

FREE March - May 2012

RISE

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Wedding Photographers in Love

passionate about their
business, their faith and
each other



Music Brings Relief to Flood Victims: Bringing restoration to Queensland

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Cover: Scarlett & Stephen, wedding photographers in love

Corrections

Looking for Leigh?

We gave the wrong web address for The Leigh Cunningham Band in our story on page 1 of the December 2011 edition of RISE Magazine. You will find Leigh and the band at www.leighcunningham.com. The correct URL appears with the Leigh Cunningham Band's logo in the article. We apologise for any inconvenience caused to The Leigh Cunningham Band and to our readers.

Citing the Source

We failed to acknowledge the source of the information contained in our article 'Tools to engage youth in God's big narrative' on page 8 of the December 2011 edition. The information came directly from a presentation by Adrian Blenkinsop of the Bible Society, at the 4D Leadership Conference which RISE attended. We should have said so in our article and we apologise to Adrian, The Bible Society and our readers for this oversight.

The electronic version of the December edition on the www.risemagazine.com.au website is correct on both counts.

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Wedding Photographers in Love

Once upon a time there were two wedding photographers on the opposite sides of America who fell in love and got married. They merged their photography businesses, and are living 'happily ever after'...



Wendy Rush interviews Scarlett and Stephen Knuth, wedding photographers in love, who are visiting Australia in May to shoot a wedding and run one day workshops in Adelaide and Sydney.

Scarlett loves Stephen and Stephen loves Scarlett. These relative newlyweds are clearly passionate about their business, their faith and each other.

Scarlett tells the story of how their romance began. "We got married on April 16, 2011, right in the midst of our busiest wedding season, ha! We met at a photography conference in Las Vegas, initially, but the story goes that I don't remember meeting him. Months later, we reconnected through Twitter and Facebook, just chatting as photographers. Then our emails turned more personal, and I was really impressed with how Stephen boldly put his love for God out there, and we had a lot of similarities like who our favorite worship artists were.

"Then I had a photoshoot to do in Stephen's hometown of San Diego, California and I stayed a few days longer to see if God had anything up his sleeve with this guy. It was cool because right after he picked me up from the airport on Sunday morning, he took me to church. After a few days, Stephen

asked me to extend my trip a few more days, then a few more days. By the time I left to go home to Florida, it was Sunday morning again, and it was so special to start and end our visit by worshipping God together.

"When he dropped me off at the airport after church, he ended up running after me into the airport, true 'chick flick' style, to wrap me in his arms and tell me that he had fallen in love with me during our week together, and that he knew I was the one for him. I felt the same, and five months later we were engaged."

Again, in true 'chick flick' style, Stephen made the move across America from California to Florida where they married, and where they merged their individual photography businesses into one, calling it simply "Scarlett & Stephen". It was a client that gave them the idea to add 'wedding photographers in love'.

"It kind of started with a wedding Stephen shot with me after we had just got engaged. When we showed up on the wedding day, our bride was so excited and said 'I just LOVE that my photographers are in love too!' I realized that brides are in love, and they like to be surrounded by others who can relate to what they're going through. And Stephen

and I are a couple that are so mushy in love, so we chose 'wedding photographers in love' as our tagline to be something relatable.

Living together, working together and running a business together, Scarlett and Stephen are often asked if they get tired of seeing each other all the time.

"Honestly" says Scarlett, "we love that we get to spend so much time together. While we do face challenges, I think a lot of it has to do with expectations and communication. We've both been guilty of thinking the other could read each other's mind regarding certain tasks. But we found in the end, by improving our communication with the business, it has actually helped us to improve communication in our marriage as well."

They have found that, in order to conduct a successful business together and still keep their relationship a happy one, they need to adhere to a few simple rules.

"Don't assume the other one can read your mind" says Stephen. "Remember, you are partners and equals. Set business hours and turn off business email on your phone when you are spending personal time together. Keep God first not only in your relationship, but your business too. Pray together."



And from the beginning, Stephen encouraged them to make the model for their life: 1. God 2. Each other. 3. Business.

Jesus said that people will recognise his followers by the way they display love towards each other. As 'wedding photographers in love' Scarlett and Stephen's aim is to display God's love – to each other and to other people.

"Just as Jesus served others, we try to serve each other above our own needs. We are also very cautious to not raise voices at each other but to keep communication open so that frustrations don't build up. We also really loved the book *The 5 Love Languages*,* and we try to cater to the unique way each of us is wired to receive love.

