



Palm Sunday



The Franciscan

Easter 2012
St Francis of Assisi Parish Newsletter

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Foreword

At the back of this issue is a list of ministries in the parish with names of coordinators. If you are moved to join any of these ministries, please contact the coordinator. We need more help in most of these ministries, particularly Sacristans, Sidespeople, Caterers... I also need more reporters for Parish events (thank you, Linda, for being my sole support at the moment!) and photographers (witness the dearth of photos in this issue). Many thanks to all who submitted articles, but I’m sure many more or you have things to say that others would like to read – so do get writing for the July/Trinity issue. Thanks once again to our printer Dave for his generous support and remember that you can access all issues on our website.

Jill Daugherty, Editor

From the Rector's Desk

My dear Parishioners,



Loretta Minghella, the Director of Christian Aid, says: “Too many Christians and Churches tend to be inward looking.” It struck me that this is a wonderful reminder of what the Cross and Easter are all about. This was further compounded in my thinking by the statement which came out of a consultation of South American religious leaders in Bolivia: “God is a fighter (*lutador*) who, in fighting with us and for us, brings about transformation.”

For me these two statements suggests that, in our Christian journey, we are called to move forward together, as Servants in the company of our fighter God, in the very real hope of confronting and overcoming the evils of this world – particularly structures and practices which prevent people from living lives transformed by love, forgiveness and opportunity. The serving person must create a framework using the Cross’s message of hope, thereby providing for others an authentic experience of God.

Easter and the Cross are key to all this, but here we must ‘broaden’ our understanding of their symbolism. Our growth as Christians is not just an individual process, for we are persons created in the image of God and therefore part of the process that is the development of fellowship and community. The Cross was never intended to encourage a form of individual spiritual heroism. The Cross is THE symbol of the Church (*ekklesia*), the BODY OF CHRIST, the *Koinonia* (fellowship) of believers.

Easter therefore means to choose to accept the way of the Cross – which leads to death AND Resurrection – as God’s way of showing us in Jesus of Nazareth how urgently He seeks for all humanity, and how entirely He has committed Himself to reconciling the whole of Creation. Easter points to community, because our task is to live a “resurrection life”, to serve and build one another up as members of one body.

To the extent that we are ready to “die” to self so that others may live a “resurrected” life, will our communities bear fruit for the coming of the Kingdom, as Jesus did. Resurrection life is about putting aside all selfish ambition and no longer concentrating on self. It’s about giving instead of demanding, about trusting others instead of compelling their trust, serving instead of being served, blessing instead of cursing. And then accepting that, when we have done all things well, we will still be unprofitable servants.

So let us use this Easter to become attentive to others, not in order to exploit them, but to work for their happiness, discreetly and effectively, and to build them up in all the riches of faith and love ... and to learn to accept from our brothers and sisters what we need.

***Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.***

May we all enjoy a wonderful and glorious Easter as we celebrate our “Resurrection Life”.

Father Timothy

40 Days' Journey to Fast and Feast A lifetime to enjoy the Feast

As usual, Father Tim provoked deep thought with what he offered the parish in the Lent worship programme and materials.

His visit to the World War I & II Battlefields of France was a life changing experience for him, which he managed to impart to us through words and visual aids in his first sermon after his return.

The Lent booklet was thought provoking, and brought forth the clear message that SILENCE is required of us to be able to reach a closer communication with God, allowing Him to be reflected through our love and concern for others. More importantly, the reality emerged that God is already in us, it is up to us to LISTEN to the still inner voice and, in so doing, change our ways to reflect the God already within.

In the Lent Course, however, we did not always have silence – the medium used to convey the message, with the assistance of the Youth, had volume. And different as it was, it was welcome. It woke us up! In the first session, an important document was exposed: its title is at the head of this article, and it is reproduced below. (It comes from the book by David Nasser: *A Call to Die: A 40 Day Journey of Fasting from the World & Feasting on God.*) In a later session we shared in the life of Mother Theresa, with her unstinting spirituality and love.

