

Walking Through Betrayal

Anyone entering into any level of relationship whether it be a marriage, ministry, friendship or business—the risks of betrayal will always be possible.

When money, ego, jealousy, power or position, in fact any form of wrong motivation and attitude is present, the risk of betrayal will always be there. That is why it is important for us to be able to recognize, respond and recover from betrayal. Because some don't, they remain beaten, bitter, broken and buried—never to raise again and fulfill their destiny and the calling of God on their lives. Society is full of ex business people, ministers, partners, church members and lonely people that just can't get back up.

Betrayal will happen to us all at some time. It doesn't matter how spiritual, nice or insightful we become, we will still be vulnerable to the betrayal of others.

Jesus himself was betrayed, but He fulfilled his mission in life because He recognized the betrayal for what it was. He responded to it well and no doubt recovered from it but it was something He still went through despite the fact that He was the Son of God.

We can learn much from Jesus and personally be ministered to by Him in seeing us released from this painful experience. An after taste of not only the betrayal but any tough experience we go through in life.

I love what Hebrews 4:15-16 says about Jesus supporting us in these times.

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need"

Over the years I personally have learned no matter how painful the experience or how challenging the battle was, whether it was self inflicted or brought on by others I

must go to Jesus and allow Him to minister His grace, understanding and help in my time of need. For our lives and ministries to continue to be effective we must keep a clean and uncluttered heart.

Within the last year I had to do this with the biggest act of betrayal, slander and false accusations I had ever experienced in ministry and life. If it hadn't have happened to me I wouldn't of believed it possible.

I thought I would start by sharing the recovery side to betrayal first. As to me, it is the most important. Whether you fully recognize and read what is happening at the time. The main thing is you come through, healed, whole and ready to move forward into all that life has for you.

Recovery

It was 5 months after I recognized and rose up from a betrayal where slander, false accusations, the casting of aspersions on myself and my family was all part of the plan. I never got to face my accusers as they fled when I came back and would not face me or return my calls.

Numbers of leaders and people around me were a little stunned, and of little help as they sat in the seat of doubt and fear. Thinking that somethings could possibly be true or my reaction and anger to the betrayal was of bigger judgment than the betrayal itself. So apart from a few close colleagues and friends I felt pretty much alone. I had to go to God which is a good thing at the end of the day. For month after month the whole scenario that had taken place would just go around and around in my head. Conversations I had and would like to have, actions that were taken, things that were said or needed to be said. People that had listened to the slander or could just not cope with the loss and change that had taken place in the church would drop away. Some would say farwell, others just quietly left. But for whatever reason the fallout took place. The truth is, when the shepherd is stuck the sheep scatter.

It was a Sunday morning I prepared my message, prayed, sought God and headed off to church. I remember that morning for some reason thinking about how bad I had been betrayed and lied against and how unjust it had all been. Then when I arrived at church I saw communion was set up and I was on the roster to share at

it. I can remember thinking I didn't want to share communion. Then I thought to myself well I suppose some people don't feel like having communion at times because of guilt or shame. Then I looked at the music team and singers and thought I bet they don't feel like leading worship every week and then I said to the Lord: "I personally don't feel like being the Senior Minister at the moment." Even though I had no plans of quitting, I felt my honesty to God did something in me. Anyway on I went to find a scripture to read for communion. I turned to a typical one everyone looks at but read something I'd never seen before:

"For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread" 1Corinthians 11:23

I was taken back and read it again and again. It was like Jesus was saying to me: "Hey Kevin on the very night I was betrayed I got up and served my most important meal and then I served it on the cross."

It was also like He was saying to me : "Now you get up and serve this meal and the call of God that is upon your life because of that meal." With tears, I shared communion with the folks that morning and waves of the healing power of Jesus flowed over me. I knew it, I was free to move forward. It didn't stop me from thinking about the betrayal now and then and it didn't make people come back or those that had wronged me ask for forgiveness or that I should approach them to make amends, but I felt free, released and healed from the fire darts of the enemy.

I sensed that now I could move forward. Still not an easy road but one I was committed to. It is interesting to note that Chapter 17:23 speaks of disunity and discord in the church. Leading with God's approval is not a matter of being right or wrong but moving forward with the right spirit whatever the outcome. Whatever your grievances, hurts, or disappointments are go to the cross, take up the meal of communion, the place from where all healing and release comes from.