"We really try to pursue a friendship with our clients beyond photography, to get to know who they are as people in love. Through our personal relationship we build with them, it helps us to learn ways we can pray for them, or show through our actions how we can exceed their expectations along the way or on their wedding day. We also end all our emails with God Bless, to show them, yes, we love God, but we're not here to preach at

them. We would rather them see it through our actions."

It is not surprising that their clients enjoy the unique approach this couple brings to wedding photography.

"I think because we are so mushy in love, we can tap into the emotional side of documenting love stories that much better. As they look back on their wedding photos, we want our clients to not see overly posed photos, we want them to see how in love they were in that moment. Having just been a bride and groom ourselves, it has also helped us to identify a lot of things about customer service that we learned in planning our own wedding that we have now changed in our business. This helps to make the experience of being a bride and groom even that much better."

They are keen to share what they learn along the way. When asked about what advice they would give others who are looking to start a business, they offer the following:

1. Do what you love and you'll figure out a way to make money at it.
2. When you don't know which direction to go, take one step. Then another step. Then one more. They will eventually add up and you'll be off running before you know.
3. If you want to be a photographer, remember, it's 80% running a business, 20% photography and "fun stuff". Be sure you enjoy running a business because that's what you spend most of your time doing.

Most people who are successful in business experience failure along the way, but Scarlett believes half the failure is not trying when you have a great idea.

"There was something in my business I wanted to try a few years ago, but was so afraid to put it out there and try it. I sat across the counter from my dad, who was also an entrepreneur before he passed away, and told him about my crazy idea. He asked 'What's stopping you from trying?' And I said with a tremble in my voice, 'What if I fail?' And my dad looked me in the eye and said, 'True, but..... you just might also succeed.' After that, I did launch my idea, and it ended up being a success. I always think back to how different things would have been had I not walked through my fear and simply tried it."

And while they are aware that most people have the view that you shouldn't combine

business and religion, for them, it's more about choosing to share their love for their one True Love.

"Just as we're crazy about each other, we're crazy about Jesus, so why wouldn't we want to talk about Him in all aspects of our life? We've received so many emails over the years from people who thanked us for being bold about our faith and how it helped give them the courage to be bold too and grow closer to God. To us, that means more than any amazing wedding we could shoot, because we always hope to point our love for each other and life back to the Creator of love itself."

And the future? Their aim is to continue to grow a successful brand, and to serve their wedding clients and families, first and foremost. They love to help other photographers, and are planning to launch some information products this year. The first one is a book Scarlett has written called *Prosper*, a Christian devotional book designed to help people to pray God's will for their photography business by putting Him first as the foundation and CEO of their business. More about *Prosper* can be found at www.choosecommitprosper.com.

While on a trip to Europe last year, Scarlett and Stephen met a couple along the way who got engaged, and Scarlett shot their proposal in Venice. The clients loved the photos so much they insisted that Scarlett and Stephen come to Australia to shoot their wedding as well.

"It's so amazing all the places our camera takes us! And in addition to the wedding, we are looking forward to exploring more of Australia like Sydney and the Great Barrier Reef."

Together, Scarlett and Stephen's work has been seen on America's TLC's "Wedding Day Makeover" television show, in magazines such as The Knot, Southern Weddings, Weddings Unveiled, Jacksonville Luxury Living and they were voted Best Of Wedding Photographers by The Knot and Jacksonville Magazine. Along with shooting, they have enjoyed speaking at different photography meetings, conventions and photography meetings imparting what they can to help other photographers turn their dreams into a reality. Now coming to Australia to shoot a wedding, they are setting aside time during their vacation to connect with local photographers in one day workshops in Adelaide on 2 May and Sydney on 8 May, sharing the secrets to their success back in the States.

Music Brings Relief to



A picturesque agricultural landscape near Toowoomba. Many people in the area are still recovering after severe flooding last year.

More than a year after the floods, Wendy Rush talks to Erika Schmidt about her efforts to help bring restoration to Queensland.

Just over 12 months ago parts of Queensland were devastated by floods and Cyclone Yasi. Lives were lost, homes were destroyed and businesses and communities were shattered in the onslaught. As people are still struggling to recover their homes and their livelihoods, one woman in Adelaide is striving to do what she can to help bring about restoration.

The “Bringing Restoration” project was formed with the aim of raising funds to assist people affected by natural disasters in Australia, particularly flood affected areas of Queensland. Erika Schmidt began working on the project in the middle of February 2011, motivated by her own experience with the floods in Toowoomba on 10 January 2011. At the time media reports described the flooding as ‘Toowoomba’s deadly inland tsunami’.

