

CESA NEWS

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN SOUTH AFRICA

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The Secret of Contentment

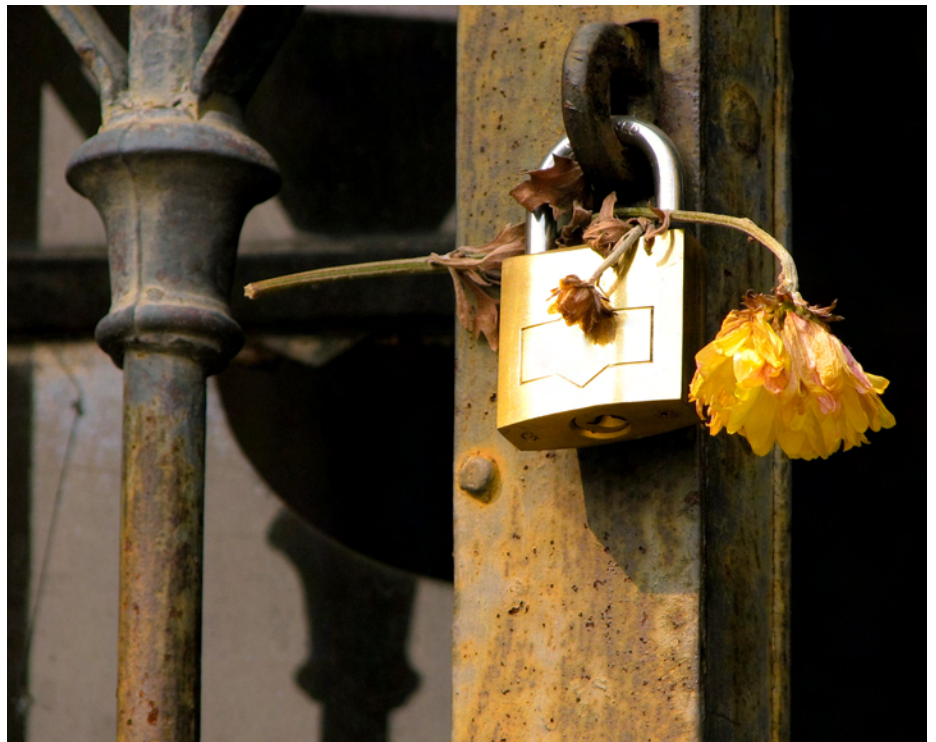
By Gary Röhm

SOMEONE ONCE sent an email with a picture of his face on it asking the recipients if they thought he looked content. What is it to be content? Is it a surreal look that one has alongside the outward expressions of happiness? Is it when one's primary relationships are going well? Is it when one is financially secure or independent of others?

We often rely on other people and sets of circumstances to be just right in order to be "content". This raises questions about the impulses of ambition and greed and whether they are healthy or unhealthy and able to achieve contentment. And then we come to the most remarkable statement by Paul in Philippians 4:11, "I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content." Is it ever possible to have "learned" contentment?

Every circumstance is an opportunity to learn contentment

Paul was imprisoned. And having received a gift from the Philippians over which he rejoices he also tells them how he did not need it. This was not Paul being rude or discontent with an insufficient gift, but using his circumstances as a teaching opportunity. Paul was pleased that they had a practical way to show their concern for him but he was most pleased that they were "having fellowship" in his sufferings (4:14 & 1:7, 29). Paul was called to suffer for the name of Jesus and anyone who shared in his ministry enjoyed the



same privilege as he did in suffering for the sake of Christ. This is the source of Paul's joy.

We can see that contentment is something to be learned in all circumstances. We often think that wealth may solve our discontentment, whereas its purpose may be to expose greed so that we can repent of idolatry. Someone once said, "To be content with little is hard, but to be content with much is impossible." Paul's secret of contentment is not Stoicism but an open secret that he easily gives away and is a God-sufficiency expressed in the fellowship of believers (4:14).

Contentment allows disciples to advance the gospel

Philippians is about embracing and modelling the way of the cross (2:4-11 & 3:17-4:1). Paul wanted the Philippians to live for Christ like he did. He was confident that this would be achieved and his confidence was in God (1:6; 4:13 & 19).