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The other healing factor were some friends and true leaders that understand the bigger picture of what was going on. I never forget the weekend I walked back into the pulpit. I knew I had to be strong and resolute toward where I was going as there were many people confused from the lies, accusations and innuendoes that had been sown.

That night by chance a friend, a brother who I had not seen for some time stood in my pulpit, a man of apostolic gifting who worked in the middle east Affeef Hasalah. I decided not to tell him what had taken place so he would minister with freedom in which he did.

The next morning as we were having breakfast, he looked at me and with his gift and understanding said: *"brother I can see many knives in your back, God has sent me here to pull them out."* He stood and prayed over me. I literally sensed his apostolic authority take charge over what had happened and I sensed an empowering from God to rise up and not give in.

It was like I was finally sitting with a man that truly understood the spiritual battle I had been in and ministered to me in a spiritual way with spiritual authority. Of course there was a number of other leaders and friends that stood with me, when you are in this kind of fight you need to make sure you are not alone. But at the same time you need to have the right people around you. Those that understand the true situation, have some authority in God and are for you and believe in you and the call and vision that is on your life despite your weakness and personality.

Recognising and responding to betrayal correctly.

It would be wonderful if we could automatically always recognise betrayal or anything of that matter that can destroy relationships. But we don't have ALL insight into seeing everything and everyone as God does. But at the same time we need to be wise in who we allow into our lives and around us in ministry, how I have failed in this from time to time.

I have allowed people's pushiness, the desperateness of the moment, my lack of patience to hurry the work of God, my love and belief in people to see them succeed and allow them to do more than they should.

I've always been more of a risk taker than a care taker. I like to believe the best in people and give them a go or a second chance. Now just while you are tucking and shaking your head thinking, yes we know that's your weakness, let me say this—it is my strength as well.

As I have had the privilege of releasing more leaders than failures, because God has always seen my heart—to raise up and release people into their call.

While at the same time working on my head to be more discerning and careful.

In raising people up, you have to give of yourself, to open your life and your heart and be a little vulnerable and transparent.

Through all of this I have been blessed, encouraged, inspired, multiplied, betrayed, crushed, slandered and abused. In all of this I have no regrets—only lessons learned along the journey.

When I read about mosses with Korah (Numbers 16) and King David with Absalom (2Samuel 15) Paul (1Corinthians 4:11-13) and Jesus with Judas. Even God had Lucifer turn against him (Isaiah 14). Was Jesus or God's choice of leader or style of leadership bad? When I think of these examples of leadership maybe it is all part of the training and development in our lives like in Hebrews 5:8 *"Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered."*

Now of course not to throw everything into the sovereignty of almighty God—there are some things we can do that will assist us in our choosing of leaders.

1. Look for the right qualities

"But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." 1Samuel 16:7

We need to look at the things God looks for—not just at the outward like : ability, age, experience or anything they can put on to make themselves look good. We need to look at things like integrity, motivation, character, past records of ministry or business dealing at their work or business ethic.

This kind of selection will save you a lot of heart ache and pain, trust me—I have learned this the hard way.



Kevin enjoying a the finer things of life in his own backyard what he refers to as The Murrakin Reserve Estate.

2. Do not entrust yourself to anyone *"But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men."* John 2:24

Protect yourself, guard your heart for out of it flows the issues of life. Bring people on but don't let them get too close too soon. Let things build relationally even then realize Jesus had a level of relationship. John the beloved (his habib) was his closest. Then there was Peter and James and then the rest of the disciples, then the 72 and then the multitude.

So when Judas betrayed Him he would have felt a little hurt but he was three rungs down the friendship ladder so it didn't crush him. But at the same time to truly develop people you have to bring them in close. So you are going to have to take a risk and trust leaders to bring them on and develop them or you will just be a caretaker and build nothing.

3. Watch people through difficult times

How they react, who they turn on, how they come through. It will be a big decider on how much you can trust and entrust to them in the future. I sometimes think it is a great thing when a mistake happens or an incident takes place or even something I made an error in—Just observe and take note of people's reactions—they are indicators of things to come both good and bad. 1Corinthians 11:19.