Erika was visiting Toowoomba twelve months after moving to Adelaide. “I can clearly remember one of my dear friends in Adelaide asking me before I flew to Queensland if I was safe going up there, as there was already flooding in north Queensland. My quick retort was ‘Toowoomba never floods, I will be fine’. Well, I won’t ever be saying that again.”

Erika explains that, prior to the flood, Toowoomba had been in drought for about ten years and then from mid-November to January they received more than their fair share of rain. Flash flooding meant that people did not have a chance to evacuate.

Thankfully where Erika was staying was not affected, but when the flooding occurred she was out with friends. As the rain fell, the water rose quickly and soon she saw bins, rubbish and other debris floating past. Erika and her friends took refuge in an undercover car park at Garden Town Shopping Centre which was already ankle deep in water. They were soon persuaded to move the car to the rooftop car park. They were able to take shelter inside but when the shopping centre was evacuated they were left stranded on the rooftop car park. From there they could see that the water levels on the street below had risen in 30 minutes from ankle height to 1.5 metres deep.

“There was water damage to shops in the CBD, damage to the railway bridge close to where I stayed and one street had been torn in half. Glass shop fronts smashed from the water pressure, walls of buildings collapsed and cars were pushed around by the water like feathers” recalls Erika. “One car was upside down as it was swept along by the force of the water. Houses were swept off their stumps. I saw a person desperately trying to keep their head above the water. I believe they were rescued further down the street.”

But sadly, lives were lost. In particular Erika recalls with emotion the loss of Donna Rice and her son Jordan, who were swept away as Jordan’s younger brother was rescued.

When the waters began to rise at first Erika and her friends thought it was just localised flooding. “Then as we kept coming across more and more water there was a definite feeling of bewilderment, anxiety and confusion. When we were stuck on the rooftop car park waiting for the waters to subside it was then that it really hit home for me – the fear and the feelings of insecurity. Thoughts of ‘what now?’ kicked in. We had no idea if we could get home, or where we would be sleeping that night.

“I sure hope I never ever have to go through that feeling of dread or uncertainty again.

“Driving around the next day was gut-wrenching. Seeing the town that I loved, so damaged and isolated. The things I witnessed are still too hard to talk about in great detail.”

As the town struggled to come to terms with the disaster, offers of assistance spread across the community to those in need.

“One of the things I love about country towns is the community spirit and in a crisis such as this it became more evident. But there is also the emotional effects a crisis like this can bring and that is the hardest to recover from. I know of many that are

