

## Gen Y and a (not so) New Commandment



I have always been interested to hear what people have to say about different generations. It is a strange phenomenon, a way of grouping people according to when they were born (and largely where as well). Classifications, labels and common traits are applied to a group based on the way they think and behave in the world they live.

There are two big pitfalls when we talk about generations. Firstly, generalisations are inevitably made about each generation, but when a generalisation is assumed upon every person in that group, it does not become a generalisation any more. This becomes a dangerous lie, in the same way that racism assumes something about every person in a particular race, and more

often that not, these are normally negative (and often false) stereotypes. The second problem when discussing generations is that we generally focus on the differences. It is true that every generation is unique because the world we grow and live in continues to change, yet we are more the same than we often give credit.

In the previous newsletter, we were presented with statistics on Generation Y. The unsurprising conclusion drawn was that the majority of youth today find God and the church irrelevant and uninteresting. Reading statistics like these can make us focus on things between generations that make us different, and they can often result in negative attitudes. A different perspective reveals that everybody, including Generation Y, wants to be happy, wants hope and wants someone they can call a friend.

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As human beings, every person in every generation:

- is made in the image of God
- is made for His glory
- lives in a fallen world
- has sinned and fallen short of God's glory
- needs to be reconciled to God through His sacrificial love for them
- seeks love and approval from those around them
- has the opportunity to make the world a better place in every stage of life

If we only focus on our differences, we lose sight of the fundamental things that make us human beings made in His image; we perpetuate an “us and them” mentality that can only divide and; we dig a hole that makes it increasingly difficult to find solutions for us to build bridges between one another.

When we focus on the Lord, we find our purpose in Him, His Spirit fills us with His love, we can love one another in the way He intended for His body, and the stereotypes we label on each other can be broken. When we love one another cross-generationally within our church, those around us can smell the aroma of Christ and will



be drawn to Him through His love. But if we cannot love our own brothers and sisters, what hope do we have of loving anybody outside our church walls?

We need to be strategic in the way we ‘do’ church, for it to be relevant and appropriate to our changing society that encompasses so much of the Generation Y culture. However, before any strategic planning or programming is done within the church, we must first repent of any ungodly attitudes towards one another and pray that God will renew our minds and deepen our love for one another, including those different from ourselves.

God has a perfect will and purpose for Generation Y, as He has for every generation past and every generation to come. May we see others through His eyes. Only God can change a person's heart. Let us demonstrate the love of Christ to those He has placed in our midst and pray that the Holy Spirit will draw all men and women near to Him.

John 13:34-35 says,

**"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."**

*by Evan Englezos*



# Gen Y Conference



On May 15th, the CBFV will sponsor a one day conference at the Canterbury Gardens Community Church. We will be privileged to have two gifted teachers and communicators who are well qualified to tackle the question of Generation Y and how they fit into the local church. **Tim Goh** is a pastor as well as a qualified medical doctor. He is Senior Pastor at the Life Expedition Church located in Carlton and he has been instrumental in this church connecting directly with many young people in the inner city area.

**Tim Hawkins** has been involved in youth ministry over many years. He is based in Sydney and his passion is to see high school students become fervent followers of Jesus. He planted and built "Crossfire", a youth ministry based at Castle Hill and this has become one of the most fruitful church youth ministries in Australia.

**This conference is for all ages and for everyone that has a real desire to see God work among and across all generations.**

Our churches are at a real crossroad, and desperately need to know better how to connect and communicate effectively with younger age groups such as Generation Y. This day will provide all participants with teaching and information that will greatly assist our churches to become more effective in this area. (see article in this edition "Gen Y and a (not so) New Commandment".)

**If you would like more information about the conference or you would like to register to attend, go to [www.cbfv.org.au](http://www.cbfv.org.au) and click on the Gen Y graphic.**

## Notice to ALL Women

**The 2010 Women's Convention:** will be held at The Island, Cowes on the weekend 20th – 22nd August. Dr Alison Howell will present the studies entitled '**Reconciliation in a Fragile World**'.

**Enquiries: Phone 9842 5494 or 9717 6121**

## Willow Creek Resources

The Association is a member of the Willow Creek Association and consequently is able to purchase resources at a discount. If your church would like to acquire any of these resources, contact George Buchanan (Director of Ministries). Phone 9766 1760 / 0425 800 960 or email [glbuchanan@optusnet.com.au](mailto:glbuchanan@optusnet.com.au)

To view available resources go to [www.willowcreek.org.au](http://www.willowcreek.org.au)

# Young People and the Future of the Church

## The Vital Need for Young People to be Heard

**A**bout 300,000 (8.3%) of people in Melbourne attend Church on a typical Sunday. About 144,000 (4%) of the 1.7million (48%) of under 34's are at Church on a typical Sunday. 53% of attenders are over 55 years (including 33% of church leaders) Melbourne population is increasing by 180,000 p.a. with church attendance declining by about 5000 p.a.