All this provoked a mind-shift that, if adopted as a lifestyle, together with the silence, can change our lives as much as the 40 days in the Wilderness did for Christ. It brought to the fore that Lent is not giving up chocolate, or other pleasures, or being pious; it's about changing our behaviour, and adopting a new way of life.... FOREVER. Who ever thought that to continue your Lenten fast could benefit you by redefining your behaviour?

Study David Nasser's list below and reflect on how.....

How about giving up Anger forever?, Or Selfishness, or Sadness, Insincerity, or Dissatisfaction....?

Injustices can be solved without Anger, if one approaches their solution by firstly changing the way we actually provoke these injustices by our own behaviour. We are sure that we would all want to live our lives being Patient, Hopeful, Compassionate, Happy, and will feel better for it.

Let's enjoy the feast laid before us. It will nurture a new life.

To Fast from....	To Feast on....
To Fast from Anger	To Feast on Patience
To Fast from Discouragement	To Feast on Hope
To Fast from Selfishness	To Feast on Compassion
To Fast from Mediocrity	To Feast on Excellence
To Fast from Laziness	To Feast on Enthusiasm
To Fast from Sadness	To Feast on Happiness
To Fast from Insincerity	To Feast on Truthfulness
To Fast from Dissatisfaction	To Feast on Contentment
To Fast from Hatredness	To Feast on Forgiveness
To Fast from Individualism	To Feast on Fraternalism

Thank you, Father Tim, for taking a new approach which captured our imagination and made us realise that the God within us can be let out if we observe silence and listen. And in the process, grow to be a better fellow person to all around us.

Hank Doeg

Prayer is wasting time with God

The world says, "If you are not making good use of your time, you are useless." Jesus says: "Come spend some useless time with me."

If we think about prayer in terms of its *usefulness* to us – what prayer will do for us, what spiritual benefits we will gain, what insights we will gain, what divine presence we may feel – God cannot easily speak to us. But if we can detach ourselves from the idea of the usefulness of prayer and the results of prayer, we become free to 'waste' a precious hour with God in prayer. Gradually we may find our 'useless' time will transform us, and everything around us will be different.

Prayer is being 'unbusy' with God instead of being busy with other things. Prayer is primarily to do nothing useful or productive in the presence of God. To not be useful is to remind myself that if anything important or fruitful happens through prayer it is God who achieves the result. So when I go into the day, I go with the conviction that God is the one who brings forth fruit in my work, and I do not have to act as if I am in control of things. I have to work hard: I have to do my task; I have to offer my best. But I can let go of the illusion of control and be detached from the result. At the end of the each day I can prayerfully say that if something good has happened, God be praised.

From: *Spiritual Formation following the Movements of the Spirit*, by Henri Nouwen with Michael J Christensen & Rebecca J Laird

Submitted by Monique Winn



Palm Sunday

Imagine, if you will, a dusty road. It's deathly quiet. Not a sound disturbs the silence. Even the wind and the crickets seem to have taken the day off. In the distance is a city. A grand city. A magnificent city, with walls as tall as the sky, and gates made of iron and steel. The turrets are big enough to house an entire army, and the stone looks as new as if it was built that very day. It is Jerusalem.

Within the city walls, it's not so quiet. It is Passover, and people have come to the city in droves to celebrate. There are people lining the streets, hanging out of windows, shouting to each other across rooftops. The excitement in the air is palpable. The noise is almost deafening. Talking, singing, laughter, praises raised to the Heavens. Children are running around, getting under the adults' feet. Babies splash in water puddles nearby. And the old ones smile indulgently. Everyone is smiling and joyful. They can't believe it. It's happening in THEIR lifetimes. Jesus is coming!

And oh, what a sight it will be! They imagine him shining, like the angels of old used to, and riding a magnificent white horse, fit for a king. Everyone is carrying a palm branch, even the children, to honour Him. Their messiah is coming! And suddenly a shout is heard from high up on the outer wall. The lookout has spotted something moving in the distance. The noise slowly dies down, and everyone cranes their necks to see through the gates, to catch their first glimpse of the one who has been prophesied about for centuries, and who, if the stories can be believed, is finally here!