Flood Victims

with Erika Schmidt

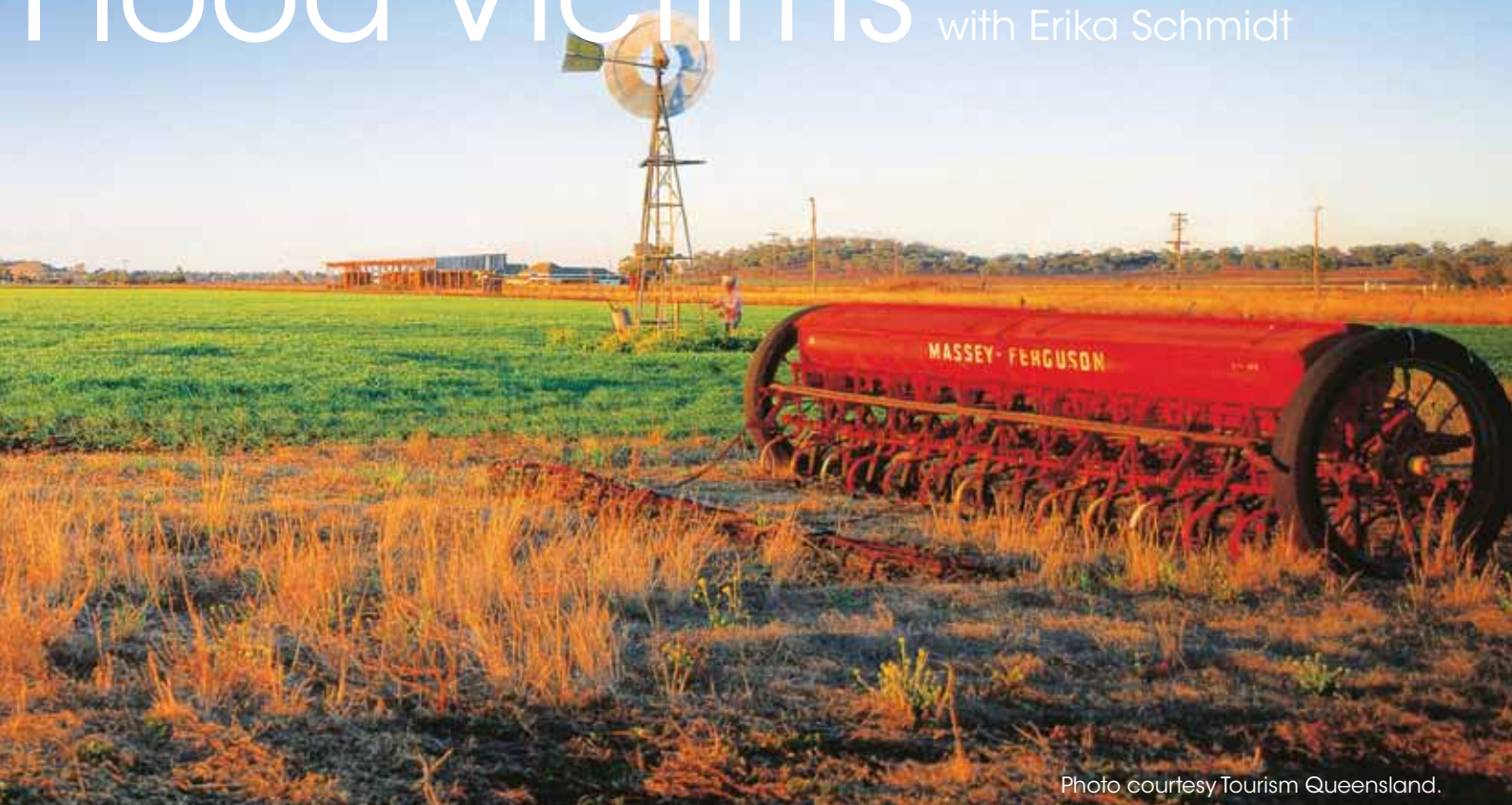


Photo courtesy Tourism Queensland.

still trying to deal with the trauma of their experience.”

While Toowoomba has recovered reasonably well from a structural point of view, in the Lockyer Valley area there are still many buildings and homes that are waiting to be repaired or demolished and rebuilt. Now with some of those areas having experienced more flooding this year, it only adds to the workload. There is still much to do.

When Erika returned to Adelaide, she brought with her that ‘country town community spirit’ and began to work towards raising funds to help those in need that she had left behind.

Her vision was to raise funds by producing a CD of original music with a Christian influence but first she was persuaded to begin with a series of smaller events before tackling the daunting task of producing a CD. So a series of garage sales and a charity concert kept her and her small team of volunteers busy for a number of months.

The “Bringing Restoration Charity Concert” was held on 23 September, featuring a variety of artists including blues roots musician Joe Man Murphy, acoustic duo Two’s a Crowd (Dave Machen and Sue Warman), singer/songwriter Mary Webb and her brother Jonathan Webb. Michele Thredgold, a singer and entertainer who has been blind since birth, sang solo then was joined on stage by Doris Henderson and the

‘Just for Fun’ choir. Money raised from the various events was donated to Global Care in Grantham and used to assist farmers in the area.

“The Bringing Restoration Charity Concert provided me with the opportunity to liaise with many people who are passionate about music, composing, being creative and allowing those creative abilities to bless others. It has opened my eyes to a world I may not have seen otherwise. I give all the Glory to our Heavenly Father for its success and I am forever grateful for the experience.”

Erika still has plans to produce a CD of original Christian music with proceeds going to her restoration project, but due to circumstances has had to set aside the venture for now. However, she believes this will be something for the future that will come about in God’s perfect timing and purpose.

If you have an interest in being involved with Erika’s future endeavors please email her on: schmidterika34@hotmail.com or go to www.bringingrestoration.com



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A State of Promise: South Australia's Christian Roots

Geoff Kempster, Executive Director CBMC International – SA Inc, speaks to RISE about South Australia's Christian heritage, and why remembering our roots is important for our future. CBMC International SA Inc is an organisation that ministers to business and professional people in the marketplace.

“By marketplace” says Geoff Kempster, “we mean the buying and selling of products and services, and this includes business, government and education. CBMC’s vision is to see the South Australian marketplace transformed through the application of Christian values and principles. To transform means to change in form, appearance and nature without in general changing the value. The Australian marketplace is structured and operates with its primary focus on the bottom line – profits and shareholder return. This approach undervalues the contribution of the people who do the work by placing increasing profits above people. As a result unrealistic expectations are placed on workers and work life balance swings heavily to work with family and personal life suffering.