Paul saw their gift in commercial terms. It is fruit, like that of a harvest that increases to their credit. He tells them their gift is an investment which increases in value in eternity. If a cost-benefit analysis was done on whether Paul was a worthwhile investment it is

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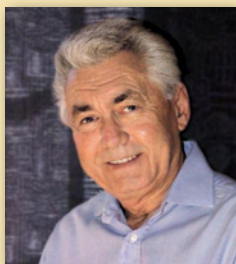
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A WORD FROM THE PRESIDING BISHOP

I HAVE BEEN thinking much about what we call “evangelistic” preaching in our churches. I think most of us use this terminology to refer to a sermon that is specifically aimed at people who are not Christians with the vague hope they may be converted. It seems to me that for many people the aim of an evangelistic service has been blunted by several factors, which sometimes discourages them. Here are some of the factors that may influence our thinking.

Firstly, the same people often respond in such a service, which usually doesn't attract too many people in the first place. This makes us question its value. The people who respond may be weak or problem people – or occasionally someone we know is a bright and committed Christian.

Secondly, in the normal course of our Gospel work, we see conversions take place anyway so what is the point of an evangelistic service? Isn't it better to keep us consistently doing what we are doing and reaping the results?

Thirdly, some people have been so discouraged with evangelistic endeavours that they do not even attempt them anymore. They expect nothing to happen and so nothing does. Sometimes a defeatist attitude is prevalent because nothing organised ever seems to go well.

There are also other problems associated with evangelistic events. It seems to me, as someone who travels around doing evangelistic preaching, that often church leaders do not really expect anything to happen and are therefore often unprepared for any consequences to evangelistic sermons. For instance, I personally expect people to respond to the Gospel presentation, but often have to contend with the fact that the church to which I have been invited has no cards or papers available for names to be taken, nor are there pencils – or even any give-away booklets. I have always maintained that names collected

after an evangelistic event are a great pastoral treasure for the minister who has eyes to see.

God's Greater Purposes

When an evangelistic sermon is faithfully preached in the power of the Holy Spirit a number of things may happen and they are not always connected to conversion. Of course, one hopes that true conversions will indeed take place, and thank God they often do, which is the point of evangelistic events in the first place. But as the Good News is proclaimed other things happen as well. Who are these people who sometimes hand in their names to indicate they have responded to the sermon?

1. Some may be true and faithful Christians who simply feel stirred by what they have heard. They may have given in their names not because they are in any special need, but rather as a way of saying, “Yes, I agree with all that. I support it, I believe it with all my heart – here is my name.” It may be nothing more than an affirmation of what has been heard.
2. Others may have been reminded of long forgotten sins and be suddenly troubled and unsure of themselves.
3. Some may feel they have not really made the great commitment after all.
4. Others may be stirred out of a personal or cultural or habitual “Christianity”. They may have been in church for years without being saved, but now suddenly the penny has dropped.
5. Yet others may become overwhelmed by the huge personal

problems they face. They may have been struggling for a long time, but now the proclamation of a Saviour brings to the surface all the ugliness of their lives.

The point is not to lose confidence in the simple proclamation of the basic fundamentals of the Good News on a regular basis. The Holy Spirit is present when the Word is preached. Who knows what His purposes and plans are for an evangelistic meeting and the people who attend? While we are looking for new converts He may be using the occasion to revive cold and dead hearts or long forgotten Gospel memories or preparing some of God's people to finally bring to resolution old and long-standing problems.

Continue to Preach the Gospel

All our churches should, without fail, continue in evangelistic activities, which should always be contextually relevant. They should expect things to happen. But if the expectations are only going to be one-dimensional, there may be disappointment and frustration. Rather see each response as a new pastoral opportunity either to affirm or clarify the Gospel for some purpose. Never despise a single name that comes in. Contact them, pray for them and speak to them. Not only may some weak brother or sister be helped, but some hardened sinner hiding behind his religious mask may suddenly come into a brand new saving faith.