A child is the first one to begin to shout, "It's Him, it's Him, it's Jesus! He's here!" Soon everyone is shouting, and some are even crying with joy and excitement. The lonely figure slowly makes his way up the hill, and along the dusty road. The people waiting for him are a little surprised to see him on a lowly donkey instead of the magnificent white horse of their imaginations, but it's a small thing, and they soon forget about it.

As he draws ever nearer the shouts grow louder, and people start jostling for a better position, so that they can be the first to see Him, to touch Him, to speak to Him. People start jabbering to the people standing next to them, people they don't even know, talking in excitement about what they're about to witness.

Eventually Jesus slowly rides into the city of Jerusalem, and pandemonium breaks out. People stride forward to lay their palm branches, and even their cloaks, on the road before the donkey, to honour Jesus as their long-awaited Messiah and King. Shouts ring out all over the city. "Hosanna!" "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Praise the Lord!" "Hosanna to the King of Kings!" "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" Jesus looks around him, at the love and praise they are bestowing on him, and He smiles. It is a bittersweet smile, for He knows what is to come.

It is less than a week later when the tide turns, and those same people are baying for His blood, like the Hounds of Hell. They are scared, and unsure. The man they praised and couldn't wait to see and touch is now the man they want to see dead. The Pharisees have done their job well. They have sown discord and fear amongst God's people, and their sights have been set on Jesus.

As we enter Holy Week, let us remember this scene, and how things changed in the city of Jerusalem over the course of a mere five days. Let us meditate on the Passion of Jesus, and all the pain and injustice He had to endure without so much as a murmur. He was brave and stoic. He obeyed His Father, and fulfilled the prophesies of old, so that you and I could be saved, and see Jesus one day in Heaven. I cannot wait for that day, when I will set eyes on Him, and be able to walk with Him, and talk with Him, and hear His beautiful voice. Let us remember what He went through for US almost 2000 years ago, as we enter this holiest of weeks. Let us not forget the sacrifice he made, for US. And let us be worthy of that sacrifice, by being obedient to our Father, and by loving others as He has loved us. Why? Because.....Family Matters!

Theresa Innes Family Matters Coffee Break

FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

Baptisms

Date	Child	Date of Birth	Parents
18 March	Jessica	23 Aug 2011	Colin & Ursula Stewart
18 March	Erin	03 Jan 2012	James & Cheryl Pretorius
18 March	Seve	14 May 2011	Justin & Leandra Perel

Marriages

Date of Marriage	Husband	Wife
31 March	Marcel Da Cunha	Bernita Jordaan

Faithful departed

Date of Death	Name
22 December 2011	Derek (Andy) Anderson
31 March 2012	Noble Dalziel

PRAY FOR YOUR PRIEST

Paul wrote to the believers in Ephesus: 'Pray...that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me...that I will fearlessly make known...the gospel.'

Do you pray for your priest? You should! After Wilbur Chapman's first sermon at Bethany Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, a man said, 'You're pretty young to be minister of this great church. We've always had older men. I'm afraid you won't succeed, but since you preach the gospel I'm going to help you all I can.' Chapman thought, 'What a crank.' But the man continued, 'I'm going to pray for you, and a few others who will join me.'

Later, Chapman wrote, 'I didn't feel so bad when I learned that they were going to pray for me. Soon the three became fifty, and the fifty became two hundred who met before every service to pray for me. In another room eighteen laity knelt so closely around me that I could put out my hand and touch them. I always went into my pulpit confident that I would have God's anointing in answer to the prayers of those people. It was easy to preach, a real joy.

And what was the result? Eleven hundred people were saved and joined the church in the next three years, and six hundred of them were men. It was the fruit of the Holy Spirit in answer to prayer. Church members have much more to do than go to church as curious, idle spectators to be amused and entertained. It is their business to pray that the Holy Spirit will clothe the preacher with power.'

(1 Thess: 1-5; Matt 8: 10-17; Ps 81; Prov 2: 11-15)

Written by Bob and Debby Gass

In the light of the invitation to become a part of the Prayer Shield and my challenge to each of you to embrace at least one ministry in your Parish this year – Food for thought.

