

BANYULE BABBLE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ANGLICAN PARISH OF BANYULE

HOLY SPIRIT WATSONIA ❖ ST ANDREW'S ROSANNA ❖ ST JOHN'S HEIDELBERG

**FEBRUARY
2012**

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PHILIP PHILOSOPHISES

Sermon preached at St John's,
Epiphany 2 2012

1 Samuel 3:1-10(11-20)

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. **The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread...** The Lord called: "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

The year is about 1100 BC. The people of Israel have been in the land of Israel for approximately 200 years, and they are living under the rule of the Judges. Now that things have settled down a bit after the conquering of the land, there is a bit of a lull. No great crises had come to them lately, perhaps they had grown complacent. (When things go well it is perhaps harder to stay fresh in our faith. Nothing improves our prayer life like a crisis!) These are times of dryness for the people of Israel.

Have you been through a "dry" period in your faith?

This experience is common for people of faith. There will be times of blessing, but they are interspersed with many other phases. In the dry periods, when God does not seem to be very active in us, or when we get few direct messages, we must plod on in faith.

Even for those of us who are *dead keen* and fired up about our faith, there seem to be only be rare times of clear messages from God to guide us on our way.

If I may, as an example, can I tell you about some of the times when I believe God has spoken to me?

These have been watershed moments, defining direction and purpose for me. I am not sharing them to show you how spiritual I am, but to illustrate the ups and downs of the Christian life.

- When I was converted at 16: a clear choice, a "Y" in the road ahead.
- When I wanted to get married: people thought we were crazy, but we put off our marriage and spent time praying and seeking God: we needed to know that GOD was the one who was behind our desire to be together.
- When I decided to offer myself for ministry (20 people prayed and confirmed this call).

- Once when I was on retreat, at a time when I felt really useless to God, and dried up, lacking confidence in my calling: I was asking God if he had a place for me in his plans: I remember the exact place on the path through the trees where I was walking as I prayed, and I felt the Lord say to me: "You are mine: I want you on my team: come and follow me."

I have been blessed to be able to hear God's direction these 4 times. I don't think there are many times like this, but they are precious. Can you think of times in your life when God has spoken to you? They can carry you for a long time.

But then the excitement ebbs, sermons seem dreary and long (!), daily prayer becomes a chore... We still believe, but it all seems a bit jaded.

If you have had times like this, you are not on your own! Just think how many ordained Christian leaders have actually left the ministry? It can happen to anyone.

St John of the Cross (16th Century in Spain) is famous for his description of the "Dark night of the Soul", because he experienced that desolation of not hearing God speak with him, and the rejection of others. But now we call him a Saint.

There are times of dryness for all of us in our life of faith.

Here there were times of dryness for the people of Israel. Eli was supposed to be the prophet of God, and yet his own sons were leading people astray and acting in self interest. (Isn't it disheartening for us when Christian leaders are seen to be abandoning good values, and become corrupt and greedy for money or power? It's enough to make you want to give up on the church!)

In the midst of this silence, God decides to speak once more into the situation.

The people need reviving, they need new direction, they need encouragement, they need to put God first once more.

And so God speaks to Samuel.

He was just a boy, beginning to walk with God. Why did God choose him, a boy, who was so inexperienced?

Maybe there was something about Samuel's heart: a malleability, an open-

ness, a trust. (*This is how God wants us to be too...*)

God calls Samuel: Once . . . Twice . . . Three times...

Now if you're trying to listen to God, and not sure if you can hear him, don't despair. If God wants to get through to you, he will keep trying until you can hear! He will not expect you to get it perfect first time! He will speak in a way that you will understand.

Eli, with his longer experience of serving God, recognized what was happening...he knows the sound of God's voice...so he tells Samuel: "when it happens again, say: Speak Lord, for your servant is listening..."

So finally, Samuel gets it. He does what Eli has told him: "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening".

And he gets a HUMDINGER of a first message! It is a judgment on Eli and his sons!

