



DANDENONG  
**Bible  
Education  
Centre**

# Newsletter December 2009

## What does Christmas mean to you?

It's *that* time of year! The time when it's hard to find a parking spot at the shopping centre. The time when you are trying to think what on earth you should buy for that aunt or friend who seems to have everything. If you have school children, it's the time when there are break-ups, parties, concerts and end-of-year reports. It's the time when you 'bake and take' food to various places. Is it a time you enjoy and look forward to, or is it a time you endure, waiting for January to come so you can recover, and work out how to pay the credit card bills?

Take some time this Christmas to think about the baby who was born in a stable and placed in a manger, the one who will be king over the whole earth. If you enjoy singing why not get together with friends to sing some Christmas carols, or read the story of the wise men visiting Jesus in Matthew 2 or the shepherds' visit in Luke 2. There is so much more to Christmas than tinsel and presents. Include Jesus now!

## Christmas - the birth of new hope

This fascinating two-night course explores the intriguing background to some of the traditions of Christmas. It sheds some light on the true story as told in the Bible, and its phenomenal impact on the world. Attending this course would be a great way to find true meaning and encouragement amid the festive blur.

**What?** 2-night course  
**When?** Thursdays, December 10 & 17  
**Time?** 8:00pm - 9:15pm



### Holiday hours

The Dandenong Bible Education Centre shop and library will close for the Christmas holidays on Thursday December 24 at 2pm. It is planned to reopen on Monday January 18 at 10am. During the holiday break, classes will continue to run on Sundays.

### Gift idea

Don't forget gift vouchers are for sale at the Bible Education Centre. Buy them for your friends and let them choose their own presents from our range of books and gift items.

## Christmas Eve service

Join with us in a special Christmas worship service and celebration. Remember the birth of Jesus before starting Christmas day. Christmas can be

so much more than presents and parties. It can be a time to remember that a little baby was born in very humble circumstances to a young virgin. From these small beginnings came one who will be the king of the whole world, and who is the son of the Almighty God. If Jesus hadn't been born, we would have no hope for life everlasting. But he **was** born, he **did** live a sinless life and he **did** die for those who would believe in him. So think of his humble beginnings at this Christmas worship service.

**What?** Christmas worship service  
**When?** Thursday, December 24  
**Time?** 7:00pm

DandenongChristadelphians

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## New Life Class 11.30–12.30 Sundays

**Dec 6** *What does the world need from God: Justice or mercy?*  
**13** *Israel - chosen or rejected?*  
**20** *Who was John the Baptist?*  
**27** *Faith, hope and love*

# The Tree of Knowledge

The Bible contains 3,566,580 letters; 810,697 words; 31,102 verses; 1,189 chapters and 66 books. The longest chapter is the 119th Psalm; the shortest and middle chapter the 117th Psalm. The middle verse is the 8th of the 118th Psalm. The longest name is in the 8th chapter of Isaiah. The word "and" occurs 46,627 times; the "Lord" 1,855 times. The 37th chapter of Isaiah and the 19th chapter of the second book of Kings are alike. The longest verse is the 9th of the 8th chapter of Esther; the shortest verse is the 35th of the 11th chapter of John. In the 21st verse of the 7th chapter of Ezra is the alphabet. The finest piece of reading is the 26th chapter of the Acts. The name of God is not mentioned in the book of Esther. It contains knowledge, wisdom, holiness & love.

*Please note: These details are from the King James Version. Other versions will differ a little in the number of letters, words and verses but the general idea remains.*

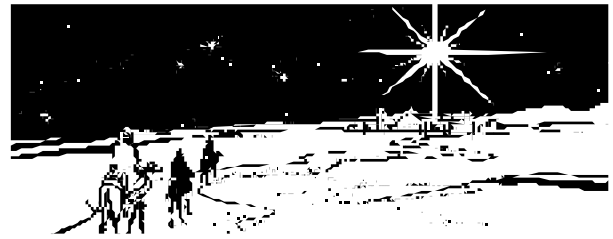
## Did you know?

Christmas carols and children's Bible storybooks talk of the "Three Wise Men" who visited baby Jesus. Did you know that the Bible record doesn't say how many wise men visited?

*Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."*  
Matthew 2:1-2

These wise men (called "Magi" in some versions) brought three gifts - gold, frankincense and myrrh - which has suggested to some people that there were three wise men.

As well as this, the wise men visited Mary, Joseph and Jesus in a house, not in the stable where he was born some time earlier (Matthew 2:11).



All our plans are "God willing"

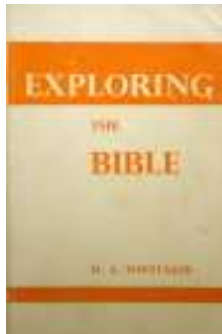
## Great holiday reading! "Exploring the Bible" by H. A. Whittaker

This book is available in the library for loan or can be purchased second hand for \$3.

In the preface the author writes,

"A strong appeal is made here to readers not to be content to be always spoon-fed in Bible instruction. If these chapters do not send readers back to the Book to explore and study and think for themselves, they have failed utterly in their aim."

So here is a book which is intended to help the reader to find ways that will help in the study of the Bible. The author does not aim to tell the reader what to do with the Bible, or what to think about the Bible. Rather, he wishes to show a number of different ways that the reader can study the Bible to help them to learn more detail of God's message to mankind. The author encourages the Bible reader to read with care and



also to look for similar passages in different parts of the Bible to gain a fuller understanding of the part being read. He speaks of the symbolic language in some sections of the Bible, the parables and miracles in other parts. There is a chapter on using a concordance, to help in your hunt for a particular word throughout the Bible, and another chapter on using your imagination to fill out the details of Bible passages.

These and many other helpful ideas are packed into this small paperback book with under 150 pages. So if you are looking for something small and thought provoking to read over the Christmas period, this could be the book for you!

Remember this book is available in the library and also as a second hand book, so come and visit us soon for a copy.