*(All Melbourne Matters Feb 2009)*

"While some of the Y-generation and younger are highly motivated and committed to social justice issues and engagement in society and institutions such as the Church, they are the exception. Many young people are not willing to sit in meetings that are not interactive, and are disinclined to accept being told what they should believe. Young people in Melbourne are looking for people's lives and actions to reflect what they say (or preach). Before being interested or willing to commit to a movement or message they are looking to see what the end product looks like. To engage young people in the future, the Church that preaches a Gospel of love and unity will need to have dealt with division and unforgiveness in the structures and relationships."

*(Quote from Christian Research Assoc. Youth Spirituality Seminar 2007)*

Only the intentional involvement and empowering of young people into decision-making and leadership of the Church at all levels will bring renewed levels of Christian commitment and influence in our city. There are many dynamic young Christian leaders already establishing and leading cutting edge ministries, and many others with deep faith and vision for the present and future of the Church.

**Time spent by pastors and other mature leaders to encourage, disciple and listen to young people will be a vital investment in the future of the Church.** We believe there are many passionate young Christians with passionate visions of how they believe the Lord is leading the Church – and that they would love to share their thoughts with their pastor and older Christians (but may be reluctant to initiate this.) The CBFV is actively committed to seeing Next Generation leaders released into the fulfilment of their purpose in God's Church – in this generation! We are meeting with, listening to and seeking to empower key young leaders of Christian networks and ministries.



# Peter Keep commences as Church Growth & Development Pastor

I have just been appointed through the Church Growth Department and the CBFV Board to a part time role as Pastor of Church Growth and Development. Having been a pastor for 28 years, I am very passionate about the local church and its role in the community and extending the kingdom of God.

My focus will be on individual churches, rather than the whole group of churches. Others are working in areas across the whole network to strengthen the whole. So, my role is not a structural-organisational one, but one of spiritual and practical encouragement and equipping.

One of the things that has been suggested by the Church Growth Department is that I go to Churches at their invitation and preach and teach for three weeks in a row, especially around themes to do with reaching out and building God's Church. Already news of my appointment is out and I am booked up for three weekend series in February, April, June, August and September 2010. I am in Rwanda on a mission trip in July.

I am also aware that some Churches do not know me, as I them, so there could be an advantage to you in me coming just for one Sunday and getting to know one another better and see how we may assist.

Another role that I have been asked to play is to help Churches work through where they are currently at and where they would like to go. I have had experience in this kind of facilitation that helps churches refocus. For example, while at Warrandyte Community Church, I facilitated refocusing at Ringwood Community Church.

The Church Growth Department has also recognized the vital importance of training. Through the CBFV Board and the CBT, it is able to make available a number of internships annually. The idea is that you may have a young leader who needs developing, perhaps studying at a Bible College and working part time to support themselves. Your Church may be able to partially support them and we can come alongside you and also grant support. There is an application process for this, so if you are interested please request those details. We think this has very exciting potential not only for the conduct of current ministry, but also the development of our people into leaders.

The Church Growth Department also has a burden for new Church plants. It is not going to do those plants, but wants to come along side those with a passion who do. I am happy to discuss this with Church leaderships that may be interested.

As this role is new for me, I would appreciate your prayers very much. God's blessings to you all as you labour in the Church to God's glory

*Peter Keep*



**Peter can be contacted by email at [peterkeep@me.com](mailto:peterkeep@me.com) or by phone on 0416 281 827 and all churches are invited to contact Peter if they are interested in exploring how he can assist them.**

# A journey to unity

## The merging of a Baptist and a Brethren fellowship

In the 1980's I was part of a merger between two Brethren Fellowships at Warragul. I belonged to a group known as Hopkins closed Brethren. A new Open Brethren group called Warragul Community Church had started in Warragul having relocated from Darnum. It soon became evident that we needed to be drawn together as one fellowship. We were separated by two doctrinal issues deemed by the Hopkins group to be irresolvable. My group had been taught that Acts 2:41-42 showed how the church was first formed, and any departure from that format would be opening the door to apostasy.

The second issue was the need for women to wear a head covering when in Church as taught in 1 Corinthians 11. The Hopkins group resolved to go back to the book of Acts and restudy the issues that caused us to meet separately. After three years of patient study, we had resolved that the principles of hermeneutics showed that we had erred in our interpretation of the issues that divided us. The resulting unity happened at a time when charismatic

issues were causing divisions in many other local churches. God greatly blessed the unity and the Community Church of Warragul enjoyed a period of significant growth which has continued to this day.