Father Timothy

PRAYER SHIELD

Sunday morning, Yvonne and I are on duty in St. Francis as the Prayer shield for the service. With feelings of expectation, stress and unpreparedness, we enter our places in the church, the Lady Chapel. What? Where? When? And now?... I didn't know what to expect.

The service begins, and what happens? Instead of me giving myself in prayer, thoughts, etc., to the service, I received. Church bells ringing in the distance, then I, Ponty, suddenly, referred back to years gone by, where the ringing of the church bells encouraged us to attend church. A feeling of nostalgia and longing came over me for the years gone by, but yet a feeling of expectation for that which is still to come.

Suddenly I was aware of Fr. Danny's sermon. And again I hear how Christ touched people, during a time where it was against their custom to do so. With each touch from the Lord, blessing happened – healing, new life. I then realized that with each "touch", be it physical, or with your eyes, with your voice, with your thoughts and your actions, you can make impressions. And then I realized that instead of giving, I was receiving.

May that be to the Glory of God.

Ponty Thuynsma, 19 February, 2012



Flowers for St Francis Day October 2011

REQUIEM MASS for THE VERY REVEREND L.L. NGEWU

On Thursday 15 February, Nina, Father June, Elise and I went to the Requiem Mass held at St Alban's Cathedral for Dean Livingstone Ngewu. Bishop Jo led the service. The singing was beautiful, with a good mix of English hymns and choruses in IsiXhosa, which was the Dean's home language. The procession was magnificent with a good representation of the Clergy in the Diocese.

There were several eulogies and all of them spoke about the Dean's interest and concern for his parishioners. He was also a family man and has left a lasting impression on all those who knew him. It was exciting for me to see Archbishop Thabo amongst those processing down the aisle to the tune of "Thine be the Glory". And the highlight of the afternoon for the four of us was that we all got to shake the Archbishop's hand and even have a conversation with him – we all vowed we would never wash our hands again.

It was disappointing that the Cathedral was only three quarters full, but considering that there were four different services held in Dean Livingstone's memory, we shouldn't have been surprised. All in all, it was a wonderful service and I am really pleased I was able to be there.

Linda Lewis.

PARISH EVENTS

Newcomers' Tea

There was a disappointing number of people at the Newcomers' Tea as only about 20 out of the 30 people expected turned up. However, it was a very pleasant morning for those who attended. A delicious tea had been provided and it was a wonderful opportunity for older members to socialise with the newer members, some of whom had been at St Francis for 6 or even 12 months.

What I really enjoyed was that there were some family groups at the tea, including grandparents, parents and children, some as young as ten months. I hope this is an indication that we can look forward to having some young adults in our congregation in the future. It was also good to see a fair number of office bearers present.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable interlude and I will certainly make sure that I will be attending the next one, and encourage many more parishioners to do likewise in order to make the newcomers feel welcome in our midst.

Shrove Tuesday

Shrove Tuesday is one of the best evenings in the Church Year for me. Not only does it herald one of the most important events of the Church calendar, but it offers an opportunity to involve all ages in the festivities.

Deacon Joan Jones did a wonderful job of bringing it all together and Robin Godfrey deserves a special vote of thanks for his role in this happy occasion. The Youth also deserve a special mention because without them the pancake chefs would have had a tough time keeping up with the demand of expertly made pancakes. Besides this, they filled the Parish Centre with laughter and good spirits and their puddings and cold drinks were enjoyed by young and old. Filling chefs provided us with a large variety of delicious fillings and, as always, everyone had a good time. It was well attended and family members, who are not usually part of our parish family, swelled the crowd.

Towards the end of the evening those who stayed that late were treated to a display of unusual ways to enjoy pancakes, as the Youth tossed the uneaten pancakes around like a ball. Well done, John-Reece for involving the Youth in this fun-filled evening.