God will not give up His divine patience until the last of His elect are saved and we should not give up our evangelistic enthusiasm so long as we remain either in ministry or as a witnessing member of a local church.

Bp Frank Retief

“God will not give up His divine patience until the last of His elect are saved”

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almost certain that the gift would not have been sent. Struggles with discontentment are unlikely to produce such faith investments. No wonder Paul had to tell them that his circumstances were really advancing the gospel.

Their gift was also a fragrant offering and sacrifice acceptable to God. The Old Testament reminds us that God sees the heart and accepts or rejects sacrifices on that basis. Although sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins was made once and for all by Jesus on the cross there are still sacrifices to be made for the completion of the gospel mission. John Piper says that Christ's cross was for propitiation whereas our cross is for propagation. Paul says that God is pleased with such an aroma. A greedy, self-serving and discontent generation will not be free to offer such sacrifices.

God is no man's debtor

Paul may as well have put an "equal" sign between vs 13 and vs 19 saying, "And my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." Just as God has more grace to give so He has every resource in glory to finish the work that He started in every believer in all circumstances. This is not Paul saying, "Give so that you will receive more" thereby stimulating greed off the back of discontentment. With Paul there is no ambiguity on the motivation for giving gospel gifts. It is a reminder that God's provision for our needs is circumstance specific rather than circumstance dependant so that He is glorified as He supplies in excess to complete His work in us and through us in all circumstances.

God is our source of contentment

Only God will allow us to turn every range of circumstances into gospel opportunities. Only God can generate the level of contentment in one's life that results in being generous out of one's poverty and not merely out of one's riches. To learn the secret of contentment is part of discipleship and critical to fellowship. It frees us to invest in eternity and to offer sacrifices that are pleasing to God, knowing that all things come from God and are to be directed towards His glory.

Gary Röhm
Rector, Christ Church Blaauwberg

Crossword Kids Camp 2010

a leader's diary entry



17 March

ABOUT 25 LEADERS arrive at St James for Crossword Kids Camp training. There is a general buzz of excitement as Chris Ebdon (camp speaker) goes through the teaching material for camp and Andre Visagie (camp director) chats through the programme we will be running. This year we are introducing a camp band. Andrew Barnes (keyboard and vocals) heads this up and the camp song is already being practiced. Can't wait for camp!

7 April | 3pm

Just arrived on camp (Rocklands in Simonstown), the weather is a little cold but clear skies! Jenni Galloway and Melissa Byne are setting up registration and getting the packs ready for the kids. The theme is "Crossword News Network" (CNN). Each child will get a booklet and a badge with the memory verse (Luke 1:4). As a leader, I get one of the CNN T-shirts. Jeff Cairns (our sound/tech guy) is setting up as well as the rest of our Crossword band arrives... Warren (Bass), Paul (Drums)!



5pm Kids start arriving. Kids from all over the Western Cape attend Crossword Kids Camp including Hermanus and Paarl. Once they have settled their stuff in the dorms, they start to explore the campsite.

6pm Andre calls for supper time and camp officially starts. It is so awesome to see kids chatting and eating together, having come from various ethnic and economic situations. Yay for the uniting Gospel of Jesus!

7pm The first session starts. We meet in the auditorium for a time of praising God, hearing God's Word taught and praying. We are working through some encounters with Jesus found in Luke's Gospel – the kids are encouraged to trust Luke's investigated account.

Eventually after a team building game, hot chocolate and a leaders' meeting (prayer and trouble-shooting), we all head to bed.

8 April | 7am

All the leaders meet for a little bit to

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pray, chat about the programme and the day.

7:30am Kids are working on their Quiet Times. For some of the children, this is the first time they have ever done a QT. (St Matthews donated a whole bunch of Bibles, so we can give some of these children their very own Bible as well.)

8am Morning starts with yummy breakfast from the Rocklands staff (they are amazing!).

