

Ministry Report May 2014

Mini-Gathering, Canberra and Holy Spirit Conference, Portland

In October 2013, the NSW district of the Lutheran Church of Australia organized a meeting for all of their pastors and church members which they called “The Gathering”. The aim was to address the pain of church decline and, in humility, look for fresh thinking and direction. They invited one guest-speaker which was me and I shared our congregation’s testimony of how the Holy Spirit surprised us with more of him. I shared my own surprising discovery of the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues, people falling under the power of the Spirit and doing mission work with demonstrations of the Spirit’s power.

Seven months later, there was to be the first of four follow-up meetings which would happen locally across the district. We met at the Tuggeranong congregation in Canberra (9-11 May) and I was again the guest-speaker. (Pastor Fred Veerhuis, the spiritual father of the NSW district, would be the speaker for the next three mini-gatherings.) My talks were similar but expanded on the theme of receiving and ministering in the power of the Holy Spirit.



Report from Deirdre Herrmann (May 2014): The first NSW district Gathering for 2014 was held at Tuggeranong Church of the Good Shepherd on 10-11 of May. Following on from the initial district Gathering at Warrambui last year, this gathering was an opportunity for more people from the ACT to be equipped and inspired by the Holy Spirit to minister to our communities with the power and love of Jesus.

We came together to seek the outpouring of the Holy Spirit for the whole church, to be built up and strengthened for sharing the power of God’s Word and give testimony to the works of the Holy Spirit.

Pastor Fred Veerhuis opened the weekend emphasizing the theme which was based on Luke 4:18-19 where Jesus explained His mission in this world by stating that the prophecy from Isaiah was now being fulfilled. This mission was to tell the Good News to the poor, announce freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, set the oppressed people free and announce the year of the Lord’s favour.

Pastor Edgar Mayer from Toowoomba was the key speaker for the weekend. On Friday evening he shared with us some of his experiences with the Holy Spirit in his community. From 1 Cor 2:1-5 we discovered some insight into Paul’s ministry with the display of the Holy Spirit’s power. Edgar challenged us to be willing to be instruments of God’s power through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit’s gifts have a purpose and we need to use them. Is God’s power through us confronting the evil in this world? Other challenges for us included looking at our worship as a place where we are connected with God personally and not just following a formula.

Our big question on Saturday was, how do you change a church? In our NSW district we are struggling to follow Jesus’ commission and finding in many places that we are not making the difference that we are wanting to. We heard about how preaching the Word of God is effective when preached with the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit does nothing without the Word. The Spirit’s power will also convict people of the Word of God.

We also heard of the power of the Spirit in two people’s lives as they were directed closer to God. Ward Westphal reminded us of the continuing spiritual battle we face as we travel through our earthly life. Jason spoke to us about how he found Jesus in one of our churches after being lost in a world of alcohol, drugs and violence. God’s Spirit has the power to change lives and use them for further building of His kingdom through witnessing God’s power.

Forgiveness is something that we all struggle with. Inta and Fred Gollasch reminded us, forgiveness is given freely to us, so now we can forgive. It is being honest about the situation and feelings provoked. Forgiveness is not forgetting the sin, nor condoning injustices and especially not judging, but leave that to God. They gave us a clear strategy to support those hurting so that the healing power of the Holy Spirit is released in our congregations.



Pastor Fred spoke to us about the significance of intercessory prayer for those that are dealing with spiritual battles. Being in contact with God for others is a powerful ministry. Our congregations can experience healing and strengthening through the support of intercessory prayer. Prayer is God's way of involving us in His plan. We were able to experience some of this prayer ministry with the laying on of hands and time for healing prayer. God worked powerfully amongst us during this time.

During this weekend we were reassured of the power of God and the Holy Spirit in our lives and how this can be part of our daily ministry in our church families. Jesus came to earth to heal and save. God rewards those that seek Him out, so be confident that God will respond to your calls. From 1 Cor 2:1-5 we can also be reminded that our faith will be based on God's power and not human wisdom when the Holy Spirit's power is demonstrated in people's lives.

The Gathering weekend was attended by approximately 60 people. It was a refreshing time that encouraged us to continue on in our ministry areas. We developed deeper insights and caught new visions on how we can be effective churches in our community.

In the evening on Saturday (at the end of my sessions), I invited people to come forward to receive an infilling with the Holy Spirit. The previous night, they had already received the miracle of gold dust. People came to receive prayer and most of them ended up on the floor when the Holy Spirit came upon them in power. The entire church was carpeted and we were able to go around the entire auditorium with people lying in a circle around the pews. I was surprised how easy the ministry time was. Even though this kind of prayer was new to many in the congregation, people were receiving freely and I did not grow tired praying for them.