Linda Lewis

OASIS YOUTH

2011 brought many challenges to Oasis Youth, with a new Youth Chaplin, new ways of thinking and a different structure. Something that needed to change was the “social club” mentality that had unfortunately crept in and was destroying the ethos of what a church youth group should be. Therefore Oasis Youth lost a lot of the existing members, as Youth became too “religious”. Despite this mass exodus, we have exceeded expectations, in that the youth have become more involved in the life of the church, especially with family services and Church festivals. A youthful presence has definitely become more evident in the church.

A Young Adults group was started after a highly successful Alpha course. This is something that was desperately needed for the young adults of St Francis and for the Matrics who felt that they were getting too old for the youth group. We started off with the original 7 from Alpha, and have since grown to 12. We have formed close friendships and a support group which meets once a week, where we discuss serious issues relating to our specific age group and faith.

D-Camp (December Leadership Camp) is collaboration between 20 youth groups from Pretoria, Joburg and P.E. It is a youth leadership conference, with the emphasis on training the youth, giving them all the skills needed to continue or to start up ministries within a youth group/church. Oasis Youth sent 16 members to the camp at Port Shepstone at the end of 2011, which had a record-breaking number of 310 campers. It was truly life changing – we experienced worship that rivalled a rock concert every night, as well as talks and workshops that were at the highest level of spiritual teaching.

This year Youth is back in full swing with a new youth band and lots of enthusiasm, all by-products of an incredible D-Camp. Oasis is

attracting a lot of newcomers and we have been on several outings: Gold Reef City, a Foam Party hosted by the Lyttelton Methodist Church and a Young Adults' camp at the Maretlwane Game Farm (Boys High Old Boys' Farm).

I am now doing Bible Study classes at two schools. I teach two Grade 8 classes at the **Chinese School** on Tuesdays. This is quite challenging, to say the least, with all the different cultural and religious backgrounds in that school, but the kids seem to enjoy my way of teaching and the fact that I'm not forcing Christianity down their throats, but rather engaging them on life issues from a Christian point of view. I finally got through all the red tape at **Boys High** and now minister to 90 boys on average every Wednesday during First Break and most Friday afternoons, in a youth session in the hall.

Jon-Reece Evans

Excerpts from D-Camp Testimonies

(See 2012 Vestry Report for all 11 testimonies)

Oasis Youth group really needed D-Camp – for many different reasons. We were all feeling very unsure and I for one was beginning to question myself and my faith after all the difficult situations I was faced with last year. Camp just solidified those friendships and destroyed any doubts I had. [...] “Church time” was a time to sit within our churches and discuss how we felt and what we had experienced that day. It's safe to say that our church over-ran by a few hours every night talking! One night they spoke about issues and boulders and about breaking them down within our church, and that's exactly what we did. We identified those issues and we were all comfortable enough with each other to voice our opinions and tell each other how they hurt us and what was holding our youth group back. D-Camp was definitely a time to help our church and youth group grow as well as ourselves, in our own spiritual journey. The camp left us all on a high to get involved more in St Francis and do more to help other people.

Zoe Miles

D-Camp was the most incredible week of my life! From praising God, meeting new people and learning more about Christianity, D-Camp 2011 helped me expand, grow and connect with God in many ways. [...] Realizing that God can just relieve us of our sin overwhelmed me and I experienced the Holy Spirit in ways I never have before.

Danielle Mouton

The week at D-Camp was the best time I ever had. I made so many new friends. It was hard for me though being the youngest of the Oasis group, but in the end it was a very nice feeling having a “second family”.

It was the third talk at evening worship and all of a sudden people were dropping like flies because of the awesome power of God’s love and that was when it hit me: “God’s love is like running into a giant fluffy pillow, shocking but very comforting at the same time”, and for this reason, along with many more, I thank the members of St Francis church for the opportunity to go on such an eye-opening experience.

Courtney Todd

If anyone was unsure of God, I’m sure that D-camp would have changed that. D-camp allowed me to know that He really is out there, and everywhere. If life was a twitter page He would be all our followers, because no matter what you did and where you were He was there. He changed my life from being the “I’ve got God on my side, boy” to the “I want more God on my side, boy”. D-camp showed me how that was possible and how to do it. I can now say that I got it right – I have more God in me and will no longer turn away from Him ever, because without Him I would be lost.

