get on with where God was leading me! Scared or not!

So rather apprehensively, I answered the door. Guess what is the first thing God asked of me? Nope, not the partner thing, although it does form part of what God spoke to my spirit about that Monday morning when I prayed, but that was not it. God asked me to crucify my flesh!

After quitting smoking I picked up some weight, which was a *huge* burden for me. I'd never really been overweight before, and I hated the uncomfortable feeling of the extra kilos. So I've been struggling with it. One diet after another, asking people to help me pray, doing whatever I can to lose the weight.

Well, can I tell you that the weight just sat there, it didn't move an inch! I would lose some, but put it back on faster than I lost it.

Hang in there. There is a reason I'm telling you all of this! I was lead not so long ago to a book by Dr Colbert, a Christian Dr in the USA. I bought it and starting reading. It was very insightful, and made such a change for me in my eating habits. So what flowed out of that is the realisation that it is a lifestyle thing. Not a diet! Not a quick fix! It is a lifestyle thing, a healthy eating daily thing. The crucifixion of the flesh is a daily activity. Almost from moment to moment, every day, we are tempted. Whether it is food when we are trying to

eat healthily or whether it is being tempted to scandal, it doesn't matter; it is how we deal with that that will matter in the end. It is saying no to the extra slice of cake when our flesh (stupid flesh) is saying, *yes, please*.

I realised that it would be hard, this opening up of my innermost self to God. My flesh is going to say, "let's watch some TV, that nice program you like is on," when I should be on my knees praying and interceding for my church and leadership. But I know, as with all things, in time the battle will get easier, but for now, that is what God wants from me; *denying* the flesh, and striving for a deeper more meaningful relationship. And as with all relationships, building a meaningful relationship takes time, it takes commitment, and it takes a lot of hard work. Am I willing to do this? I think for the first time I can say, "Yes Lord, here I am."

Two things I leave you with:

- 1) God will never leave you nor forsake you.
- 2) If you want to follow hard after your God, you will have to make some sacrifices, it will surely be a daily struggle, *but* whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for Christ will save it!

God never takes without replacing it with something better. We never have anything to lose if we walk with God in God's will for our lives. Yes, I'm scared. Yes, I know the going will be rough on some days. Yes, tears will come, and yes, I will fail from time to time, *but* I want to fulfill my purpose come what may! More than anything, I want to please God. I answered the door, what will happen now, I'm not sure. All I know is that I'm pushing through!

One day at a time! How about you?

### Joshua 1:5

***No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.***

# Devotionals

## A Time to Rebuild



by **Branden Cox**

The book of Nehemiah is an exciting one. It speaks about rebuilding the city of Jerusalem, which was once a great city. God's favour was with Nehemiah as he undertook the task given to him. Nehemiah had submitted to God all that he intended to do. God was directing Nehemiah and God directs us in very much the same way.

**Nehemiah 1:9:**

*"But, if you come back to me and do what I tell you, I'll gather up all these scattered peoples from wherever they ended up and put them back in the place I chose to mark with my Name."*

We too, like Nehemiah, are builders. We are all called to be builders: builders of pathways that lead other people to the

knowledge of Christ.

As we are obedient to what God wants us to do, God supernaturally works in the lives of those who are being ministered to and God's Word truly does become a guiding light in their lives. Far too often, our eyes — the eyes of the builders — can be shifted, due to a lack of faith. This happens to all of us as we are, after all, only human, *but* we are reminded of our purpose very quickly. God reminds the builders of their calling through so many different ways. The eyes are then shifted into the correct perspective and the building continues.

Worship has the same purpose, in bringing people to a place of correct perspective. The purpose of our lives is to bring others to the knowledge of Christ, to live, serve and worship our Mighty God.

Worship also builds. It builds and opens the hearts of those who are hurting, to receive a touch from God. When the

music plays, and people begin to start communing with God, how the Spirit of God just sweeps through.

**Psalm 119:5:**

*"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path"*

Those who are broken begin to feel the healing that the Spirit of God brings. Those who are sad begin to feel the joy of the Lord being restored within their Spirit. Those who have been lost start to feel the longing of God in them. Building the pathway to Christ in people's lives is not a solo effort. We do it with the Spirit of God, Who may at times direct our fellow brothers and sisters to come alongside us and assist with the building.