Helen Moohen, an elder at Living Grace and one of our chief intercessors, was with me and I encouraged people to come to her for healing prayer. It was wonderful not to travel alone. Helen was approached constantly with all sorts of questions about our experience and she ministered powerfully in healing but also in the prophetic. Whenever I was preaching, she was praying in tongues.

Together with a few of his church members, Greg Fowler, the pastor of the Tuggeranong congregation, and his wife Connie were committed to have me come and, after I had left, they were keen to continue with the experience of the weekend. God heard their prayers.

Vickie Wallis (29 May): Pastor Edgar, First of all I thank God for you and your work. I thank you for your willingness to be used in such a powerful ministry and I thank your congregation for sharing your time with us.

The week before you came, I was praying with a friend, praying because I felt our worship had become very "beige" and I was spiritually stale and afraid of rotting. I prayed for a 'new' vibrant worship experience, one that was full of colour and had 'sparkle.' I was not sure if that would happen at my church or I was going to need to leave and go seeking a new church home. I had been wrestling with this for some time and had finally found the words to express it.

When you spoke at The Gathering, I could relate to your story. This seemed to be what I had prayed for. When you prayed for gold dust I received a metallic shimmer on my hands. When I got home, I discovered one sparkle. My daughter reflected: "Mum you are a woman of faith, you only need one sparkle." I had used the word sparkle a week before as a figure of speech, to describe the intensity of what I was longing for. God delivered a real sparkle. He had my attention.

Your teaching on Saturday continued to encourage and inspire me greatly. The final session with prayer was awesome, to experience the Holy Spirit in its fullness was ... I have no words. As I laid on the floor I remembered praying: "Lord, I know you are doing something here in me, I have no idea but I give you permission to do whatever. My brain fizzed and my eyes flicked. It was weird but exciting all that the same time.

At our Sunday evening service after you left, several of us shared our experience of sitting under your teaching and ministry. It was so encouraging to hear each other's testimony of what God had done in the previous 48 hours. During this time one of our younger people felt unwell and laid down on the floor. My husband stopped the progress of the worship (Pastor Greg was just getting ready for communion) and offered hands-on healing prayer. We all surrounded the person. With their permission we laid on hands and prayed for them. Afterwards they were still not well but able to sit, stand up and take part in communion. After the service, the person reported that they were very thankful for the prayer and it did help.

When my family got home from church, we all discovered that we had gold dust on our hands. I was the only one that had been at the conference on the Friday night when you prayed for it. Now all four of us had multiple sparkles and we all were amazed and felt totally blessed.

During the following week Pastor Greg and I spoke about the plan for the following Sunday. We both went away to pray and seek what God was planning for the evening service. At this point we felt this is where the "new thing" was going to happen. Whilst I was praying, I felt God lay the

words “Take off your shoes for you are standing on Holy Ground” on my heart. I was puzzled as I was praying about praying for people to receive the Holy Spirit in its fullness. Then it dawned on me. I asked: “God, are you asking me to remove my shoes whilst I pray for people?” There was a decisive “Yes”. I screwed up my face and started to attempt to negotiate. I have cold feet most of the time and love my warm fluffy socks and boots. They help me get through the Canberra winter. I realized pretty soon that it was not open for negotiation.

Pastor Greg and I spent some time in prayer together before the service started. My feet became so warm I decided to take my shoes off then, before the service started. We had just over twenty people arrive, including some visitors from a Lutheran Church in NT. [There was also another Lutheran pastor (army chaplain) and his wife visiting.] We reached a point in the service where I was invited to come to the front and pray for people who wished to receive. We put the prayer (from Page 144 in your book, I hope that is OK) up on the screen and invited people to pray it privately if they felt led to do so. I don’t actually remember how many people came up for prayer. My guess would be about eight. Some people I made physical contact with, others I just held out my hands in their direction, it didn’t seem to matter as I could feel God working and the Holy Spirit moving. Most of the people I prayed for fell down in response. [Pastor Greg Fowler was catching them.] I was surprised but so very thankful for what God was doing. I am humbled that God is using me in his plan and praying that I don’t get in the way of his work and mess things up. I am coming to the terms with ‘barefoot prayers.’

My nine year old son was one of the people. He started to sway as soon as I started praying and then fell down. He described it as his head felt all nice then kind of went “pouf”. He then described laying there feeling good but like he was stuck to the floor for a while. He didn’t stop smiling all night.