“As a democratic nation having a marketplace economy is important, however, we need to change the form of it but not the value of it. To change the emphasis from the intense focus on the bottom line with the resulting devaluation of people to that of a more balanced approach that respects the contribution of the workers – what some term Compassionate Capitalism.

“Christian values and principles are based on upholding the value of people and in treating each other with respect. To care for other’s needs and to treat others as you would like them to treat you. Success in business does not have to be at the expense of this but is rather a balance between profit making and treating the people who generate that profit with honesty and integrity.

“To transform the marketplace, first we need to know and understand it before we can engage with it. By ‘knowing’ I am not referring to a marketing exercise or analysis, but seeking to understand our roots – our heritage – our destiny.”

Geoff explains that Australia’s Christian influence began in the early 1600’s when a devout Spanish explorer called Captain Pedro Fernandez de Quiros set out to discover the great south land ‘Terra Australis’.

“He believed he had found it when he reached what is now Vanuatu which he claimed for Spain and Jesus Christ, renaming it as ‘Australia del Espiritu Santo’ or ‘South Land of the Holy Spirit’, Australia for short.”

‘I, Captain Pedro Fernandez de Quiros . . . hoist this emblem of the Holy Cross on which His [Jesus Christ’s] person was crucified and whereon He gave His life for the ransom and remedy of all the human race . . . on this Day of Pentecost, 14 May 1606. . . I, take possession of all this part of the South as far as the pole in the name of Jesus. . . From now on, [these islands and lands] shall be called the Southern Land of the Holy Ghost . . . to the end that to all the natives, in all the said lands, the holy and sacred evangel may be preached zealously and openly.’

“Providentially, the discovery of Australia was delayed until another Christian, Captain James Cook, arrived in 1770.”

South Australia is unique because it is the only State of Australia that was settled by free settlers. The settlers were a group of ‘Christian Dissenters’, so called because they were Christians who were not aligned with the Church of England. It was established by a private company, the South Australia Company, with almost all the directors being lay preachers. Their vision was for Australia to be a centre for the spread of the Gospel. George Fife Angas, a Board member of the South Australia Company, felt he had been called by God to establish a State where Christians would be free to worship without being dictated to by government or monarchy.

‘My great object was, in the first instance, to provide a place of refuge for pious Dissenters of Great Britain, who could in their new home discharge their consciences before God in civil and religious duties without any disabilities . . . that South Australia will become the headquarters for the diffusion of Christianity in the Southern Hemisphere.’

Geoff believes that, like God’s chosen people the Israelites, we need to know about and understand this history in order to create a successful future.

“The Old Testament books of the Bible tell us

how God instructed his people to remember his promises, their deliverance from Egypt and the Passover when their firstborn sons were saved from the enemy. They were told to teach these stories to their children and their children's children. The leaders were to ensure that each generation knew the Law and their destiny as a nation.

"What are *our* stories?" asks Geoff. "The stories that we as twenty first century Australians need to hear? What has God got to say to us that we need to remember, obey and pass on to our generation and beyond? We find these stories by going back to our roots. By knowing about, and seeking to understand, people like Quiros and Angas. Elizabeth R Kotlowski, author of *South Land of the Holy Spirit*, has researched Australia's Christian heritage and believes that, 'Australians must rediscover their identity - where they have come from and who they are - that they might know their destiny: where they are going.'

"In Dr John C Maxwell's words 'when people can touch the past, they will reach for the future.'"

Geoff says "If we view our marketplace through the lens of the circumstances that we face on a daily basis we will become discouraged, cynical and overwhelmed by what we see. The Israelites wandered the desert for forty years because they looked

at their circumstances and overlooked their stories – the promises of God, his Word and his presence.

"Instead of just looking at our circumstances, we need to engage with our twenty first century marketplace with a different expectation. An expectation that is more like Joshua's, who was appointed by God to cross 'the river of impossibility', as Dr Michael Youssef calls it, to go in and take possession of the Promised Land, the land that was pledged to his forefathers.

"The Lord's instruction to Joshua was to 'be strong and courageous'. To help him understand this God encouraged him three times with what it means to be strong and courageous. First, to believe and trust in the promises God has already given; second, to obey, meditate on and apply God's Word; and third, to trust in God's presence as he moves forward.