In early 1990 I was asked to help a struggling fellowship at Morwell which was experiencing difficulties. The local community had been plunged into economic crisis by the privatisation of the electricity generating industry. That industry had employed 22,000 people and with privatisation that was reduced to 6000. Consequently massive local unemployment caused many people to leave and seek employment elsewhere. That employment crisis caused large drop off in attendance at the local churches and Morwell Gospel Chapel like all other churches suffered considerable reduction in membership.

In addition to that problem, the Chapel had faced significant internal crisis from other complex issues. Despite much prayer and endless efforts of Godly people,



the issues could not be resolved. This was a sad state with a group of discouraged people continuing to faithfully maintain the testimony of the local church. In 2008 the leaders of Morwell Gospel chapel started dialogue with the local Baptist Church. That church had been through its own crisis. They had proposed to merge with the Church of Christ, but members rejected it. They closed down for a period. Then after reopening, they faced a new problem when the marriage of their pastor failed. It was agreed that we should exchange preachers and conduct some joint services. The purpose was a courtship so we could explore issues that separated us. Each month during 2009 we held one combined service and afterwards met with their leadership. At those meetings we discussed the issues which united us, and explored the issues which divided us

The Morwell Gospel Chapel and the Baptist Church of Morwell have become a new church under the title of **Christian Community Church**. Our first service was held on the 3rd January 2010 and was a day of great blessing and love by all who attended. At this point in time, the new Church has links with both the Christian Brethren Fellowships of Victoria and the Baptist Union of Victoria. However, as far as our interaction with the local community is concerned, our desire is to downplay any sense of “denominationalism.” We feel that the most important thing is that Jesus Christ is honoured as Lord and King. The merger has already been a source of blessing. Some new families have recently appeared at the Baptist church and they too were keen to be part of the impending merger. On the 28th February a special service to celebrate our unity took place.

*Howard Sharman*  
Christian Community Church  
Morwell



## Christian Community Church Morwell

Christian Community Church Morwell celebrated their inaugural Unity service on Sunday 28th February. The service was the culmination of an amazing story where two struggling fellowships (Morwell Baptist & Morwell Gospel Chapel) have merged to form one vibrant fellowship. The Bible readings from John 17:20-26 and Ephesians 4:1-6 were a biblical basis for this new fellowship and one of the songs ‘In Christ Alone’ was at the heart of where this fellowship sees itself.

George Buchanan and Geoff Whittaker shared in the celebration service representing the CBT/CBFV and Howard Sharman gave an outline of the journey towards unity between the two fellowships over the last two years. Peter Harvey, who brought the message, challenged all present to remember that Jesus promised us that He would build his church and we need to be obedient and faithful to this as we focus on the kingdom of God and allow the Holy Spirit to work among us.

It was encouraging for the new leadership to see the building filled with all generations represented.

# Bunyip Ridge Bushfire Anniversary Church Service

**From L-R:** Russell Broadbent MP (Federal Member for McMillan);  
Leanne Anderson (Community Care Manager, CCW); Bill Anderson



This was held under a large Marquee at the Labertouche Hall on Sunday 7th February. The theme for this service was restoring hope. The service was organized by the Community Church Warragul on behalf of the local community recovery committees.



A large crowd assembled for this service and they greatly appreciated the music provided by Steve Messer's 'Strange Country'. Steve also shared a message of hope with all those assembled. Alan Matthews who is the Uniting Church Growth Corridor Minister gave the Bible Reading from John 14:1-7 with Captain Eric from C.H.I.P.S (Christians Helping in Primary Schools) providing the children (& others) with an amazing presentation of the Good Samaritan.

Russell Broadbent, who is the local federal MP for this area gave some reflections focused on the losses of the previous 12 months. The morning was a tremendous testimony to the goodness of God throughout this difficult time and also one of hope as people look to the future. The whole morning was a powerful witness to the faithfulness of God and one where the Community Church at Warragul connected with their neighbors and local community in such a positive way.



# At the Crossroads

The CCCAust National Conference in June will centre on **BIBLE; CULTURE & MISSION**. The Conference will be a pivotal and timely event in the life of our churches and movement as a whole throughout Australia. As we move into the C21st we need to balance our emphasis on each of the above three areas. Too much emphasis on one to the exclusion of one of the others will not serve our ultimate purpose of being an active part of the Great Commission to the world around us.

The three keynote speakers will each address these important areas and provide us with important insight and guidance.

**George Verwer** comes to the Conference with a wealth of experience in evangelism throughout the world where he founded *Operation Mobilization* as a dynamic global mission. **Mark Strom** is the current Principal/CEO of the *Laidlaw College* (formerly Bible College of NZ) and his teaching locates the big story within both ancient and modern history and culture.

**Jeremy McQuoid** is the teaching pastor at Deeside Christian Fellowship in Aberdeen, Scotland. He is passionate about lively, biblical preaching and training of younger leaders and he has written the book, "*How to set your heart on fire*".