I generally find unless you have been through a few challenges, times of testing and stretching as a leadership, the team is not seaworthy and ready for any church or business growth.

I mean look at **Peter**. How many times was he sought out by Jesus and sorely tested? He was corrected about four or five times and publicly. But he kept coming back and there he was at Pentecost, standing up among the 11 preaching and seeing 3000 people swept into the kingdom.

Let's face it Jesus' leadership wasn't always the popular choice. Read John 6:60-71.

Then there was **Judas** who was actually next in line for leadership according to Jewish rights as he was the most Jewish disciple.

There was an incident in his leadership development that turned bad. It was when the alabaster jar of perfume which was worth one years wage was poured over Jesus. Quite an extravagant gift for the leader and possibly not so necessary.

Judas was not pleased with the event and objected in John 12:1-8 and Matthew 26:6-13 (read these passages). But in front of everyone was corrected by Jesus.

Isn't it interesting as soon as this incident happened Judas betrayed Jesus and it says looked for an opportunity to expose Him to his true enemies—the Pharisees. (Matthew 26: 14-16)

That is what wrong spirited leaders do, look for opportunities to run you down, expose you, sell you out. So be on your guard especially after you correct or direct someone. Sit back and observe. Where was Judas on Pentecost lying in a poor man's grave six feet under pushing up daisy's.

4. How they handle the little things

Money was only ever meant to be a little thing but because of our need and greed we have made it a bigger thing.

"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much." Luke 16:10

I worked for BHP for over six years and saw many people taking things, getting others to clock them off while they left early, taking sickies off when they weren't sick and because it was such a big company they worked at half pace. I remember feeling it was a privilege to have this job and as boring as it was it enabled me to buy a car and live the life I had.

I left the company only having taken four sick days off in seven years. I never got anyone to clock me off and I feel that even though this was a little thing it empowered my future in the ministry both in working for others and when I was given my own church.

God always sees how we treat other people's property and vision and from that releases us.

It is interesting to note that Judas did not look after Jesus' finances well: *"He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it"* John 12:6

Watch people that cut corners, treat others property badly or not loyal in relationships. See how they handle money in regard to giving. This is a sign of things to come.

Responding in the middle of Betrayal

How do you respond when it happens to you, you feel gutted on the inside unable to respond, hard and unemotional you shut down, building a major distrust for people. I can really understand David's words now in Psalm 55:12-14

"If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were raising himself against me, I could hide from him. But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship as we walked with the throng at the house of God."

It is interesting in the time of Judas Betrayal of

Jesus—Jesus quotes: *"Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me."* Psalm 41:9

It was not only the betrayal of Judas, but at the same time Jesus had to cope with the denial of his most enthusiastic follower, the doubt of others and the scattering of the rest. How gutted would he have felt in his darkest hours!

Paul experienced a similar thing: *"At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them."* 2 Timothy 4:16

As painful as these experiences are they are all part of the journey and you must keep your senses about you and stay on course. For at these times more of your true enemies will be exposed and your true followers will come to the surface.

This is what I noticed after my bad response and knee jerk reaction was to smash the slanderers but being they were older I took it out on a coffee table with a few choice words. After this I calmed down and watched as I was fascinated who then rose up with more accusations, offers to run the church—like with Jesus when Judas kissed Him his worst enemies began to rise up to destroy him. That is why you need to keep your wits about you. Betrayal is a horrible thing but it does bring your enemies out and expose who is with you and who isn't. It flushed any church business or organization and allows it to have:

- ◆ A fresh start
- ◆ A new day
- ◆ A resurrection
- ◆ A Pentecost
- ◆ A building of the church

So be on your guard, keep a good spirit, stay on course for there is a new day ahead.

Kevin

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PUB CHURCH

We had to close our night service last year due to lack of commitment, interest and need. Most if not everyone could attend the Thursday morning or Sunday morning 9:30am service so to have the same people twice a day wasn't a big deal.

I was disappointed for about one hour until I realized I now had time and space to start Pub Church on a Sunday night. Something I have always wanted to do. To take church out there among the community into a building that was originally built for the fellowship of people. I acquired the 2nd floor at the Kent Hotel in Beaumont Street called "The Living Room". We kicked it off last year so it has been running for about 2 months with a bit of a break over Christmas and new year.