Another great session, learning about Jesus encounters from Luke. After each session we get into smaller groups and really discuss what we have just heard and how to further apply it to our lives. We also get time to pray. My group starts out a bit nervous to pray, but by the end of camp they are all praying and grappling with what they are learning. Afterwards we go back to the auditorium for a review game run by Lauren (St Matthews). It is really encouraging how much the children are learning and remembering.

Crossword Kids Camp Soccer World Cup! We split the children up across

ages and churches into “play” teams. This helps them to meet other children and learn how to love and serve each other. Across the camp time we do various activities aimed at encouraging children with different gifts and talents. Today we play a soccer round-robin. Games are 10 minutes long and then the teams rotate. Guest referees do a great job making sure the rules are kept and the kids have fun. Eventually it is a showdown match with the Orange team winning. Special mention to a camper who scored a goal across from the opposite side of the field (he was the goalie!).

The rest of the day rushes past with team activities, another great session – definitely have our camp song “I want to be like Jesus” stuck in my head.

9:30pm Eventually the day starts slowing down – hot chocolate, leaders’ meeting and bed. When I get back to my dorm, all my kids are already asleep.

9 April | 7am

Last day! It is storming as I make my way to leaders’ meeting. We think of awards to give to encourage children and chat about all the exciting Gospel

opportunities we have had. The behaviour of the children on camp has been really encouraging.

Kids start to move about and the weather holds off. One last session reminding ourselves of what it means to meet and follow Jesus. Lauren (St Matthews) and Christina (The Message) finish off the last teaching session with a massive review game.

As Andre winds up camp with awards and thanks, it is so clear that God has been at work. He gifted our camp speaker – Chris! He enabled our musicians, He raised up leaders, He made sure the right kids came and were in the right groups, He spoke to many children and made sure they went home changed.

As we pack up and give the kids QT material to take home, it is encouraging to see how many kids take the booklets (made available in Afrikaans too – hopefully next year in Xhosa as well!).

2:30pm Pack up time. Can’t wait for next year’s camp. But going home to sleep!

*Jo Taylor
St Stephens Church, Kenilworth*

Confirmation Service at Holy Trinity Scottburgh

SUNDAY, 13 JUNE 2010 Holy Trinity Church Scottburgh held a confirmation service. It was a great day as Emily Wortmann confessed her belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. Bishop Raj Moodley performed the ceremony, which was attended by many regulars, visitors and family.

Later in the service, the bishop brought a great message to us from Acts 11. He encouraged all present that if they claimed to be Christians, they should then be disciples of Jesus. He explained that being a disciple of Jesus is more than just attending church, but it’s also about learning from Jesus and taking what we learn from Him to others who do not know Him.

After the service, we all celebrated Emily’s confession over a cup of tea or coffee and enjoyed some eats provided by the family. We continue to pray for Emily that as she has made this confession of faith, she will continue to follow



the Lord Jesus in her daily life as she grows and matures in the Lord.