He trembles at this message: He keeps it to himself. (Wouldn't you?! It is not an easy message.)

But Eli squeezes it out of him, with a terrifying oath.

And when Eli hears the message, he knows it *has* the RING of the Lord about it. He has heard the timbre of this Voice before. And he knows that it must be listened to, and obeyed.

"It is the Lord. Let him do what seems good to him."

Psalms 139: "You know every thought I have, and there is nothing hidden from you."

We are the clay, and he is the Potter. We are the creature, He the Maker and Saviour and Judge.

What can this passage say to us?

Are we in the dry desert, where there has been little inspiration?

Do we really desire to hear God's voice clearly?

Are our hearts malleable? Are our wills wholly submitted to God, for the sake of His honour and glory?

And will we be willing to hear Him, even if it is a word which disciplines us? (*The Lord disciplines those whom he loves...*)

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This Month – February

Saturday 18th: 8.30 am C.R.E. prayer breakfast at All Saints' Greensborough: 9439 3569

Monday 20th: 1.30 pm St Andrew's M.U. 'Chat & Chew' at St Andrew's

Wednesday 22nd: 10 am Holy Spirit M.U.

Friday 24th: 9.30 am C.R.E. 'Using Music in the Classroom' at Diamond Valley Baptist

Monday 27th: 9.30 am Training to become a C.R.E. teacher, All Saints' Greensborough; 10 am M.U. Council, St Peter's Eastern Hill

Next Month – March

Monday 26th: 10.30 am M.U. Lady Day service at St. Paul's

Wednesday 28th: M.U. Northern Deanery Day at Holy Spirit

mainly music

mainly music starts again in February. For last year's families **only** 'Pre-registration' will be:

9.30 am Tuesday 7th February at Rosanna

9.30 am Wednesday 8th February at Heidelberg

9.30 am Thursday 9th February at Watsonia

Then *mainly music* sessions will start properly on:

9.30 am Tuesday 14th February at Rosanna

9.30 am Wednesday 15th February at Heidelberg

9.30 am Thursday 16th February at Watsonia.

These second dates will be on the website.

Rosemary Bellair

Continued from page 1...

This is applicable to our individual lives in so many ways, at times of crisis and decision. The main thing I would like you to go away with today is a renewed resolve in your heart to be open to whatever God may say to you.

But also as a church, we are trying to discern the voice of God at this point in our history.

Let me wonder with you openly for a moment about our life together....

Why has this parish been in the doldrums for the last 20 years or so? Is there some way we have failed to hear God speak? Why has life seemed to bleed out of us? What happened to the good old days, when Sunday school was full, and the church was buzzing?

We can identify with the times of dryness that the people of Israel experienced, can't we?

Many of you may be feeling a little apprehensive about this year to come, with our "new" Mission Action Plan ... I have heard a number of people say in the last few months: "too much change, too quickly!" "What about the beautiful worship which we love, the lovely hymns we love so much, the beautiful Anglican ways of worship?"

We are afraid of losing all that we love! "We must not throw the baby out with the bathwater!"

Yet this is not what we are doing! What we DO seek is the LIVING and PRESENT word of God to us, both as individuals and as a Body.

Like the people of Israel, and every person of faith who has ever tried to follow God and hear his voice, we must ask ourselves:

What is more important to us? Our beautiful historical building, or the living, breathing presence of the Holy Spirit? Surely it is not for these bricks and collections of beautiful objects that our souls ache? *Is it not for the life-giving power of the Spirit in our day to day lives?*

Yes, we are living in times of dryness. The voice of the Spirit does not come very often these days. It is hard sometimes to discern the voice of the Spirit. Yet when he speaks, will we be ready to listen and to obey?

Psalm 95
"Do not harden your hearts, as

the people of Israel did in the wilderness, when your fathers tested me, though they had seen my works."

When Jesus called his disciples, he must have seen in them an integrity, a pliability, a willingness to be moulded and used by God: and he said to them:

"Come and follow me."