Put on your helmet of salvation and let's continue building those pathways in people's lives, using the tool of the Word to do it and the Spirit of God to guide us.

## Who's Approval are you Seeking?



by **Theresa Bosch**

We are sometimes trapped by constantly seeking approval from people and sometimes at the expense of not doing God's will. I know this all too well; I've probably done this a number of times, and at times not even been aware of it. So, we need to be careful and always seek God's approval first.

God's Word inspires us to seek God's pleasure without worrying about the way others treat us, or what they may think of us. In Ephesians 5:10 it says, "Try to learn what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the worthless things that people do".

I have always been a sensitive person (much of the time, too sensitive), which means I worry too much about what people think and end up trying to please everyone and, as you know, that is not always possible. But, as I have grown spiritually and drawn nearer to God, this has started changing. I am now more inclined to want to action God's Word, which creates a change of mindset, so now my thoughts would be more on,

"what does God want me to do?". This is very liberating, even though those who are trapped by the things of the world think it limits one, but that's just because they haven't experienced the freedom that it brings to your spirit, and the joy that comes from that.

**Colossians 3:23-24:**

*"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people. Remember that the Lord will give you as a reward what he has kept for his people. For Christ is the real Master you serve".*

We have covered some great topics in our Bible studies this last year and I'm definitely going to put some of this into action in 2007, especially the influencing and discipling of people, starting that ripple effect. Showing God's love to others is so important, especially to those who haven't accepted Christ into their lives. As Christians, we find it so easy to accept and love one another as we are, because we know we are all equal in God's eyes, but we need to reach out and share this with everyone

else. If someone tries to influence you in a negative way, turn it around and influence them in God's way.

I would like to share something rather interesting I received in an e-mail, which some of you may have received.

The shortest chapter in the Bible is Psalm 117. The longest chapter is Psalm 119. The chapter in the centre of the Bible is Psalm 118.

*Facts:* There are 594 chapters before Psalm 118 and there are 594 chapters after Psalm 118. Add these numbers together and you get 1188.

What is the centre verse in the Bible? Psalm 118:8. Does this verse say something significant about God's perfect will for our lives?

The next time someone says they would like to find God's perfect will for their life and that they want to be in the centre of God's Will, just send them to the centre of God's Word!

Psalm 118:8 reads, *"It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in people."* (NKJV)

Is it odd how these scriptures worked out... or was God in the centre of it?

# Devotionals

## Some Inside Humour - "A.A.K."



by Colin Roopnarain

I was once among a mad pack of journos selected to go on a special course. It started excitedly enough, with words like "hotel", "buffet" and "all expenses paid." Then once the course began, we realised it was a basic grammar course. Being journos, we thought we knew it all, so we sulked and put on the most indignant looks we could muster. Of course, after an hour, we were so engaged in arguments about full-stops, we forgot all about our resistance effort. And in doing so, we actually learnt quite a few things.

Oddly enough, that's what church has been like for me.

Here, take a tour with me; I was born and raised a minister's son, with perfectly parted hair, manners and golden voice (ok, fine, the last one's a lie). Jesus sounded amazing. I heard words like "eternal life", "heaven" and "streets of gold". "Wow," I thought, "how wonderful this sounds." So I did what my daddy taught me and was a good little boy. It worked for a while, until adolescence began.

I started saying "like" a lot, messed up my

hair and gave everyone angry looks. And I went where I hadn't gone before: The Back Pew. You can tell where this is going... yes, soon, I stopped church altogether and proudly professed atheism.

And then, I got what I now know as an Attitude Adjustment Klap. Battered and bruised, I returned to church. But this time I forgot to resist. Suddenly, I was having fun and despite thinking I knew it all, I began to learn. And boy, did I.

I learned that you can care about people, in so many ways. Like when Brigitte sends me, and so many others, a text message bright and early every Monday morning. Not only does it give me comfort and advice, but it wakes me after I ignore my alarm.

I learned that it is possible to really listen to people, and that it's actually enjoyable. By the way, if you listen to Elize, you'll hear the funniest stories about her father, who thinks she's gone a bit mad.

I learned the importance of putting others before myself. Theresa taught me this when, despite being terribly afraid to drive, she once willingly gave me a ride when I needed one. Of

course, after the ride, I certainly know about being terribly afraid...

