ORDER OF SERVICE Sunday 25 July 2021

Welcome and Notices Mr Keith Ferres, Session Clerk

Prayer of Invocation

Young at Heart Nicola McDermott by Christine Bradbeer

Bible Reading: Acts 10:23-48 Christine Bradbeer

Sermon Series on Acts #8 Reflections on the Conversion of a Military Man.

> Prayer of Intercession and The Lord's Prayer

> > Benediction



NOTICES 25 July 2021 Website: www.blackburnpc.org.au

Wednesday 28 July Sunday 1 August 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting.
11 am Divine Service
All Welcome. Covid safe practices.

If lockdown is extended on 27 July we plan to stream on the facebook page and upload to YouTube link on the church web page (link above).

For your prayers this week

Congregational member: Alistair ROSS

and

C and **N** and family have been serving in SE Asia with *Interserve* and are currently on home assignment. No image permitted.



GARDENIA ST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 53 Gardenia Street, Blackburn 3130

> Minister: Rev Graham Bradbeer tel. 9041 7911 mobile. 0409 978 690 Session Clerk: Mr Keith Ferres 98305466

Electronic Banking Details: ANZ Forest Hill, Account name: Blackburn Presbyterian Church BSB: 013-328. Account number: 2970 40694

WELCOME

GARDENIA ST. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BLACKBURN

25 July 2021



Peter Baptising the Centurion Cornelius by Francesco Trevisani, 1709 [Cohors II Italica Civium Romanorum]





N iger's first democratic transition since independence provides President Mohamed Bazoum's new administration (elected Dec 2020) with an opportunity to prioritise accountability for alleged war crimes committed by all sides in Niger's armed conflict, Human Rights Watch said today in a letter to the new justice and defence ministers. Massacres by alleged armed Islamist groups in Niger that have killed over 310 people since January 2021 highlight the need to investigate grave abuses and hold all those responsible to account.

World Watch Monitor May 2021

n 2019 the Islamist group Boko Haram stepped up attacks eastern Niger. In March alone, 88 civilians were reported killed. They warned Christian families in the area, giving them three days to flee their homes or be killed. Several Christians fled to the border city of Diffa. In that year there was estimated to be 200,000 displaced people in the Diffa region, some whom had also fled from the Islamist insurgence in neighbouring Nigeria. In a prerecorded address to the UN general assembly on 24 September 2020, President Mahamadon Issoufou (who stepped down in December 2020 after serving two terms) stressed that only international action can restore security in the strife-torn Sahel region and Lake Chad Basin (see map).

Barnabas Fund 2021

Sermon Outline Th

The Conversion of Cornelius, Roman Centurion of the Italian Cohort

The antipathy between Jews and others in the ancient world was epic. It was what made Judea such a difficult province for the Roman administration.

Our reading in Acts tells us as surely as Jesus Christ destroyed the bitterness that divided the Jews from their Samaritan cousins, so too he shatters deeply entrenched racial prejudice that saw others 'unclean'.

1. Cornelius' need for conversion

Cornelius (Acts 10:1-3) is a 'good man' and an appealing character. He is a military officer stationed at Caesarea with the "Italian Cohort". He had become a 'God-fearer', devoted to Israel's God, generous to the poor and devout in his prayers. What more did he need? He needed to be converted. We all do. Jesus said so (Matthew 18:3). The *Good News* has the power to convert us. But how would Cornelius hear that message?

2. Peter's racist attitude

Our passage begins with Peter's arrival at Cornelius' house. Peter seems surprised himself at this (v.27) 'Jews just don't do this'! MSG He and companions had come from Joppa (11 hrs 50 mins. walking Google maps). He had been prepared by a specific vision reminding him that God wanted noone considered unclean. Had not Jesus taught that it is not what goes into a person that makes them unclean, but what comes out of a person! Peter was prepared for this encounter by a thrice repeated vision.

God's Spirit works in the lives of disciples. Moulding Christ-likeness in them.

3. The Saviour who was 'cursed'

What Cornelius needed to hear was not good advice. He was already a good and highly regarded man. What he needed to hear was the Good News! In answer to his pravers an angel had appeared to tell him who to ask to visit: yes, Peter. Peter tells Cornelius and his family and close friends who were gathered for this occasion about Jesus of Nazareth: his life, death (on the tree means 'cursed for us'), and his resurrection. He is the judge of the living and the dead, and the one by whom our sins can be forgiven (v.42,43). These are central to the mission

of the Christian Church. Imagine how they fell on the ears of this Roman centurion.

4. A Gentile Pentecost!

The message was receive with faith. Cornelius and his family believed the message.

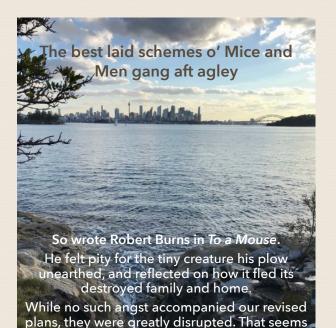
To Peter's amazement the Holy Spirit fell upon them and they spoke in tongues and gave praise to God. Tim Keller suggests their desire

to praise God tells of a deep spiritual change, and the speaking in tongues indicates a deep sociological change in which no one language or culture is prioritised over another. I think he is right. GB.



Sincere thanks to Greg and Mignon Goswell

for their diligent and loving attention to pulpit supply for us all on the past four Sundays.



to be the common lot during Covid. Instead of a road trip seeing friends of yore we enjoyed two weeks with our Bondi family and returned from that 'red zone' to two weeks of home guarantine.

No complaints. It was a challenging, joyfilled and rewarding time.