The word is spreading around the district about what has been going on. It has rapidly gone around our local multi-denominational Christian School and there is much talk about “The Lutherans are doing what?” One lady I shared with told me later: “I have spent the whole day praising God since you spoke to me.” There is a buzz, this is big, so much bigger than our congregation. God is on the move and it is so exciting. [I had left eighteen of my books with the church so that they could be brought to the men’s camp in June. However, in response to what is happening, they already sold four of them.]

So we have begun the ‘new’, no idea where God is taking us but fully confident that he is in control. Please keep us in prayer as we begin this journey.

One week after ministering in Canberra, I was leading the “Surprised by the Holy Spirit” conference in Portland, Victoria (16-18 May). The invitation came from Nicky Schultz, the manager of the local Christian bookshop (Abundant Life Books) and worship leader over the weekend. Her pastor, Richard Schwedes (my Lutheran colleague), provided the initial spiritual covering and the conference ended up with widespread support from the local churches. About 10% of the more than one hundred and thirty adult attendees were pastors. In addition, there were more than twenty children.



People came hungry to receive more from God. I remember praying for a man who told me that he was the chairman of a Lutheran congregation some distance from Portland. He had been desperate and dry and was close to giving up hope. His congregation was not going anywhere.

Last year, I ministered in the German Lutheran congregation at Springvale (Melbourne). One couple especially became even hungrier for God and, at Easter, paid us a visit in Toowoomba. They also came to Portland and brought two others with them. The husband told me that, as a German Lutheran, he felt cursed because he was overthinking everything and could not simply receive the Holy Spirit. His need to analyse and understand everything was blocking him. A few times, he ended up on the carpet lying on his back without pain even though he could not do this at home. The Holy Spirit was on him and, after he drove home, he texted me the following day: “Lieber Edgar. Danke nochmal fuer das wunderbare Wochenende. Ich wollte Euch nur mitteilen, dass ich um 6:21 angefangen habe in Zungen zu reden. Lobe den Herrn.” He had received the gift of tongues at 6:21 am precisely. Judging by his report, he was still German and analytical but Jesus had overcome this hurdle for him which made him rather joyful.



The team around Nicky was hungry and so many of the most active church members were looking for a breakthrough in their relationship with God and a breakthrough in building up their churches. Over the weekend, I was leading and preaching at eight sessions and added one for Pastor Richard Swedes and the intercessors around him. I think that I prayed for people with the laying on of hands for more than six hours and, surprisingly, I did not grow tired. (At the conference, everyone that received prayer fell down under the Spirit's power.) The Spirit of God was ready to respond to the hunger of his people and much happened.

From Tatjana's notes: One woman had wanted the gift of tongues for a long time. Her husband, who already spoke in tongues, kept telling her that she already had the gift. When she came forward for prayer and asked for the gift of speaking in tongues, Edgar also told her that she already had it. She went down and then heard someone sing loudly in tune but it was not English. She opened her eyes to see who it was but could see no one singing. Then she realized that she was the one singing in tongues.

After the Friday session and after dreams were mentioned at the conference, the same woman had a vivid dream about her seventeen-year-old daughter. Her daughter competes in equestrian jumping and had a competition the next day, Saturday. Sarah dreamt that her daughter had a serious fall at one particular jump with the horse coming down on her. Sarah kept telling and texting her husband and daughter that she absolutely needed to wear her protective vest which she had stopped wearing. She even rang her husband again from the conference. Saturday the daughter competed and had a serious fall at the exact jump the mother saw in the dream. The horse fell on her and, only because of the vest, she remained largely injury free except for some bruises on her back.

One woman was healed from scoliosis which she had had for 70 years. A man received healing from arthritis which meant that he could make a fist again.

After prayer time in another room, we returned to the main auditorium when a woman cried out: "I can see fog. There is fog in here." I had also seen this faint milky mist in the building but I thought that my old eyes were playing tricks on me and Tatjana had the same experience and the same suspicions. However, another young man immediately came over and said: "You are talking about the fog, aren't you? I see it too." A number of people confirmed that they saw also the fog which we identified as a manifestation of God's glory cloud (like in the Bible on Mount Sinai and Mount Transfiguration and other places).



One young boy told his dad at home that he would always believe in Jesus because of what he had experienced at the conference that day.



The gold dust came on the first night after I prayed for it. There was much rejoicing and many more traditional Christians saw the manifestation and had God expand their minds and faith. Like in Canberra, the miracle continued after the conference and became an instrument of outreach. For instance, a lapsed church member overheard the mentioning of gold dust and pricked up his ears. What was going on in church? He had better come and check this out.