"Australia and in particular South Australia were birthed on sound Christian values and principles to operate in the governance of the country as well as the marketplace activities. The founding fathers established this state as a free settlement and as a centre for these values and principles to move out from South Australia throughout Australia and the Southern Hemisphere. This was the benchmark for the healthy functioning of our nation and state. Based on this solid

foundation we don't need to be absorbed by the current circumstances we may face in the marketplace but move forward in the expectation of the founding values and principles being realised.

"Equally for us then, when we live according to God's promises and God's Word and we trust His presence, moment by moment, the result is guaranteed, as it was for Joshua and the Israelites.

"As we seek marketplace transformation it is essential that we know and understand our marketplace by remembering and re-telling our stories – the Lord's promises for our country and our State, by being obedient to and resting in his Word, and by trusting in his moment by moment presence. What the Lord starts, he brings to fruition. We can then engage with our marketplace with a different expectation. We can step out in confidence that the Lord has gone before us and is also with us, moment by moment, as we fulfil his purposes in the South Australian marketplace in 2012 and beyond."

CBMC International – SA Inc supports people in the marketplace by facilitating regular small group mentoring and leadership sessions, and through its co-ordination of the annual South Australian Prayer Breakfast. For more about CBMC go to www.cbmcint.com.au.



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Youth Services

Modbury Church of Christ

Youth church service 6.30 pm every second Sunday. Social and study groups for teenagers and young adults.

Contact: ROFL (12-17 years) Lauren 0423 9436 672; Young adults (18-35 years) Brendan 0413 738 253
955 North East Road, Modbury 5092
Email: church@modbury.org.au
www.modbury.org.au

Events

God and Science – in the Pulpit; God and Science – in the Classroom

Seminar series commencing 19 March explores the relationship between science and faith.

Presented by Tabor Adelaide's Graeme Clark Research Institute.
More info: www.taboradelaide.edu.au

Heaven to Earth

10 March, 31 March, 14 April, 28 April
10am-4pm

Learn to fly with both wings of the eagle – worship and intercession, with Jacqui Waters.

Venue: McLaren Vale Institute Hall, Main Road, McLaren Vale 5171
More info: Jill (08) 8386 1696

LifeWell Conference - Strength

30 August to 1 September

Fostering restorative communities and personal wholeness.

Keynote speakers include Clinical Psychologist Dr Robi Sonderegger
Find LifeWell Conference 2012 on Facebook

Revival SA

First Saturday of each month 10 am to 12.30 pm

City-wide gathering to pray for revival in all areas of society. Co-ordinated by Australian House of Prayer for All Nations

Venue: 27 Sturt Street, Adelaide (Adelaide Christian Centre)

South Australian Prayer Breakfast

September, Adelaide Convention Centre.

Details to be announced shortly.

www.cbmcint.com.au

Wedding Photography Workshop by Scarlett & Stephen

2 May

One day wedding photography workshop by award winning US photographers Scarlett & Stephen.

www.adelaide.scarlettllovesstephen.com

Breakfast of Hope

Featuring Tim Costello with performances by Anna-Maria La Spina and Andrew Naylor

30 April, 7.30 am-9am

Venue: Adelaide Convention Centre

More info: www.hopeinthislife.com

by Nick Hawkes

Housework and divorce

A study conducted by the Melbourne Institute found that for every extra hour of housework men did, their risk of divorce decreased by half.

Research at Washington University also discovered that men who did housework were less overwhelmed by their wife's emotions, they had lower heart rates during conflict and were therefore less inclined to avoid conflict. This, in turn, made conflict resolution more likely.

Men, you had no idea that manhandling the mop was so important, did you!

Of course, there is nothing magical about the ability of housework to prevent divorce. It's not that housework stops divorce; it's the care husbands show by doing housework that stops divorce.

The simple truth is that a successful marriage requires men to resist any tendency to be self-obsessed and to invest in the well-being of their wives. In an article on "Christian Sexuality" Jim Douglas says that too many "Wives can be seen withering on the emotional vine because they lack husband love."

The importance of showing love can even be a life and death issue. Dr Paul Pearshall writes that: "Inconsistent intimacy is more predictive of early death than high cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity, lack of exercise or poor diet."

The fact is, we need love. Why? Because God made us to love him ...and to reflect his love in our love for each other.

Nick Hawkes has two degrees in science and two in theology. He is the author of a number of books including The Country is Different, and The Dance Between Science and Faith. He is also the author of the Basics discipling series. Nick is a radio broadcaster and noted speaker who has been invited to preach in America and India. We welcome Nick as a regular columnist in RISE magazine.

