



PROSACC – Profound Revelations Of Sunday Afternoon Cycling Church

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The cover picture is based on a mosaic in the San Marco Cathedral, Venice.

Check out the latest information at www.cyclingchurch.org.nz

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Introduction.

Have you ever walked into a darkened church building on a brilliantly sunny day and wished there was some way of having church outside? Have you ever been doing some outdoor activity and experienced a stronger sense of God's presence than when singing praise songs? Sunday Afternoon Cycling Church (originally the Sunday Evening Cycling Church) was founded as a means of worshipping God other than meeting in church halls, singing songs and listening to speakers. We believe the act of cycling with an appreciation of the beauty of God's creation (Romans 1:28) is a more meaningful spiritual experience than the average church service, and one that many people outside the church can relate to more easily.

While these newsletters are largely fictional, a number of cyclists really do venture out for rides most Sunday afternoons and have meaningful worship experiences. PROSACC is partly aimed at poking some fun at church as we know it, and partly aimed at stimulating some serious reflection about what more meaningful forms of 'church' might look like. Such reflection seems increasingly important in this age where many people struggle to find spiritual meaning in the institutional church.

By the way, the email addresses do actually work if you wish to try them out. Take a look at the website too – www.cyclingchurch.org.nz



The birth of Sunday Afternoon Cycling Church

Newsletter 1. Concerning the Involvement of Women

Dear Prayer Supporters,

Welcome to the first ever newsletter of the Sunday Evening Cycling Church (SECC). Since its formation in January 2003 we have been enjoying a number of rewarding cycle worship times, riding at various locations around Christchurch during the long summer evenings. However, it has come to our attention that there have been no women involved in our activities up to this point and we are unclear as to why this might be. Is it that Christian women find the lycra cycling shorts too immodest to reconcile with the instructions in 1Tim 2:9 for women to dress decently? Maybe there is some confusion about whether women are allowed to speak during the very sacred activities of SECC due to the instructions of 1Cor 14:34-35 which state that women must remain silent in the Corinthian church and wait till they get home to ask their husbands if they have any questions. Maybe women fear that if they have to wait till they get home to ask about the particular cycle route, they might become hopelessly lost as the males seldom ask directions. Maybe it's angst about whether they can become involved in positions of authority within SECC (eg. choosing cycle routes, saying the SECC opening prayer (Appendix A), teaching others about cycle worship, cycling at the front of the bunch) as instructions in 1Tim 2:12 forbid women to teach or have authority over men. Maybe women think they might be humiliated by being made to ride at the back of the bunch as they are the weaker sex according to 1Pet 3:7.

While these verses do present some interesting theological difficulties the enlightened members of SECC also recognise the numerous examples of women in leadership in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. We were particularly inspired by the story of Jael (Judges 4:17-22) who hammered a tent peg through the head of an enemy general Sisera while he slept in her tent, thereby saving Israel. Through this most uplifting story we can see the value of having women involved, particularly those who, like Jael, have a gifting in the area of dealing with punctures. Therefore we would like to make it clear that SECC is an equal opportunity worship experience and we affirm that women can be involved in all areas of propagating the gospel via cycle worship. The only area some members felt concern over was that of map reading and felt this should be decided on a case by case basis.

One SECC member even received a picture from the Lord based on Matthew 25:1-13, which was of ten virgins cycling to meet a bridegroom – five of whom carried spare oil and five did not. It was a long cycle ride and all of their chains began squeaking. The five foolish virgins without spare oil had to detour to buy more oil to lubricate their chains while the five wise virgins with spare oil cycled on to meet the bridegroom and go to the wedding party. The other five turned up late and were not let in.

We think this is a prophetic word and ask you to join our fervent prayers, believing in faith and claiming that those five wise virgins will come along to next week's cycle ride. Debate arose as to whether we should pray for the other five to turn up the following week after they have bought their oil but it was decided that we should concentrate our prayers on the five wise virgins at this stage. If you have any inspired thoughts to guide us further on this issue, please email them to:

whywontwomencomecyclingwithus_isitourbodyodourorsomething@cyclingchurch.org.nz



The picture of the ten virgins

Newsletter 2. Concerning Mountain Versus Road Biking, and Deeds of Darkness

Dear Brothers and Sisters who Share our Cycling Vision,

We would like to inform you in this newsletter of the friction that has arisen among those members of Sunday Evening Cycling Church (SECC) who fervently believe that mountain biking is the most pure form of worship, and those who believe (with equal fervency) that road biking is more pure and therefore more acceptable to the Lord. We wish to resolve this issue lest our worship become as a stench in God's nostrils.