I learnt that prayer is indeed powerful. And that you don't need to be in church for it to work. I found this out in a car with Tirone and Justin; not because of their driving, but because I was feeling down.

I learnt that someone has always got your back. This is important when one is being prayed for by Pastor. If you fall, Brigitte, Shirley and Marietjie will catch you. And they are strong...

I learned that God uses us in ways we may not know about. I know this, because I once saw Elize looking rather sad. I also saw her listen to Branden sing, and I watched her begin to smile as she said to me: "That boy can sing".

And lastly, I learnt that love does exist. I see this each week when Kristy looks at Wayne (Bob), when Sean teases Gertjie, when Marietjie smiles at Pastor and when Justin and Tirone jump up and down in unison. I feel it when Cheryl throws me in the air like a lightweight toy or when the kids attempt to catch me and beat me up...

More importantly, I feel it even when I'm not in church.

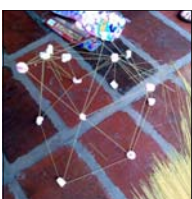
## Bible School News

by Tirone Nel

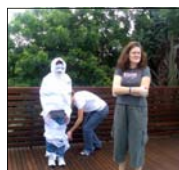
Throughout the year, we meet up once a month on a Saturday for our Bible School.

The course is hosted by DGFC, and for 2006, the theme was "Developing Leaders After God's Own Heart", by Dr John Maxwell. Dr Maxwell is a respected leader in the areas of training and mentoring others, not only in church life, but also in the secular business world.

At the crux of each session is a study on the character and life of David of the Old Testament, who in 1 Samuel 13:14 is called "*the man after God's own heart*".



Amidst adorning fellow participants with toilet roll and building wacky (and totally unstable) constructions, comprised of spaghetti and marshmallows, we learnt some deep, spiritual life lessons in



developing ourselves as people after God's own heart and creating unity in the body of Christ.

We discussed that sometimes our spiritual passion diminishes and that its unrealistic for us to expect ourselves to always be "up" spiritually. David didn't always have a great sense of God's presence. In fact, he sometimes felt that God had abandoned him; but even in those desert experiences, the key to his victory is that he *trusted* in God, regardless of how he *felt*.

We saw that God does not choose a leader by the same criteria as that of the world; no, just as God anointed David, son of Jesse, to be King Saul's



successor, God's not concerned with the "outward" qualities of people, but with the people's hearts.

We grew to understand the value of good decisions. The reality is that our choices have far-reaching effects, regardless of our role in the body of Christ. The choices we make have an impact and influence on the lives of those around us.

For this reason, it is vital that we discern the will of God in every situation, since what may look right to us in the flesh is not necessarily God's good and perfect will. We must stretch ourselves to think of God's agenda before our own.

I leave you with a profound lesson in leadership imparted to us by "Dr John":

*Those who are the closest to you and me determine the level of our success.*



# I Will Enter God's Gates with Thanksgiving in my Heart



by Tirone Nel

Oh, I can hear it already. You're probably already humming the tune of that catchy song that shares the same opening line as this article. I am, however, not pilfering the words of a popular praise song, but rather quoting the scripture from whence the lyrics came:

**Psalm 100 (NIV):**

*"Enter God's gates with thanksgiving and enter God's courts with praise. Give thanks to God and praise God's name."*

There have been times where I have felt that drawing into God's presence is an uphill battle. When I have let myself become overwhelmed by the storms of life, as I've found myself rummaging through a whirlpool of fragmented thoughts, I've tried to fight my way through a myriad of anxiety, fear, panic and doubt, to hopefully find a quiet little chamber of peace on the other side, where I am finally free to share in communion with my Lord.

It is during these times when this inspiring verse from the Psalms reminds me how to submerge myself into the presence of the Most High. Just as Jesus calmed the raging storm for his disciples, just as David slew the giant for his people, so too can I break through into victory in my mind and defeat despair, by having an attitude of gratitude.