Just a Little Something

from Loan Leane

Just a little
Something



Steamed Trout with ginger, garlic & lime cold rolls

Ingredients

2 whole Trout (each weighing approx 225g), gutted
1 inch (2.5 cm) piece of fresh root ginger, peeled and cut into thin strips
4 spring onions
1 garlic
1 lime
1 level spoon of crushed sea salt
1 pack of vermicelli noodles
1 pack of cold rolls
Assorted fresh leafy greens

For the sauce:

1 level teaspoon peeled, grated fresh root ginger
1 garlic chopped
3 table spoons of light soy sauce (Japanese soy works just as well)
3 tablespoons Shaoxing (Chinese brown rice wine)
1 tablespoon of sesame
1 level tablespoon of soft brown sugar

Method

First of all, rinse the trout and dry it with kitchen paper, then sprinkle the outside of the fish with salt and leave aside for half an hour to help firm up the flesh. Meanwhile, place all the sauce ingredients in a small saucepan, then bring them up to simmering point and simmer for 5 minutes.

When you're ready to cook the trout, wipe the salt away with some more kitchen paper and place the fish in a steamer with the ginger, ½ sliced lime and garlic scattered inside and all over. Place it over boiling water and steam with a lid on for exactly 15 minutes.

While trout is steaming, bring a pot of hot water to a boil and add your vermicelli noodles (follow pack instructions) for about 10 mins. Rinse well and squeeze the remaining half lemon onto the noodles. To serve, pour the re-heated sauce over the trout and garnish with the spring onions and fried shoots.

Pour boiling water into a deep bowl and take one cold roll pastry and slowly work the wrapper around and into the hot water until it is completely covered and place onto a round plate to cool for 20 secs before adding vermicelli noodles, assorted leafy greens and trout.

Roll the cold roll and dip into sauce reserve. (you can also use another sauce of 3 tablespoons of soy and 1 cut chilli mixed well). Eat using your hands- no cutlery required!

Repeat the cold roll wrapping process.

Welcome to my very first food column. I hope to take you all on a food journey to fall in love with food as I have had the privilege of doing while growing up. Food has always been a big part of my life. To me it is more than just eating, it is an experience. All the recipes I have dished up have a story of their very own. They originate from the heart, through a few tears and some unforgettable journeys.

My first shared recipe is based on my Easter memories.

Growing up in a very strict religious family my parents showered all their six children with the knowledge to appreciate what we were fortunate to have and to never ponder on what we had to go without. My parents' faith was so strong inside of them that I always wondered how they, particularly my father, accepted all the hardship that seemed to be thrown at them, constantly.

I learnt that they used Lent as a time to reflect. A time to stand within yourself and learn to understand the lessons we all seem to shut our eyes to.

Obviously, I never came to this realisation until I was much older and my parents would try and educate us through the sharing of food.

This particular recipe I am sharing with you is one that holds many childhood memories. As I write this, I can vividly make out the aromas drifting through the air and it makes my tummy ache for my parents.

The recipe has a powerful message: to eat with one's hands, to connect with your soul – this dish is meant to be shared as a community.

Frooty Fun has a Spiritual Message



Author Paula Betzold from Port Pirie, South Australia talks to RISE about how a few fruity characters have sprouted into a set of nine children's books.

"But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!" (Galatians 5:22-23)

Whenever Paula read these Bible verses she always saw the fruit as characters. Little did she know that out of her imagination would grow a set of characters based on these verses that would come to be known as the *Frootz of the Spirit*, with names like Polly Patience, Gemima Gentleness and Fred Faithfulness. Alongside the Frootz are opposites which she calls the 'Spoilt Rotten Bunch', including Doubtful Dill, Anxious Apple and Meanie Mango. In each book one of the Frootz meets one of the Spoilt Rotten Bunch and the Frootz helps the Spoilt character to see that he or she needs to be filled with the Fruit of the Spirit.

Paula says that God had been speaking these books into her life for years. "God gave me visions of what the books should look like. He helped me to create the stories, characters and illustrations in my imagination. Spending time with God in prayer and creating the vision that He has for the books was a very special and wonderful time for me.

"But I didn't actually write any stories down until after I had drawn the characters. Once the characters were created, the writing

began. *Faithfulness* came first, which took me quite some time but the others followed relatively quickly. But I could not sit and write just because I wanted to, it was God's timing. Just to sit, pray and allow God to fill the page. It was beautiful 'God time'.