Those who favoured mountain biking quoted many Old Testament passages, for example: Isaiah 42:11 "Let the people ... sing for joy; let them shout from the mountaintops", and Isaiah 52:7 "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet (and bike tyres) of those who bring good news". Those who favoured road biking quoted from Luke 3:5 (which they claimed was more authoritative being the New Testament) "Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every mountain shall be made low, the rough ways smooth."

This potentially divisive issue however, has been placed on hold by an even more pressing issue raised when some members received a word from the Lord in the form of the following two Scriptures: Rom 13:12 "So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light. Let us behave decently as in the daytime", and also Eph 5:11 "Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness."



The debate between mountain and road bikers

These verses seem extremely pertinent now that daylight saving is coming to an end and there is widespread belief that SECC may have to change its meeting time to avoid the “deeds of darkness” – maybe Wednesday lunchtime or a weekend morning. Further details will be given as they become available.

Please smear us with the sunscreen of your prayers, that we might receive the light of God’s guidance regarding our meeting times, without suffering from the UV of the enemy’s doubts and discouragement as we face the possibility of not meeting in the evenings with consequent issues for our identity. Please email any thoughts to:

theverytrickytheologicalquestionaboutroadormountainbiking@cyclingchurch.org.nz

or

whoneedstoseewhereyourebikinganyway_realchristiansridebyfaith@cyclingchurch.org.nz

Newsletter 3. Concerning the Resolution of the SECC/SACC Identity Crisis

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord, Spiritual Second Cousins, and Great-Aunties of Faith,

As valued supporters you will be aware that the Sunday Evening Cycling Church (SECC) has been facing an identity crisis because we are being forced to change our meeting time to avoid being involved in “deeds of darkness” (Eph 5:11). Concern has also been expressed at our lack of contextualisation in our approach to mission adding to the case that we need to change our name to become more relevant. A suggestion was made to change our name to Sunday Evening Cycling Society (SECS) to avoid negative connotations pre-Christians may have associated with the word “church”. However, inviting people to come out for SECS (while it has a certain appeal) was thought by some to be inappropriately ambiguous.

We wish to be as biblical as possible in our choosing of an identity and meeting time and, after some revelations from the Lord, we have come to the belief that the truly anointed meeting times are 1.25pm to 3.37pm on Sunday afternoon, with our anti-home group on Wednesdays at the same time. The logic behind this reflects the central Christian beliefs that God is One God, yet in three persons, and that Jesus is both God and human. Therefore to reflect God's oneness the first chapter of the first book of the New Testament (Matthew) was chosen which contains the genealogy of Jesus (capturing the concept of his humanity). This chapter has 25 verses hence the starting time of 1:25pm (on the first day of the week).

To reflect God's trinitarian nature, the third chapter of the third book of the New Testament (Luke) was chosen which also contains the entire genealogy of Jesus. This was taken as glorious confirmation of the divine inspiration of our decisions. Luke 3 has 37 verses hence our finish time of 3:37pm. As a result of the time change we will henceforth be named the Sunday Afternoon Cycling Church (SACC). Thank for your prayers that have enabled this difficult issue to be resolved. If you would like to join us for these cycle rides or make any further suggestions about our meeting times please email:

neverletamathematicianreadthebible@cyclingchurch.org.nz

Newsletter 4. Concerning the Resolution of Mountain Biking Versus Road Biking

Dear Intercessory Giants,

It has been brought to the attention of the SACC leadership that the issue of whether road biking or mountain biking is the most pure form of worship (and hence most acceptable unto the Lord) has been left largely unresolved. We trust that this edition of the newsletter will clarify the matter for all concerned. Following the recent series at the Ilam Baptist Church on Romans, we were very convicted by Romans 14:1 which states “welcome the person who is weak in faith – do not argue with them about their personal opinions. One person’s faith allows them to eat (or ride) anything, but the person who is weak in faith eats only vegetables (or rides only one sort of bike)”. Unfortunately, rather than resolving the issue, considerable debate is occurring about who is weaker in faith. Does road biking equate to having weaker faith, or is it mountain biking, or do you need to do both in order to have a strong faith?

At this point we were reminded that “the Lord moves in mysterious ways” and in fact the Lord might choose to move on something other than two wheels altogether, and so we began to wonder what the most biblical form of wheeled transport might be. A unicycle for example would be much more biblical, symbolising the oneness of God. A tricycle similarly would be a perfect symbol of the trinitarian nature of God where the three aspects of the Godhead (wheels) work together in community. Debate arose as to which member of the Godhead equated to the front steering wheel (which also provides the motive power of the whole vehicle).