What Happens at Pub Church?

I very simply book a solo or trio artist who performs covers or their own songs for about 40 to 50 minutes while every one enjoys a drink or two with a friend or someone new.

I get up and welcome people to Pub Church, have a few announcements then go on to share a 10 to 15 minute message that is sharp, short and relevant to the hearers. We then take up an offering for some charity in the community or missionary overseas. It could be the Samaritans, the salvo's our own mission, bushfire brigade, surf life saving and so on. Anything from \$70.00 to \$200.00 has come in the offering. The muso then goes on and plays for another 20 minutes while the crowd—anything from 20 to 50 up to now with always about 1/4 of the crowd being unchurched listens or chats between themselves.

It is a place where you can easily bring friends. The best night yet was three weeks ago. We had great music, over 50 people (approximately 15 unchurched), an impacting message and the room was full of God conversations. \$134.00 was given to an overseas mission in India and the beer also tasted great!

Kevin

Senior Leader @ Life Church
Email: info@lifechurch.or.gau
Mobile: 0407 467 798

Follow Kevin on TWITTER
<http://twitter.com/KevinWilcock>



GlobeReach some of the works we support overseas
or are planning to support in the future

CAMBODIA/BURMA – Donna Byham

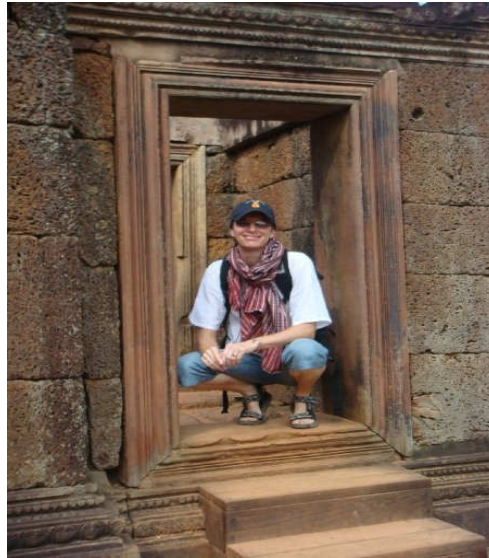
"But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." Genesis 3

Mulla Nasrudin was a legendary sufi figure who lived during the middle ages. He was known as a Philosopher, wise man and was remembered for his anecdotes. He was approaching the door of his house one night when he suddenly realised he had lost his key. He tried to look around for it, but the night was so dark he could hardly see the ground. So he got down on his hands and knees and examined the ground where he was standing. But it was still too dark to see anything. Moving back toward a streetlamp, he again got down and began a meticulous examination of the area.

A friend came by and, noticing him, asked what he was doing. Nasrudin replied: "I lost my key and am looking for it." So the friend too got down on his hands and knees and began to search. After a while the friend asked, "Do you remember where you might have lost the key?" "Certainly", answered Nasrudin. "I lost it in my house." "Then why are you looking for it out here?" "Because", answered Nasrudin, "the light is so much better here."

The past 12 months I've spent in Australia have been a time of deep reflection with God in dark and hidden places. A journey in finding my

own spiritual keys. A journey that has not been easy. A journey of becoming more self aware and realising that what I do, what I have or what others think of me is not important to God (even though it often is to me). Instead of accepting myself as I am and journeying with God in this, is what's important to Him.



Donna at Siam Reap (over 1000 year old worship temples—a must to see if travelling through Cambodia) in a traditional Burmese scarf, great from stopping the dust going down your throat while riding your bike.

Thomas Merton said: *"Before we can surrender ourselves we must become ourselves, for no one can give up what he or she does not yet first possess."*

2009 has been a good year preparing myself emotionally, spiritually (as mentioned above) and physically (with regular work at the hospital and exercise) in readiness to join the Servants Team in Burma this month. I am excited about 2010 and what is to come. I want to thank those who have been supporting our work in Cambodia faithfully and are continuing to. I also want to thank those who have committed to and are supporting me for my work in Burma. Your generosity brings me much joy and comfort. I look forward to sending more updates this year with how things go.

Hope your Christmas has been great as will the New Year be.