"As the creation of the books took place in my thoughts, the characters and

books began to come alive. The desire to see something on paper grew within me. Like a craving for food I had a craving to draw, write and be creative."

When the books were finally in draft form, Paula plucked up the courage to make an appointment to show them to her Pastors.

"I was a sweaty mess. It's not that easy to put your heart in front of someone and say, so what do you think? My Pastors were quite surprised at what I had created and they were really encouraging, telling me I should go ahead and publish the books. I had always expected to have an illustrator re-draw the pictures but I was encouraged to use my own illustrations."

After four or five years of dreaming and praying these characters into fruition, Paula emphasises that the books are not hers, but God's.

"I never thought I would write or illustrate children's books. Even now if someone calls me an author it feels quite strange, but I do like the thought of God being the author, not me!

"God tells me not to be concerned about them, that I need to concentrate on the things that He has for me to do in Port Pirie and He will take care of the books. I do honestly find this a difficult task but God continues to open doors and enables me to trust in Him. I am allowing Him to lead instead of striving to market the books. I am the vessel, He chose to create them. He will see to it that they do what He intended them to do."

Her message is not just for children. Paula hopes her books will encourage adults as well to be filled with love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness, kindness, gentleness and self-control.

"As a child I suffered from the opposites of each of the fruits of the spirit, as we all do at different times in our lives. And I think it is important to show children that they can be different - they don't need to be filled with bad things. I love to encourage others and I enjoy helping others to see the positive!"

And are there more fruity adventures on the horizon?

"Definitely!" says Paula. "I have begun a recipe book to go with the Frootz books. I have written and illustrated nine other books around farm animals, *Filled with the Spirit Crew* and *In Need of the Spirit Bunch* encouraging children to be filled with blessing, song, strength, compassion, dreams, wisdom, honesty, forgiveness and giving. I have begun dreaming with God about 9 other books, the characters are flowers and weeds, with; *Sown in Good Soil Crew* and *Thrown on Bad Soil Bunch*; and they encourage children to be filled with hopefulness, unity, worth, excellence, beauty, acceptance, uniqueness, creativity and thankfulness. BUT... God has told me I need to be patient and wait for the Frootz books to be successful before proceeding any further with them. All in God's time!



Paula's books can be purchased at Koorong or through her website at www.frootzofthespirit.com. The money Paula receives from the sale of her books goes to building God's Kingdom. This year she and her husband will use income from sales to assist the youth in their church to participate in a mission trip with Teen Missions Australia.



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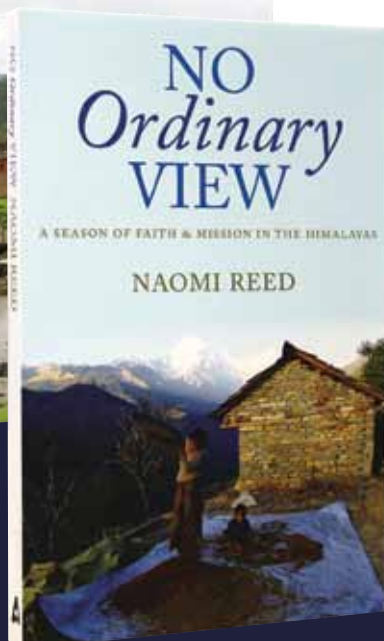
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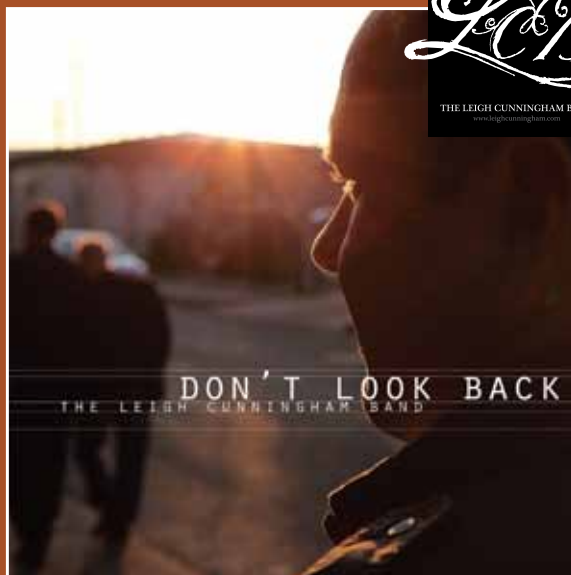
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