Cycling as in the vision of Ezekiel

The tricycle metaphor was abandoned at this point in lieu of the most biblically founded form of bicycle design yet proposed. Ezekiel 1:15-21 contains a remarkable description of cycling as it occurs in heaven (as an aside many members of SACC were very encouraged to learn that cycling is an inherent part of the afterlife). In Ezekiel there are four angels getting around on what is essentially a modified unicycle which has a second wheel intersecting the main wheel perpendicularly. This enables the rider to move forwards, backwards and from side to side without turning.

A competition has been initiated to build a working model of this bike, but until this anointed vehicle is available for use it was decided that the most biblical form of bike design currently available (and hence results in the most pure form of worship) is the unicycle. Next weeks ride is therefore a unicycle ride up the Rapaki track and down the Bowenvale track on the Port Hills of Christchurch. Both tracks have steep and challenging terrain and we look forward to many significant encounters with the Lord as we undertake this step of faith (or is it pedal of faith?) in our worship. If you would like to be part of the design team for the “Ezekiel bike” please email your design ideas to:

mountainunicyclistshavethstrongestfaithbyfar@cyclingchurch.org.nz

Newsletter 5. Concerning Head Coverings

Dear Advocates Before the Lord's Throne,

I would like to devote this newsletter to keeping you informed of the very significant discussions that have been taking place concerning the use of head coverings by males undertaking the most sacred act of cycling. In 1Cor 11:4-5 it is stated that women should have their heads covered during worship but men should not. This poses a problem for the males as the law of the land states that head coverings (helmets) should be worn and we are instructed to obey the state authorities (Rom 13:1). Which biblical principle should take precedence? After much debate and some acts of civil disobedience by some claiming to be obeying the law of God rather than the law of men, the issue has been satisfactorily resolved following a revelation to one of the SACC members. This *rhema* occurred as the person hurtled at great speed and with little control down a muddy hill towards a large pine tree. The words from Eph 6:17 were vividly imprinted on his mind ... "put on the helmet of salvation".

They were indeed "saved" from hitting the pine tree and, with great rejoicing, it was decided that this was a word from God for all of us. It was resolved that the wearing of helmets by men was not in fact a stench in God's nostrils, but could be included as part of our act of worship, being a metaphor of the salvation that Christ has achieved for us "on the tree" (1Pet 2:24).



The helmet of salvation

Some debate continued as to whether being saved "from a tree" was an appropriate symbol for being saved by Christ "on a tree". Some members continued to explore the metaphor further, finding significance in the fact it was a *pinus radiata* tree that was involved, particularly the fact that God's salvation *radiates* out and includes the entire cosmos in its scope. Few saw much significance in the *pinus* aspect of that image, with the exception of one person who suggested we

need to *enlarge* our vision in this area and recommended an internet search on “pinus enlargement” to see if God might wish to reveal anything else from this rich metaphor.

We will keep you informed of any significant developments from seeking the Lord in this manner. Please give thanks that we have clarified this troublesome area of men wearing helmets. Your continued prayers are like spiritual dental floss – enabling us to remove the decaying substances of dispute from between the teeth of our fellowship.

If you would like to add to our insight into these issues please email:

helmetsareassignoftheantichrist@cyclingschurch.org.nz

Newsletter 6. Concerning the Doing of Works

Dear Lawyers-of-Prayer Representing us Before God's Judgment Seat,

In this issue of PROSACC we would like to inform you of the considerable discussion amongst Sunday Afternoon Cycling Church (SACC) members about whether the act of cycling is sufficient as our offering of worship to the Lord. Many feel that God might be leading us to engage in some form of work to further express our faith whilst cycling. At this stage we reminded ourselves that it is by grace that we are saved, not by the length of the cycle rides; it's through faith, not the height of the hill climbs, nor by any other works so that no one can boast (Eph 2:8-9).

Despite this, some suggested that cycling-worship, if it is not accompanied by works, is dead (James 2:17) and proposed that, at the very least, we need to be proclaiming the gospel while we are cycling. How this might work in practice remained unclear. A ten second presentation of the entire gospel was demonstrated that could be shouted out to passers-by, with a thirty second extended version that could be used if you happened to be stopped at traffic lights. Special commendation would be given to those who could present the gospel and cycle uphill at the same time. Others thought that large banners attached to our bikes would be more culturally acceptable, with pertinent quotes such as "WWJD – What Would Jesus Drive", and "Let go, let God (except on downhills)" and "No Jesus no peaceful cycling, know Jesus know peaceful cycling". The aerodynamic properties of an attached banner were strongly questioned until those posing the question were rebuked for their lack of faith that God would always provide a tail wind if we were to take this step (or pedal) of faith in his name.



