



PLAINS PRESBYTERIAN

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Restoration Takes Time

But the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.

Judges 16:22, ESV

One of the major effects on the economy of the lockdown that many nations have been or still are experiencing is the shutdown of all but the most essential businesses and shops. The day before the beginning of the lockdown here in the United Kingdom, I purchased a hair clipper, because I anticipated that barbers and hairdressers would be one of those services that would be unavailable.

That proved correct and eventually the time arrived and passed when I would normally have made a trip to the barber to get my hair cut. I finally plucked up the courage to attempt to cut my own hair. It seemed unkind to ask my wife Gemma to try and help me, as she is visually impaired. As it turned out she may well have done a better job than me because at the time of writing this Seed I have a bald patch on the back of my head and very thin areas on the sides. I'm now wearing a hat, when I go out, until my hair grows back again.

My experience at do it yourself hairdressing caused me to think of the account in Judges 16, describing the restoration of Samson's hair and his relationship with God as he pulled down the pillars supporting the Philistine temple of Dagon. Unlike my loss of hair, Samson's loss, through his compromising relationship with Delilah, broke his covenant relationship with God, and he became a prisoner of his Philistine enemies.

Yet, even in his broken state and humiliation, the Lord was working in his heart. As his hair grew again, so also did his relationship with God, and he killed more enemies in his death than he killed during his life. That speaks so much to me of God's heart to restore any of His children when they mess up, even when it seems that there's no way back to relationship with Him. It also reminds me that restoration takes time, just as it takes time for hair to grow again.

Perhaps there's someone reading this Seed who feels that they have messed up their relationship with the Lord. It may even seem that there's no way back to Him. Can I encourage anyone who's feeling like that to simply come as you are to the Lord. Ask Him to forgive you and restore you. Seek out trusted Christian help and be patient as the Lord begins to renew and mend your life, and please remember that restoration takes time.

- Dean Gardner **Seeds of the Kingdom**





Update on the Moderator's Appeal for Vanuatu

Three weeks ago, I launched a Moderator's appeal for Vanuatu in response to the scale of damage caused by Cyclone Harold.

This Category 5 Tropical Cyclone wreaked tremendous havoc on Vanuatu's northern Islands on 6 April, as we have seen on our [Global Mission Facebook](#).

Through your generous support for the recovery work by our Church partner Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu (PCV), our beloved congregations and members have raised \$33,000 as of 15 May. Well done for giving so generously in the current circumstances.

The fact that we can respond financially even while we face an uncertain economic future is testament to the deep faith within our membership, and of the strong commitment that we have to our partner Churches. While we are unable to send anyone to help due to Covid-19 border restrictions, the financial support will be a significant boost to the PCV's rebuilding programme.

Our Church has been quick to send much needed funds. In the first week after the cyclone, the PCANZ donated emergency funds to Talua Theological Training Institute, which had sustained serious damage. The following week we forwarded further funds to contribute to the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu's support for communities affected by Cyclone Harold, and also by volcanic ash fall which was simultaneously causing serious problems on Tanna Island.

In a letter of thanks to donors, the PCV General Secretary Allen Nafuki made note of our donation, he wrote: "On behalf of the PCV a massive thank you to every group and individual who made a donation to the Church's effort to support all those affected by Tropical Cyclone Harold and the volcanic ash fall on Tanna".

A subsequent letter from the PCV has indicated the size of the recovery programme ahead. The total damage to PCV buildings and property across five presbyteries, including Talua College and Navota Farm, is estimated to be in excess of NZD \$500,000. The PCV has made the difficult decision to close Talua College until 2021, in order to concentrate on the rebuild programme.

The PCV has approached its other partner churches for financial help, so whatever our Church contributes will be added to this collective effort.

I invite you to continue to give what you can, as the need is great for our brothers and sisters in Vanuatu. The appeal will conclude on 9 June. You can donate online to the PCANZ Global Mission account number: 02 0500 0086963 10 with the reference Cyclone Appeal. Cheques can be mailed to the PCANZ Assembly Office, PO Box 9049, Wellington 6141. If donating online, send an email to katrina@presbyterian.org.nz to request a receipt.