May we do likewise.

Philip



Holy Spirit Happenings

Holy Spirit Watsonia M.U.

First meeting for 2012: **Wednesday, February 22nd** at 10 am.

Monday February 27th: M.U. Council Meeting, 10 am for 10.30 start at St Peter's Eastern Hill. Guest Speaker: Anglican Chaplain to the Defence Force.

Monday March 26th: Lady Day service at 10.30, St Paul's Cathedral. Celebrant and preacher: Bishop Paul White.

Wednesday March 28th: M.U. Northern Deanery Day at Holy Spirit Watsonia.

May 20–24th Australia Council at Pallotti College Millgrove. 23rd: Open Day – guest Rosemary Kempself, M.U. World-Wide President.

C.R.E.

For the 2012 start in school in the first week in March, there will be a Prayer Breakfast **Saturday February 18th**, 8.30 am – 10.30 am, at All Saints' Greensborough (cnr Church & Main Streets, Melway 20 J2). Registration: Marilyn Brown 9439 3569; cost \$ 6.

Friday 24th February, 9.30–1 pm: Professional Development for C.R.E. teachers on *Using Music in the Classroom* – Diamond Valley Baptist Church, 309 Diamond Creek Rd, Melway 11D. Registration Ray Fitz-Gerald, 9439 3928.

Monday 27th February, 9.30 am–3.30 pm: *Training to Become a C.R.E. Teacher* – All Saints' Greensborough (address above). Registration Ray Fitz-Gerald, 9439 3928.

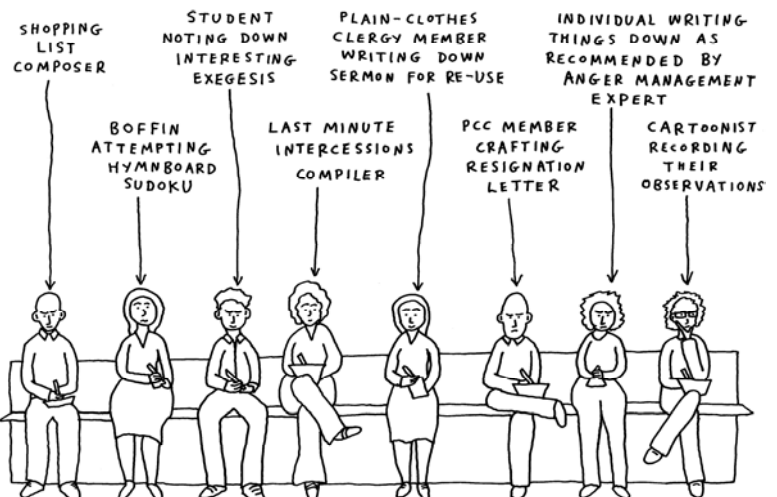
St Andrew's Mothers' Union

Monday February 20th at 1.30 pm at St Andrew's: An informal 'Chat & Chew' meeting after the long Christmas break.

Betty Kettle – 9435 6533

MAKING NOTES

WHY PEOPLE ARE WRITING THINGS DOWN DURING THE SERMON



History Corner

By John Adams

St John's Diamond Jubilee 1911

The Anglican parish of St John's, Heidelberg, celebrated its diamond jubilee in October–November 1911. The *Heidelberg News* recorded the progress of events. On 4 November, reference was made to the early years of the parish with divine service conducted first in 1848 by the Rev'd Dr H.B. Macartney and the laying of the foundation stone in 1849. The Rev'd Francis Hales was the first incumbent, followed by the Rev'd George Goodman for a year, and later the Rev'd Arthur J. Pickering for some 25 years.

The celebrations took place over three Sundays. On the first Sunday [29 October] the Rev'd Canon George Merrick Long was the preacher. He had been first headmaster of Trinity Grammar School in Kew which he founded in 1904, and at age 36 in May he had been elected to be Bishop of Bathurst, one of the first Australian-born bishops to be consecrated. The *News* reported:

"The reverend gentleman gave a resume of the church history and stated that it was only natural to find [the parishioners] were all proud of their church which was noted for the old associations, and also spoke in glowing terms of the work performed by the pioneer preachers. It was the third church built in Melbourne and suburbs so the building handed down to them many traditions."