Guy Smith

D-Camp was an experience unlike any other. It inspired me to make many fundamental changes in my life. The worship sessions proved to be the highlight of the week, as it allowed many people to have personal and meaningful moments with God. Watching the School for the Deaf worship was also a truly amazing experience.

I came back with a new outlook on many things and I am truly grateful for the opportunity. Thank you Father Tim and St Francis for supporting D-Camp.

Tamsin Raymond

SENIOR CITIZENS FIGHT BACK

Senior citizens are constantly being criticized for every conceivable deficiency of the modern world, real or imaginary. We know we take responsibility for all we have done and do not blame others.

HOWEVER, upon reflection, we would like to point out
that it was NOT the senior citizens who took:

The melody out of music,
The pride out of appearance,
The courtesy out of driving,
The romance out of love,
The commitment out of marriage,
The responsibility out of parenthood,
The togetherness out of family,
The learning out of education,
The service out of patriotism.
The Golden Rule from rulers,
The nativity scene out of cities,
The civility out of behaviour,
The refinement out of language,
The dedication out of employment,
The prudence out of spending,
The ambition out of achievement, or
God out of government and school.

And we are certainly NOT the ones
who eliminated
patience and tolerance.

Submitted by Innes Anderson

News from the Rev Martzi Eidelberg in the US

New Canaan where I now live is an interesting place. It is approximately an hour and a quarter by train from New York (referred to as 'The City'), and many people, my son Dietrich included, work there and commute daily. Many young families settle in New Canaan because of the excellent schools. That is a reason why Dietrich and Heather moved here – they were also disappointed by the therapy Nathaniel (who at that time showed symptoms of autism) was receiving in New York. Here the schooling is very good at all levels and the local library, bookstore, and even clothing stores have the needs of children as their major priority. I do aqua aerobics at the local gym and the class before mine is full of young mothers (sometimes even a father) with babes in arms, having lessons in making their children 'water friendly'. Because of all the children, there are also many au pairs. When I arrived, two years ago, Heather, who was then working, also had an au pair: Nina von Tonder from Johannesburg who is at present studying at Stellenbosch. That year she also proved to be my blessing and I still miss her very much.

I worship at St Mark's church. Because of the superabundance of children and teens, the church has many programs for them. Our youth worker, Joshua Hill, is very capable and has taken youngsters to work with him in hurricane areas. There is always a report back by some of them on the Sunday after they return from a trip, which makes it a parish project. This past year, some of them visited Taizé, which many regarded as very meaningful as they became exposed to a larger world. So despite my often saying that New Canaan reminds me of Camelot, I feel that the pastoral leadership here draws youngsters' attention to the needs of the world. This was again evident recently at the interfaith gathering at the Methodist Church where speakers drew attention to the discrepancy between the daily amount of money spent to keep US forces in Afghanistan and that which is spent to relieve poverty in the US.

When I first arrived at St Mark's, I contacted the Episcopal Church and Anne Richards ('Mother Anne'), who is assistant to the rector, Peter Walshe, came to see me. She also gave me the name of the person who is responsible for the lift club. On Mondays, there is a book discussion led by Mother Anne. We have just finished a book, *Female Leadership*, written by a Swedish Jungian therapist, Karin Jironet. Now we are about to start *Woman, Food and God* which, we have been cautioned, is not about dieting... On Wednesday, there is Bible Study led by Bishop Grein, Mother Anne's husband. This has been a most wonderful experience. When I first joined the group, we read *Revelation*, a book I had always dreaded to cover because it seemed to me that it was always interpreted in the light of contemporary circumstances. Fortunately, he put it in its original historical setting: it was written to second generation Christians who had grown lax in their new faith, and also to the Christians who were being persecuted, especially by the emperor Nero (the number 666, by the way, stands for Nero). There is a parallel with *Hebrews*, written also for second generation Christians, but in this case converts from Judaism who too were being persecuted as Christians and wished to revert back to Judaism, an officially recognized religion in the Roman Empire. Now we are looking at *Mark*, which is the gospel scheduled for this year. At the same time, we are also reading NT Wright's *Mark for Everyone*. June de Klerk often mentioned him but this is a first for me and I'm finding him spiritually very informative.