I know that our Church, the PCANZ, acknowledges and is grateful to the Rev Phil King PCANZ Global Mission Coordinator, and the team at our Assembly Office, for coordinating this appeal. Surely, to give to help another, in your own hour of need, is of the highest action of love.

Rt Rev Fakaofa Kaio

Moderator, Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

Wishes for The Rest of The Year.

Enjoy the rest of the year, that lies ahead

Whatever it may hold, and open wide your arms to life, Be curious and bold.

Be brave and courageous too, and take the path which climbs,

And leave behind the shadowed vale, to seek for brighter times.

Reach out towards each lovely thing- The world has much to give,
And find throughout the moving year, New strength to love and live.

And should some darker days appear, may there be guiding hands,
A voice to comfort and to cheer, A friend who understands.

May all the special gifts of life, Be yours through every day,
And tranquil moments touch your heart, as love lights up your way.

-Iris Hesselden

Call of The Wild: TU- WHIT TU - WHOO

Late one evening a bird lover stood in his backyard and hooted like an owl – and, amazingly, an owl called back to him! In fact, they went on to have an entire "conversation". The bird lover tried it again the next night, and the next, and the next- much to his delight, the owl always answered. Several days later his wife was chatting with a neighbour, several doors up, "My husband spends most nights calling out to owls," she said. "That's odd", the neighbour replied. "So does my husband". And then it dawned on them.

- Grapevine Magazine



Reflection

Where do we get our ideas from?

Often thoughts are built on the ideas of others; many great inventors took inspiration from another's idea.

Often our ideas, especially those born during the night, are about mundane tasks. Occasionally, we might have thoughts about great ideas, but then we have forgotten them by the morning. Even if we had the foresight to have a pen and paper at hand to make notes, the nighttime scribbles by morning time often make little sense.

Inspiration can come from all sort of sources and people. The word inspire means to breathe in and we can take in lots of things from others - both good and bad.

In some cases, we have a choice about what to breathe in, although sometimes the air we inhale is full of pollution, whether from chimneys or car fumes in the cities of our developed world.

In some countries, the city air is so full of pollutants that people wear face masks just in order to go about their everyday business. Over the past 3 months the world has been coping with Covid 19 so wearing a face mask for many people is an essential and they will probably do so for some considerable time. One way of helping prevention.

We can be inspired by many things. Great works of art, or pieces of music can go by many of us relatively unnoticed, but those who are inspired by them find they are rewarded with great pleasure.

We are often urged to develop a state of mindfulness, which is all about deciding to let awareness of our surroundings and our own feelings help us concentrate on what is really important.

We are told one benefit of broadening our horizons in the way we look at things is often improved mental health.

This is reflected in a hymn " Everywhere around me I can see the hand of God"

It was there all the time, but only the person who looks for it can find it.

Many of us like going for walks by along a river, by a beach, through a walkway, often taking the family dog. Do we ever ask the question? "How can people fail to notice God when they can see the wonders of his creation?" How indeed.?

Many people think that mindfulness [making the effort to direct our thinking] is a new idea, but in fact it was mentioned years ago in the Bible, by St Paul.

"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things" Adapted from the manse window.

This is the day, that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Keeping Connected

Sunday 9.00 am with the Moderator Right Rev Fakaofa Kaio.

A time of Devotion reflecting the Lectionary reading for the day

<https://www.facebook.com/modpcanz/>

Sunday 10:00 am with Dr Rev Tokerau Joseph, Mairangi, Castor Bay Parish

A 30-minute responsive service with singing. <https://youtu.be/BKXvwTAWDro>

Video service, podcast, and Zoom with Rev Arii and Tai

Timaru Presbyterian Parish with Brent and Rory can be sourced through Dorothy.

Prayer: Father, thank You that Your heart is a heart of mercy. You are the Father whom Jesus described in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. I pray for anyone reading this Seed today who feels a long way from You for any reason. Thank You that You are near and not distant from them. Please help them to come in honesty and confession before You to receive Your forgiveness and grace. Please help them to trust You as You restore their life. In Jesus' Name, I pray. Amen.

- Dean Gardner **Seeds of the Kingdom**