Yes, by remembering how much I truly have to be appreciative to God for, I can see how God's providence in my life always outweighs any struggles and trials I may be facing. I know that whatever situation I face right now is merely for a season, but my faith tells me that God's promises are ageless; God cares so much for me, that the way for my salvation has been paved — my sins have been atoned for and my hope for the future rests in the Lord Almighty. Indeed, the gates are open, and I will enter with thanksgiving in my heart and on my lips. In God's presence, I am now able to cast my burden unto the Lord and have my strength renewed.

There is so much pain and heartache in this world which we cannot escape.

Putting on an attitude of praise and thanksgiving is by no means a miracle "off-switch" to the hurt in our darkest hour of distress, nor is it a place of denial, but it is about recalling our blessings and God's mercies to us, bringing our spirits to perceive from a divine perspective. By whatever measure God's Spirit has given us, we can thank God that God does comfort those who mourn, and that in time, the mourning of God's chosen people will be turned into dancing, and then we are enabled to help others who are mourning.

I know there are so many things I am grateful to God for: salvation, loved ones and my job, just to name a few. Yes, I can even thank the Lord for my job, for God has always provided for me, and, in perspective, there are countless amounts of unemployed people out there.

Paul exhorts us to take captive every thought and to make it obedient to Christ (see 2 Cor 10:5). I encourage you to put on an attitude of thanksgiving in your heart, and taste and see how God's presence is that much nearer for you to enter into.

## Are you at Peace or in Pieces?



by Sean Cameron-Gunn

Peace — the seemingly elusive ingredient to a better and happier life. Nowadays, it seems that no one actually has it or understands the true meaning of peace. For example: when a country is in turmoil, peace-keeping troops are sent in with guns, bombs and tanks to "keep the peace". Nations will have endless peace talks about how to keep it, restore it and rectify, but all that can be accomplished is a tentative, fragile truce which is soon shattered. Sadly, this is the world we live in. But this does not negate the angelic announcement of "peace."

As a matter of fact, one of Jesus' titles is the Prince of Peace' (Isaiah 9:6) and one of the "fruit of the Holy Spirit is peace" (Galatians 5:22). This is surely no coincidence. You, see, although the world seeks peace in all manner of ways, it is only ever temporal and transitional. The reason for this is because they look for it outside of their Creator who designed them to have peace with God (Ephesians 2:14).

Before coming to Christ, peace for me

meant doing what I wanted to and when I wanted to do it. Obviously this gave me a sense of control, a sense of purpose — as if my life was on the right track. However, when I gave my heart to Jesus, God dealt with me regarding my control issues. For me, it was never easy to just "let go and let God" because of the fear of the unknown. However, after letting go of this fear and surrendering to God, there came such a release, such a peace into my life and heart. The pressure of having to perform (or not perform) was gone. All that remained was the assurance that, no matter what happened, God was in control of the situation. What a relief to no longer have control! It is the most liberating experience.

In other words, peace — real peace — cannot be found outside of God. This is fact. This, of course, does not mean that nothing will ever upset you. What it does mean is that when trouble strikes, or a crisis or loss occurs, you have the assurance that that no matter what the outcome, it will be for the glory of God (John 16:33; Romans 8:28). Therefore peace, faith and assurance all meet together in God. We have the peace that comes from knowing God

(Ephesians 2:14), faith in what God has promised (2 Corinthians 1:20) and the assurance that God will perform what God has promised (Philippians 1:6).

For the world, those who do not know Christ, this might seem odd, and even strange. But this should come as no surprise to those who have a vital, life-empowering relationship with the Prince of Peace. Jesus says: *"My peace I leave you; my peace I give you. I do not give it as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."* (John 14:27).

Two of the Greek words for peace are "to rest" and "set at one again." So why not allow yourself the peace you long for to rule and reign in your heart? Why not have your soul and heart "set at one again?" Why not accept the "rest" that God has for you? Ask yourself: what have I got to lose? You'll clearly see that there is more to gain than to lose by accepting the Prince of Peace. Then you too can proclaim:

**Luke 2:14 (NIV):**

*"Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace to humankind on whom God's favour rests!"*

Article from The Daily News from 30 September 2006

## Marriage injustice flayed

### Local pastor outraged at discrimination against same sex couples

DAILY NEWS REPORTER

**A**S CHRISTIANS took to the streets last week in protests against the Civil Unions Bill, a Durban pastor has voiced her outrage at what she describes as "gross discrimination" against the gay and lesbian community.