Many Blessings
Donna Byham
Email: donnabyham@gmail.com
Australian Address: 12 Quarry St, Port Kembla

Support Details:
Account Name: Donna Byham
Account BSB: 633-000
Account No.: 124 195 819
Web: www.empowerasia.org
www.servantsasia.org

INDONESIA—Colin & Kim Crago

I got powerful healing when we have healing service.....

My name is Sugino from Pinggir. I am one of member from HDRK and I got powerful healing when we have healing service. Before I know about Jesus already one years I very sick, I can not eat so I am very skinny, I can feel my body very weak. But one day my friend Mr Ranot asking me to join in healing meeting, he said: "If you want to heal come with me and Jesus can heal you and my pastor will pray for you." After that I go with Mr Ranto to HDRK, Ps Colin pray for me and I heal. After finish I come back home and I can eat a lot, my family very shocking when they see me eat so much. Praise God now my body heal, since that I never go to the hospital.

Healings Outside of the Church

One of the group, Ibu Tumiyem, a very poor lady who has been the recipient of various food distribution programmes, now a stalwart of the Church and prospering somewhat better, went to visit her parents. When she got there they

told her about the lady next door who was suffering from some sort of bone disease. She was a Christian and had prayed about her situation. Ibu Tumiyem offered to pray for her and did. Immediately the pain ceased. There was a Muslim lady present who had a badly sore knee—Ibu Tumiyem prayed for her and she received healing straight away. Since then the Muslim lady has come to Ibu Tumiyem requesting healing for her son which Jesus honoured.

Another member of the group, Ibu Jinto, had a son, Andika, with a high fever. While she was praying, two men dressed totally in white came in. They asked here a question: "Do you believe in the straight road or the curvy road?" She replied: "I don't know, I'm not very well educated, I just believe in Jesus and I know I'm going to be with him forever." "O.K.", they said and prayed for Andika. The fever left him immediately, so did the two men and they didn't depart by the door.



God heals my lung....

My name is Mr Joko from Sumber. I come to the HDRK with my wife on 6 December 2009 because I got information from my friend that there is a healing meeting at HDRK, they said if you go to the church the pastor will pray for you. So I go to HDRK and then Ps Colin pray for me so I heal. Before I can not breath very well, just like asthma. But after I go to the church now I can feel getting better and better. So at that night me and my wife accept Jesus in my life. Hallelujah!!!

Colin & Kim Crago
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Hi Everyone,
 Since I updated you all at the OzReach conference our life has slowed down a lot...which is really great. We have been enjoying a lot of family time...soaking up the Wollongong beaches and sunshine (which is the best on the NSW coast of ours). We had a lovely holiday before Christmas at a caravan park on the far south coast—very simple and isolated...highly recommended for those who need a quiet holiday on the beach.

In case you weren't at the conference, Fred resigned from his role as Senior pastor of Central in late September 2009, after he suffered a nervous breakdown and has since been getting treatment for an anxiety disorder. He is improving in his well being and taking time to ride his bike, journal his thoughts and feelings and spending time being Mr Mum. He is in the middle of preparing for a gruelling cycling event in the Alpine Mountains of Brigh, Victoria—200km up hill in one day...yes he's mad!

Our kids are at that hilarious stage...painful one minute hilarious the next...Elke 6, Austin 4, Eliza 2. They are enjoying having their dad around more. I am finding some time to swim and knit when I can. I work two days a week for a NSW government department called Ageing Disability and Home Care, where I

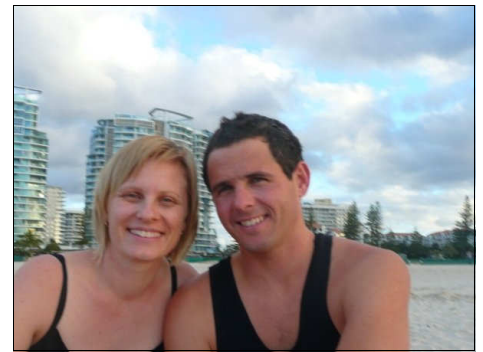
support people with disabilities and their families find accommodation and respite services.

As far as our walk with the Lord...we have learned so much more about his grace and love for us since Fred has resigned from church. I am still reading a Psalm 118 which gives me great comfort and hope for the future. Fred has been working his way through a book called "The Happiness Trap" by Dr Russ Harris—recommended by the psychologist we see. It is a fantastic book to help our minds come to a place of rest and ties in with the scripture from Romans 12 about surrendering our thoughts.

