**Need a hand up, mate?**

By Bill Pugh

It was Monday afternoon, a washing day. The Hills Hoist was loaded with dried clothes waiting to be unpegged and put in the basket to be taken inside.

I was carefully unpegging and there was one garment a bit out of reach so I leant over to unpeg it.

I forgot about the small stand at my feet, pushed it over with my knees, and ended up on the grass. I could not get up and called out for my wife who rushed out to find a neighbour to help me.

Most were away on holidays, but a young man came running by, and my wife said, “Please, can you help?”

Around the back he came, saw my plight and said, “Need a hand up, mate?” And he put his strong hands, and arms, under my arms, and easily lifted me upright.

Such gratitude from us, and he continued on his run.

**Reflection**

ln looking back, I can still hear his accent. Not a dinkum Aussie sound, but one from another community.

Here surely was a parable of the good Samaritan in person. He was ready and willing to help on the spot. Not a resident of our street but a passerby, responding to someone who needed a lift up, a good Samaritan in person.

Thank God for this young runner. Surely responding to the call, as made in the words of Richard Gillard (Tis: 650).

**My peace I give to you**

By Geoff Sherpell

What kind of peace you may well ask? David Beswick, a retired Uniting Church Minister, says that it is a gift of wholeness, being made well, reconciled, saved, and knowing God.

Peace and wholeness are brought together in the healing miracles of Jesus illustrated liberally throughout the four gospels.

When people talk about what they are most looking for in life, peace features high on the list. We seek peace and tranquillity from the noise of traffic, inner peace when we are in chaos, world peace when, for example, we are confronted with Russia trying to take over Ukraine in the most devastating manner, while just a bit of peace and quiet after a day’s work is much sought after.

Back in the 60s and 70s, when I was employed by Prince Henry’s Hospital in St Kilda Road, I attended a businesspersons’ lunchtime church service at Scots’ church in Collins Street.

I do not remember any words said except most times when I was jumping back onto the tram with renewed energy, to get back to work, were the peaceful words regularly said by the Minister, Rev Gordon Powell: “Let go and let God”!

I have a little book called “Prayers of Peace”: Let me share a few with you.

“In the practice of daily prayer, we can find the blessing of God’s peace.”

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” Matthew 5:9

“Where there is peace, God is.” George Herbert

We should realise that He accepts us and surrounds us with His love. It’s when we come to terms with ourselves, and offer what we are to God, that the seed of “peace” is established.

**Reflection**

“Peace, I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.” John 14:27

**Breath of life**

By Bill Pugh

God walked in the garden in the cool of the day at the time of the evening breeze. A busy God needed a quiet walk, a refreshing breeze.

How on hot summer days we long for a cool, refreshing breeze. Breath, wind, spirit, breeze, are fundamental to human life. Wind drives the scudding clouds and changes the seasons.

There is another breeze which blows, significant in the Bible story. On the day called Pentecost it blew mightily on the gathered friends of Jesus, like a rushing mighty wind which brought new strength and empowerment to proclaim the resurrection.

So the Church was born. They proclaimed his message as they travelled the Mediterranean world. News of this new faith was received by the scholars and philosophers.

In Athens, Paul was invited to address them on Areopagus Hill, the meeting place. He spoke about the many statues to gods he saw in the city, even an altar to the Unknown God.

Paul said this confusion was unnecessary. The real God is revealed and known through his only son Jesus, cruelly condemned, crucified and raised to life on the third day.

He is the Risen one whom they proclaim. At the mention of resurrection, the council were furious, dismissing him by saying, “we will hear you again on this matter”.

The Speaker of the House, as we would call him today, adjourned the debate with no fixed arrangement.

The old prayer reminds us to be “deeply conscious of the shortness and uncertainty of human life”.

Shortness of breath and physical incapacity underline our vulnerability.

More than ever do I value the ability to breathe into my lungs good, clean air.

The gift of life renewed every day. And later to sense the calm and peace which comes at the time of the evening breeze.

**A good night’s sleep**

By Bill Pugh

Sometimes we sleep like a top, so the saying goes. But sometimes we wake and can’t get back to sleep.

Many thoughts and worries invade our minds. Some seek sleep therapy, others pills.

But maybe the Bible can help. When I wake up I vision the alphabet and a Bible character for each letter, starting from A to Z.

If that does not work, maybe a warm Milo will help.

For matters of conscience, we can try to work it out. For sins, we can seek forgiveness and a new beginning.

There are no easy cures. Sleep is important for renewal of body and mind.

The Bible values the gift of sleep. The Psalmist advises us to take our worries and sins to our forgiving God, and then, “I will lay me down and sleep in peace, for you O lord make me to dwell in safety.” Psalm 4:8

**Reflection**

“Unless the lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain. Unless the Lord guards the city, the guard keeps watch in vain. It is vain that you rise up early, and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives sleep to his beloved.” Psalm 127: 1, 2

The first and last words of the Greek alphabet are a wonderful description of God:

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” Revelation 1:8