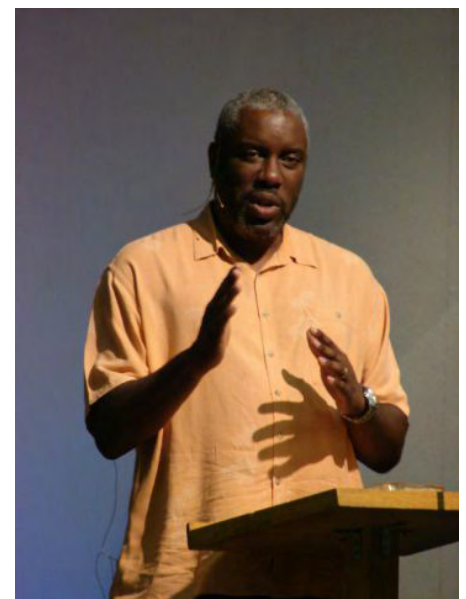
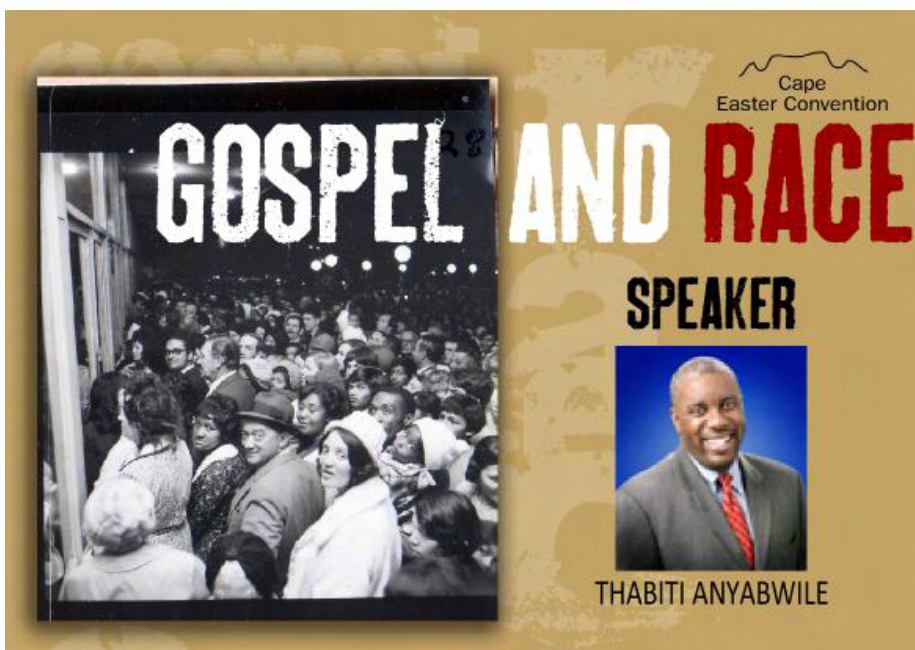
*Rev Dion Steele
Holy Trinity Church Scottburgh*

Above

L – R: Rev Dion Steele with his daughter Megan Steele in front, Emily Wortmann, Bishop Raj Moodley, Evelyn Moodley and their daughter Janine Moodley

Cape Easter Convention 2010

THE CAPE EASTER Convention was a little different this year from previous years. Instead of having speakers do a Peninsula rotation over a couple of nights, we all met at St James for three nights to listen to Rev Thabiti Anyabwile. Thabiti is the senior pastor of the First Baptist church of the Grand Cayman, and he dealt with the subject of "Gospel and Race". Thabiti was the 2009 Synod speaker. He is not only a dynamic speaker but is also truly passionate about truth and the Gospel.



Rev Thabiti Anyabwile

Our hearts will, I believe, never be the same again after hearing God's word break through the framework of race theory. It also placed before us a biblical view of what it means to be human, and being reminded of the wonder of being made in the image of God and all that it means.

On the first night the challenge was to refashion our understanding of ourselves and of others, to be moulded by the Holy Spirit and to shift our minds from otherness to togetherness. How refreshing then, as we think about and look at our young democracy, a country steeped in racially-defined thinking, to know that because of who God is, and who we are as image bearers, that we are not individuals defined by race. Yes, we are ethnically diverse, but as Christians we are one in Christ.

At the start of the second evening,

Thabiti started with the sombre truth "for all have sinned". Irrespective of race, this Gospel truth places us all on the same level before God. And then the phrase that brings us all hope – "while we were yet sinners Christ died for us".

We were reminded through Ephesians of the wonder of the grace which reconciles us to God and to each other as we trust and believe in Christ. Through Christ we are privileged to be members of His household, a people of unity, a new "spiritual" ethnic group. We may not always experience this unity, this oneness, but God has made us a new people because of the work of Christ. Christ is all, and in all – "we have been moved from biology to Christ"!

The challenge set before us was clearly mapped out on the third night as our eyes were focussed on the church.

The questions we took home with us were clear. How does being a new people impact who we are as a church? If someone took a snapshot of us, would we be seen as being a new spiritual ethnic group? Do we love the people of God? Are we worthy of our calling, displaying humility as we imitate Christ? Do we reflect the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace? How does this all work out in reality as a people living in South Africa, with all the cultural diversity we experience?

We ought to be motivated by grace and our oneness in Christ. And we should live lives worthy of our calling.