I have been attending a service on a Monday evening (we call it "dinner church") that is run from Central Church. It is a small group of adults and children who gather for a meal tighter and pray and worship and talk about God and life issues. It has been a place of refuge for me during the difficult period with Fred and I am so thankful to our beautiful church and for their unconditional love and support to our family...it has been a true CHURCH in operation! The other think I like about this group is that is has helped me invite other "non churchies" to come along and share a meal and engage in spiritual conversation. Skpetics of the church world have been intrigued by what we are doing and ask lots of questions and are keen to start coming. We even had an Afghani Muslim man come and eat

with us one evening and share his faith...of course we ate halal food and we even all prayed together...it was a great time of sharing faith.

So what is ahead for us: Fred will work 3 days for 3 months getting his hands dirty as a mechanic; I'll continue as above and the kids will do what they're told...Ha! We are nervously excited about what God has around the corner for us. But for now we are healing and recovering from a very difficult time. I could go on and on but my theme this year is to live simply and peacefully. We are not thinking too far forward; for now it is one day or one week at a time (sometimes one minute or one hour at a time). We will continue to be apart of the community at Central Church and look forward to sharing with Carolyn and Luke Meers on their time ahead as leaders of Central. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who have supported our family through this time and kept in touch. Your phone calls, sms and emails have helped us to know we are loved and supported. I hope this little insight helps you understand our family a bit more.



Janet & Fred David **Six Weeks away...relief**

Central Church ~ Carolyn Meers

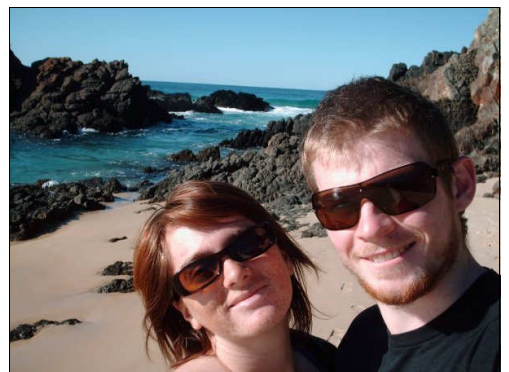
After 12 1/2 years of meeting as a church at our Swan Street Building, Central sold up and have moved to renting the Senior Citizens hall in Gipps Road, Gwynneville. We felt led as a church to stop putting so much of our finances into bricks and mortar and instead to use the money to generate interest to send overseas in support of our missions. Over the last 18 months Central has planted two congregations that seek to reach people who would not consider going to a traditional church service to seek God. One of these congregations meets down at Warilla on Saturday mornings, and the other meets over dinner on a Thursday night.

Both these congregations look very different from the Church service most Christians would be familiar with, but they are seeing people connect to God who would never walk through the doors of the Church. Central has also recently seen a change in their leadership as Fred and Janet David passed the baton onto my husband Luke and myself. At Central we believe that churches are like ice cream, each has a unique flavour. Our job as Christians is to get people to love and eat ice cream, it doesn't matter what the flavour. Much of our journey as a church has been to discover what flavour God has made us, and to be confident in that even if it's different to

the chocolate or strawberry flavours down the road. Our prayer requests:

- ♦ Pray for all three of our congregations that they continue to reach people who don't know Jesus.
- ♦ Pray for wisdom as our new leadership team rises up to guide Central.
- ♦ Pray that as a church we continue to be true to the flavour that God has dreamed for us to be.

Carolyn Meers
 Central Church Wollongong
 Email: carolynmeers@gmail.com



Luke & Carolyn Meers,
 Enjoying a day at the beach.

Mates in Ministry

When: 19th February 2010 10:00am to 12:00 noon

Venue: Airport McDonalds (the one outside) purchase your own lunch from the healthy menu. 9 Ross Smith Avenue, Mascott (sorry about the venue it is just accessible as Rod is flying in)

Speaker: Rod Irvine - "**Lessons learned in Leadership**"

Rod pastored and led the Figtree Allsaints Anglican church for just on 20 years seeing it grow from about 350 to 1300 people becoming South Coasts largest church.

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