I received the following text messages: "Dear Edgar & Tatjana, I have to share this with you. I am soooo excited! I am doing a practical internship at a big (Pentecostal) church in Melbourne. In class today, I asked if I could talk about my conference (they also had one on Fri. night & Sat. morning). As I was sharing, the gold dust appeared on my hands! The co-ordinator was really excited & gave me a hug. Then she had it also. She asked me to go around & show everyone in the class (16 people) & they got it too! It actually went about 10cm up my left arm. Then later, I was telling

my supervisor & the gold dust reappeared on my hands. Even now, as I am writing this to you, my hands are sparkling again! God is pouring out His love ... Wouldn't it be amazing if this happened at the church service on 8th June. Please pray with me that it will. Then we will have the Word with a demonstration of the Spirit's power! PS: Someone made the comment that the Lutherans were blessing the Pentecostals! How good is that?"

On the Sunday afternoon, we had a session which was only for Pastor Richard Swedes and a team of intercessors. I think that there were more than twenty of them. First, I shared with them a dream which I had. In the dream, I was visiting a Lutheran congregation that were in the early stages of renewal. I came to help and, in the course of the dream, was led to confront the demonic head-spirit which was opposing the congregation. In Jesus' name, I removed the strongest spirit which was replaced twice by a smaller one until they were all gone. In response to the dream and the impression that a similar anointing was imparted to me by Apostle John Alley, I volunteered to pray a spiritual warfare prayer for the church in Portland. It turned out to be powerful and Tatjana especially confirmed what I prayed. God gave her rather specific pictures and visions while I was praying.



After the spiritual warfare prayer, I asked whether we could do something "crazy" and minister "honey scrolls". I had only done this once before but there was an amazing outcome for at least one woman who received amazing prophetic giftings. It was what I felt that God wanted me to do. I explained how Ezekiel (Ezekiel 2-3) and John (Revelation 10) received scrolls with writing on it. The scroll was sweet in the mouth and bitter in the stomach. I prayed for everyone (and later Pastor Richard prayed for me). Afterwards, I asked whether anyone experienced anything and whether we have confirmation that the impartation

happened. Pastor Kevin Bell had only joined us after the introduction of the "honey scrolls" but he said that, as soon as he entered the room, he seemed to smell honey which was strange. Thank you, God.

On Tuesday after the conference, Nicky Schultz wrote to me: "Someone asked me to pray for them as they are seeking direction. As I was praying for her, my stomach was cramping, swirling around – and I had the most specific pictures for her."



A retired Lutheran pastor drove Tatjana and me to the airport at Mount Gambier. It was a pleasant drive in pleasant company. He shared how he and his wife had always been open to the Lutheran renewal movement in the past. This morning, both of them felt so happy about what happened at the conference but they had never received prayer themselves. At the airport, he asked me whether I wanted a coffee and surprised me by buying only one. He did not intend to stay but, before leaving, asked me whether I could pray for him. In the middle of

the airport lounge, I placed my hand on him and prayed and he immediately became wobbly on his feet. We moved to the side of the building. I organized Tatjana to catch him, prayed and he fell down and rested on the carpet. After a while, he began to laugh and we joined in because it was so funny for this to happen in such a public place but he could not get up for a while. He remarked that this was not a fearful experience but all fear was gone. We said good-bye and he went home to pray for his wife.

The gathering in Canberra and conference in Portland were wonderful experiences and gave us much hope for new beginnings in the Lutheran church and beyond. The testimonies of goodness – the grace and love of our God – simply overwhelm me and make me very soft and thankful toward him. I also paid attention to a number of observations:

It is better to travel in team. I minister out of what God has done at Living Grace (Toowoomba) and it seems better to share what happened to our community as a community. Helen was wonderful and so was Tatjana. I told the conference in Portland that Tatjana was gifted in dream interpretation and many came and shared theirs with her. People who received visions at the conference were able to check with her immediately. Tatjana also prayed for me and covered my back in so many ways.



Everywhere people keep saying that they want to come and spend time at Living Grace. The mission and commission is for our church, not just one man. This means that everyone is given the privilege to stand up and live out the values and insights and authority which God has granted to us. On Tuesday after the conference, I was home and shopping in Aldi when one of our new members told me that they are looking for a place which would enable them to host visitors. We are going out but people will also come to us and this is wonderful.

In Canberra and Portland – just like at Living Grace – God is touching children and we are encouraged to keep an eye on the next generation and minister to them.



The miracle of gold dust remains important and brings people into new things and joy.

Some of the most active and committed Christians are on the verge of giving up hope and contemplate leaving the Lutheran denomination. They are looking for more in our relationship with God.

The message never changes. We preach Jesus and him crucified but we are thankful when God confirms the preaching with demonstrations of the Spirit's power. Jesus is Lord and his lordship is good.