*Jean Machill
Publicity & Events Co-Ordinator
St James Church
Kenilworth*

Sound Ministry Training Day

ON 1 MAY 2010 fifty people from churches across the Western Cape gathered at St James Church Kenilworth for a 3-hour seminar on sound and audio ministry.

The training day was led by Michael Slater, who is the director and principal of the College of Audio Engineering (www.caecollege.co.za). Michael has over 17 years experience in the professional audio industry in South Africa and in the UK, and many more years experience ministering in churches as a musician and sound operator.

In most churches, the sound ministry is often an ignored and thankless task – until something goes wrong. It is usually handled by a small group of very willing and servant-hearted people, but they often lack the confidence that comes with technical knowledge and training. As the operation of the sound system is becoming more and more important in our churches, the aim of this training day was to equip and encourage those involved in this ministry.

We began the day with God's Word, where Paul makes clear in 1 Corinthians 12 that we are all part of the body of Christ, that the body of Christ needs many different parts to function, and that "the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable" (v23).

Michael then explained the physics of sound, discussed church architecture and speaker placement, helped us understand the relationship between the sound operator and the music ministry team, and gave us an overview of microphones and the correct way to use them. People had plenty of opportunity to ask questions related to their own situations, and Michael helped them troubleshoot problems.

In the second half of the session we had the hands-on opportunity to "build a mix". Some very gifted and able musicians from a variety of CESA churches came along to minister in the morning, and Michael used them to help us understand how different instruments blend together and how to create a balance of sound that is conducive to congregational singing. We were able to discuss the way each of us heard the results, and were surprised by how

different our perceptions of the same thing often are.

Michael impressed upon us that we are doing this for the body of Christ and that we should strive for excellence as we play our part. The feedback I have received shows that everyone left feeling better equipped and more confident in their ministry. Moreover, we were challenged and encouraged to minister behind the sound desk for God's glory and to continue working at this valuable ministry.

Clint Lombard, Music Minister, Christ Church Somerset West

This training day was the result of a collective (and encouraged by Bishop Des Ingelsby) between Colin Peckham (Music Director, St James Kenilworth), Rob Booth (Music Director, The Message Rondebosch), and Clint Lombard (Music Minister, Christ Church Somerset West).



"I went to the final Mighty Men's conference"

A FEW OF our guys went last year and raved about it, so I thought I would go with them this year, especially as it was to be the last one in Greytown. A colleague asked me why I was going and I said it was in case our guys were misled. Being there I could correct things. I went with certain negative expectations. But I also went asking God to refresh me and challenge all of us. It turned out to be one of the most profound encounters with God I have had.

From the start there was little emphasis on numbers. I still do not know how many men were there. But it was awesome singing the praise of our great God in the biggest crowd of men I have ever seen. I thought the music was low key and quite toned down – not what I expected. It took a while to get 'into' the music style. They had a

mix of home-written songs and some traditional songs and only a few more upbeat numbers. It dawned on me that the focus was not entertainment but each man worshipping God.

There was a gentleness about the place which is difficult to explain; a couple of hundred thousand men quietly camping, patience in queues for coffee, showers, finding tent sites and using toilets and parking places. It was ideal Christian behaviour.

The messages were not detailed exposition but a weekend-long challenge to us to be watchmen for God, to be men who read our Bibles, who pray, who turn away from sin, who speak up for Jesus, who exercise faith in God and are willing to trust Him, take risks for Him and be counted for Him. Yes, there were a few bits we would not agree

with but they were minimal. Angus Buchan evidently loves Jesus and is a man of faith. Not a perfect man, but a man whom God has singularly owned.

The last meeting saw a few of our guys seated during the singing. It turns out afterwards that we were praying about serving God better, repenting of sins and asking guidance over issues. There was a sense of God being there.

I write this more than a month later and I can still feel the effects of that weekend. I feel I want to know God more personally, see His hand in my ministry more evidently and I am seeking Him more earnestly. I felt that God was there.

*Tom Robson
Rector, Christ Church Sandton*