The Marriage Alliance of South Africa (Masa), which organised the mass action in three cities, wants the definition of marriage to be a "voluntary union of a man and a woman" and for parliament to adopt ordinary legislation recognising civil or same sex unions apart from the definition of marriage.

But the Reverend Deborah Bell, senior pastor at Deo Gloria Family Church in Gordon Road, Morningside, believes Masa's stance implies that gay people may not have the same, equal rights as anyone else.

On the church's website the pastor writes: "Just as heterosexual couples that happen to be Christian feel marriage is the right thing to do from an ethical perspective, gay and lesbian couples who are Christians feel the same way.

"Most that I know, want to marry because they believe this is the right thing to do, both ethically and morally in the eyes of God."

In a letter to the *Daily News*, Bell said: "The argument used by the Marriage Alliance (only formed in 2005), is that the

government must satisfy the majority.

"Well, it will be interesting how many white people in that same marriage alliance group would say: 'only do what the majority wants', when white people themselves are in the minority group!"

"Does this mean white people should not be afforded equality and the same rights as black people because they are in the minority? Of course not! That is ridiculous, yet it is the same principle," she said.



"However, homophobia 'the racism within', is clearly putting a veil over some of these Christian groups, who actually do not speak for the whole church, contrary to what they may think.

"This ignorance and bias is clear by their action in this case and must stop in the face of justice. Clearly churches have their own constitutions and can at will refuse to marry gay and lesbian people based on their own constitutions. That is another matter of course."

Bell said that in order for the constitution not to be contradicted, the marriage formula itself must change. There must be no other compromise as anything less is discriminatory.



THE Rev Deborah Bell (right) and her life partner Marietjie Geldenhuys have been together for eight years. They have said their vows to each other privately and would like to marry legally, but do not have the same privilege as heterosexual couples

Picture: Supplied

"I love Jesus Christ and live a moral life. I am an upstanding member of the community and I have contributed to it both financially and in deed through our church and in the upliftment of all people seeking the face of Christ. However, I wish to sign the same register for all couples to marry without reservation.

"We live in the 21st century and yet still see this gross discrimination against gay and lesbian people, who have been discriminated against because of ignorance and homophobia in society.

"Promiscuity lives in all communities and lust in every society. Yet the gay and lesbian

communities are constantly singled out because of the ignorance and stigma people have attached to gay and lesbian people.

"People's stories in the GLIBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender) community need to be heard. Many are your brothers, your sisters, your colleagues, your neighbours and your chil-

dren. Being invisible does not make gay and lesbian people non-existent."

Bell said many of the Biblical references to homosexuality had been misinterpreted.

"I do not and will not compromise my faith, but I know that people have misinterpreted the word of God to suit themselves and their own fears. This has spilled over into this reaction to the change in the proposed bill. Why is there such fear?"

"With a divorce rate close to 50%, straight people were certainly not examples of those who should be holding onto the Marriage Act for themselves.

"What does this say about morality?" she asked.

"Those gay and lesbian people that want to get married do so for the same reasons that most straight people do, to commit their lives to one another in this lifetime and to have the same rights as any other married couple do.

"Anything less than equal is unacceptable. Justice must be served. We are talking about human beings here, whose lives will be affected, unlike the lives of heterosexuals, whose lives will not be affected by a change of the marriage formula in any way whatsoever.

"The Bible must not be used in error once again as it was in our past to proclaim that slavery was ordained by God."

Rev Bell can be reached at [dgbn@iafrica.co.za](mailto:dgbn@iafrica.co.za)

## Our Vision

To bring all people to the heart 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, forgiveness and love.

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 nation.

## Our Core Values

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

## DGFC on Weddings



*Congratulations to Sean Cameron-Gunn and Gert van der Linde, who were joined together in a Holy Union of marriage by Rev. Deborah Bell on 11 November 2006.*

## Weekly Activities

**Sunday services** at 18h00, 48 Gordon Rd, Morningside, Durban

**Mondays:** Counseling & Phone a friend for Christ

**Tuesdays:** Music Ministry and Intercessory Ministry

**Thursdays:** Home group – Time of teaching and fellowship

**Saturdays** (once a month) Bible College - Equipping & Leadership training

## Contact Us

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