As a parish, we have as our theme, Transformation in Christ. We have already had sessions on *The Stages of Spiritual Transformation*. Now we are reading Esther de Waal's *Seeking God: The Way of St Benedict*. Every Sunday, between the eight and ten o'clock services, a clergy member addresses us on a chapter. Gail Blundel, many years ago when she was at St. Francis, also used this book for some of her quiet days. So every time I open the book, I recall St Francis.

Lots of good wishes for 2012. Love and Shalom from Martzi

RICK WARREN ON MUSLIMS, EVANGELISM & MISSIONS
with Brandon A Cox & *The Christian Post*

QUESTION: A recent newspaper article claimed you believe Christians and Muslims worship the same God, that you are "in partnership" with a mosque, and that you both agreed to "not evangelize each other." You immediately posted a brief refutation online. Can you expand on that?

WARREN: Sure. All three of those statements are flat out wrong. Those statements were made by a reporter, not by me. [...] Let me address each one individually: First, [...] Christians have a fundamentally different view of God than Muslims. We worship Jesus as God. Muslims don't. Our God is Jesus, not Allah. Colossians 2:9 "For in Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Second, while we urge our members to build friendships with everyone in our community, including Muslims and other faiths, ("Love your neighbour as yourself"), our church has never had any partnership with a mosque. Friendship and partnership are two very different levels of commitment. Some of our members have hosted a Bible study with Muslim friends, which I applaud, but I've never been to it, and a Bible study certainly isn't any kind of partnership or merger! [...] Third, as both an Evangelical and as an evangelist, anyone who knows me and my 40 year track record of ministry knows that I would never agree to "not evangelizing" anyone! I am commanded by my Saviour to share the Good News with all people everywhere, all the time, in every way possible! [...]

QUESTION: Why do you think people who call themselves Christians sometimes say the most hateful things about Muslims?

WARREN: Well, some of those folks probably aren't really Christians. 1 John 4:20 says, "If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen." And 1 John 2:9 says "Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness." I am not allowed by Jesus to hate anyone. Our culture has accepted two huge lies: The first is that if you disagree with someone's lifestyle, you must fear them or hate them. The second is that to love someone means you agree with

everything they believe or do. Both are nonsense. You don't have to compromise convictions to be compassionate. [...] I'm constantly trying to build a bridge to non-believers [...]

QUESTION: "Building a bridge" sounds like compromise to many people.

WARREN: Building a bridge has nothing to do with compromising your beliefs. It's all about your behaviour and your attitude toward them. It's about genuinely loving people. People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. Before people ask, "Is Jesus credible?" they want to know if you are credible. Before people trust Jesus they must trust you. You cannot win your enemies to Christ, only your friends. It's part of what Paul calls "the ministry of reconciliation." It is Christ-like to treat people with dignity and listen to them with respect.

QUESTION: Why are most Christians so ineffective at sharing their faith?

WARREN: [...] First, they don't really have any unbelieving friends. They spend all their time with other Christians. As a result, they are afraid to share their faith because it feels unnatural to them. For most people to come to Christ, you must build a relationship with them first. You must love them. The truth is, most Christians love everything else more than the people around them that Jesus died for. Second, many don't really believe that people are lost without Christ. Third, many Christians are afraid of the criticism they will receive from other Christians if they hang out with unbelievers. It was the religious people who hated Jesus the most. They criticized him for associating with tax collectors and lepers and prostitutes and politicians and going to parties. Lost people loved Jesus but the religious folks saw his associations as dangerous compromise. The same is true today. Modern Pharisees still use guilt by association as a weapon. [...]

Submitted by Terry Brauer

For the full text see <http://www.brandonacox.com/culture/an-interview-with-rick-warren-on-muslims-evangelism-and-missions/>