Why not put the Conference dates of June 11 – 14 into your plans for 2010 and make this part of a holiday to Queensland. The

Conference will be held at the Mueller Community Church. For more details visit the website [www.cccaustconference.com](http://www.cccaustconference.com)

# ...about Community of Hope



As friends of the master, Jesus Christ, we embrace his pathway and find hope and strength for life's journey through his loving, compassionate and empowering ministry.

We affirm and celebrate what Jesus taught and practiced, and believe that the meaning of life and the answers to people's deepest needs are found in following Him.

The Community of Hope has participated in Mind-Body-Spirit festivals Victoria for a number of years, and also in New Age and Community festivals in local areas. It encourages Christians to actively participate in such festivals and markets and to present the Good News of Jesus in a thoughtful, relevant and contemporary way. In 2010, two of the '**Mind Body Spirit Festivals**' that we will attend will occur on Friday 11 June to Monday 14 June and Friday 19 November to Sunday 21 November. Both of these are open to visitors between 10:00am to 7:00pm.

## We offer to:

- Help people understand the New Age Movement and other contemporary spiritualities.
- Give support and advice for a Christian presence in local festivals and markets.
- Encourage spiritual seekers to make contact with caring churches offering courses which bring meaning and purpose to life.

## Working with local Churches

Since its inception the COH has been involved in New Age and Alternative festivals in both NSW and Victoria, and has developed strategies, methodologies and sensitive dialogue to point people to Jesus Christ as the answer to their spiritual search. It has also facilitated participation

in Community festivals, local markets and other suitable venues.

The COH seeks to equip local churches and interested groups to be effective in sharing the good news with today's spiritual seekers and respond to the opportunities presented in their local communities. It offers expertise and encouragement to help churches to offer this witness in effective ways. Local churches have the opportunity to be informed about the "alternative" spiritual scene and to discuss and plan for a relevant witness in their particular situations. The COH is aware of the need for prayer support and invites people who are prepared to support this ministry

in this way to offer their time and encouragement.

The COH believes involvement in local festivals and markets creates opportunities for churches to build bridges in the community and be relevant in today's society. We believe the potential to bring the gospel to searching people far outweighs any dangers of involvement.

**Greater is HE who is in you than he who is in the world.** 1 John 4:4

For further information please email [info@communityofhope.org.au](mailto:info@communityofhope.org.au) or visit the website [www.communityofhope.org.au](http://www.communityofhope.org.au)

## CBFV 2010 Planning Day

The CBFV Board and staff met on Saturday, 13th February to consider directions and strategies for 2010 and beyond. By the end of the day the following areas were identified as the highest priorities requiring action and resources. These were;

1. Church Planting
2. Training and equipping of current & future leaders
3. Effective communication between the Board and all relevant stakeholders
4. Church support such as training and development.

The Board believes that these four areas are critically important for us as a network of churches as we consider our past, present and future.

# cbfv

## Contact details

**The Association of Christian Brethren Fellowships in Vic**

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# Impacting families through Temcare and the local church

**In the book of Nehemiah, God's people had a mind to work (4:6). They were determined to complete the work that God had started. They were faithful to fulfil the will of God in their lives.**

There is much work for the people of God to do and we at Temcare are encouraged by all the support our volunteers continue to bring to families, children and young people. As a Christian welfare organisation that was established and supported through the vision and hard work of the Brethren Churches, Temcare aims to support families in a Christ-centred way.

During difficult times, our Temcare volunteers are able to provide support and encouragement through both the respite and mentoring programs. In our current annual report one of the mums wrote "my experience with Temcare has always been a positive one, they have catered to my needs and provided assistance that suited my family that was most helpful for me"

In January this year, Temcare held its family camp at CYC The Island. During the week, there were Christian discussions

and a range of activities organised for the campers. The feedback from the mums was positive and since the camp, some of the mums have made an effort to be in touch with each other. Thank you to all our volunteers for their time and support at the camp.

On the 17th April, Edge Church will be hosting a Temcare Dinner to celebrate and share the work of Temcare. We would love to see many people there and more detail in our March Newsletter. This will be a free event with the ability to make donations on the night. If you are interested in attending, please contact the Temcare office on 9852 9795.

We would like to thank all our supporters for the time they give to pray and their generous financial support. Temcare is always looking for ways to fund its programs so we are grateful for every contribution made.

We look forward this year to developing our programs further and would love to hear from anyone interested in getting involved or even just to find out more about what we do. Alternatively, you can visit us on [www.temcare.org.au](http://www.temcare.org.au)

*Barry Ibrahim*  
Principal Officer

**Next Edition** Any fellowships or individuals that have events, announcements or other information that might be relevant to a wider audience, please feel free to **contact Geoff Whittaker**: Tel 5968 6785 / 0431 251 871 or Email [geoff@cbfv.org.au](mailto:geoff@cbfv.org.au). The next edition will be published in June 2010.