There was an afternoon service conducted by the Rev'd William Hancock, vicar of St Thomas, Essendon, and acting rural dean, remembered as the father of historian, William Keith Hancock. On 5 November the preachers were the Archbishop, the Most Rev'd Henry Lowther Clarke, in the morning, and the Archdeacon, the Rev'd

William George Hindley, in the afternoon. The *News* continued that the vicar [the Rev'd William McKie] announced the celebrations were to be devoted to defraying the debt of the church funds and property which were estimated to be £375. "Special singing was a feature of all the services, an anthem being rendered in the evening. Miss [Emma] Chambers presided at the organ, and Mr A.J. Morcum acted as choir conductor."

On 11 November the *News* advised the Rev'd G.E. Hickin [actually the Rev'd George Aicken], principal of Ridley College, would be preacher next day in the morning, and the Dean of Melbourne, [the Very Rev'd Reginald Stephen, soon to be Bishop of Tasmania] would take the evening service. On Tuesday evening, 14 November, the Lord Bishop of Wangaratta [the Rt Rev'd Thomas Henry Armstrong] was to give a lecture in the local Heidelberg Recreation Hall on 'A Trip to Bible Lands' which, said the *News*, "should be crowded by all classes and religions. He will tell of his impressions, the result of which he saw on a recent tour of that country, and by means of some beautiful and original views and a first class lantern exhibition".

The *News* on 25 November reported the culminating events:

"St John's Church of England, Heidelberg, concluded its most successful diamond jubilee celebrations by a tea and entertainment for the children on Friday evening [17 Novem-

ber] arranged by a strong committee of the ladies of the congregation with Mrs Matthews as secretary. Over 90 children sat down to tea at St John's schoolroom and were regaled with all good things. From 7 to 9 o'clock a lantern entertainment was provided, a series of instructive and humorous pictures suitable for the children being shown, on conclusion of which each child was given a piece of cake as they left the hall. The total collections and donations in connection with the celebrations are expected to reach about £245."

John Adams

Editor's note:

I see this was during William McKie's incumbency. Around 1980–1 at Trinity College I knew slightly his son John who had become a bishop: being 2½ at the time of the jubilee he may have been present at some of the festivities. By the time I knew Bishop John McKie he was himself by no means young and was inclined to be forgetful. At one service he conducted he forgot the sermon and went straight on to the Creed. This wouldn't have been a major problem except that day there was a visiting preacher.

John's older brother William, who would have been 10½ at the time of the jubilee, later became the organist and music arranger for the Queen's wedding and coronation. In an article in the *Age* on 2nd September 1953 (p. 4) he said he got his first connection with music by blowing the organ at St John's.

DONATED ITEMS

OVER THE GENERATIONS A MULTITUDE OF ITEMS HAVE BEEN GENEROUSLY DONATED

THESE ITEMS MUST BE USED REGULARLY AND CANNOT EVER BE DISPOSED OF



LECTERNS



COLLECTION PLATES



CANDLE STICKS



HYMN BOARDS



ALTAR CLOTHS



BEGINNINGS

THIS SUMMER:

write... or draw in the boxes

Best place:

An activity I enjoyed:

Best food:

Best Music:

Something which I made me unhappy:

something I will remember:

Something which probably needs to go into the washing machine:

Best _____
(insert category here)

My name is:

THIS TERM:

I will be:

• returning to the same School/college/place of work/other

• starting something new

I Am _____ ^{← adjective}
about this fact.

ADVICE FROM THE BIBLE

How not to be anxious:
Philippians 4 verses 6 and 7

I must not forget:

- pens
- bus/train pass
- lunch
- tie
- lawnmower

Thank you
space →

prayer
space →