Acts of mercy

Still others felt they were called to focus our works on caring for the poor rather than preaching without first demonstrating God's love. Some suggestions for acts of service have been:

- establishing a bike recycling scheme to provide low cost bikes,
- offering energy supplements to needy cyclists,
- anointing the chains of passing cyclists with oil (careful aim would be required),
- offering free puncture repair with an option of prayer to be filled with the Holy Spirit while the tyre is being filled with air.

Considerable debate occurred as to which approach was best. To fill a person's tyres with air while their soul was perishing was seen by some to be pointless, while others thought that preaching to those without the basic needs of a simple bike, tight tyres and well-oiled chain would be hypocritical. Please uphold us in prayer as we attempt to gain a clearer picture of God's will for the future direction of SACC.

If you would like to make a submission on this subject please email your Spirit-inspired thoughts to:

cannedgospelpresentationsdontgetconvertsbutmakemefeelrighteous@cyclingchurch.org.nz

Newsletter 7. Concerning Spontaneous Versus Planned Worship

Dear Predestined Prayer Partners Perpetually Petitioning and Praising God,

In this newsletter we bring you the difficult news that several members of Sunday Afternoon Cycling Church (SACC) have expressed discontent over the style of worship experienced on SACC rides. They feel that rides have been too liturgical in their form – always the SACC opening prayer (Appendix A), a ride along a pre-planned route, a time of reflection, then home along another pre-planned route. They would like to see more spontaneity in our worship times, particularly when it comes to the route that is followed. Rather than deciding a route before the ride commences, it has been proposed that we allow Spirit-led bike rides where, at every intersection, the worship leader for the morning would seek God’s direction as to which way to turn.

A number of trials of this style of worship have been conducted with mixed results. On one ride some of the traditionalists (who prefer the pre-planned approach) abandoned the main group after the worship leader discerned that the Spirit wanted them to ride around a particular block seven times. It is not clear whether their decision was based on a lack of trust in the Spirit’s leading, or fear that the houses in the block would all collapse and they would be held liable, but it has proven to be one of the most divisive issues yet to face SACC.

A group approach to seeking the Lord’s direction has also been trialed to avoid potential divisions, where a small group of people recognised as having the gift of “word of direction” attempts to reach consensus about the direction to turn.



Seeking God’s perfect cycle route

While this shows much promise in reducing conflicts, the process will need to be streamlined, as the first ride took five hours to complete around 10km of riding. That was half an hour spent cycling and four and a half hours seeking the Spirit's leading. Many felt the time was well spent in order to successfully determine God's perfect path for our worship ride. Debate then occurred as to whether God had a perfect bike route for every ride we did, or whether God had a more general approach to bike routes. For example, any ride between 5 and 150km, with or without hills, on or off road, would be quite an acceptable act of worship to God, and it is up to our free will to decide the route on the day.

Those who believed in the perfect-route doctrine quoted from Proverbs 16:9 "in his heart a man plans his course but the Lord determines his steps (pedaling)" and Proverbs 20:24 "a man's steps (pedaling) are directed by the Lord. How then can anyone understand his own way?" They firmly believe it is essential to cycle on the Lord's pre-destined route otherwise our worship would become as a stench in God's nostrils. The traditionalists still held that pre-planning a route was quite an acceptable practice at which point the spontaneous faction quoted from Matthew 9:17 "do not pour new energy supplements into old camel backpacks, if you do the camel will burst, the energy supplement will run out and the backpack will be ruined".

Please cocoon us with the silk of your prayers during this time of crisis that we might become beautiful butterflies for Jesus. If you would like to make a submission on this subject please email your thoughts to:

spontaneousisbestandtheothersareallidiots@cyclingschurch.org.nz

Newsletter 8. Concerning Inter-Denominational Events

Dear Prayer Warriors,

Many members of the Sunday Afternoon Cycling Church (SACC) recently experienced a difficult clash of interests when the Sunday Afternoon Caving Church extended the right hand of fellowship and invited us to attend their worship time at Cave Stream near Arthur's Pass on a Sunday Afternoon. This raised huge theological questions about how we should relate to other denominations and we would like to discuss this with you in this newsletter. While we all technically believe that salvation is achieved through faith in Christ's death and resurrection, and that worship is best conducted in the outdoors, there are major disagreements about how to express this faith in our worship times. A central belief of SACC is that Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12) and that meeting in dimly-lit environments is a sin. This directly contradicts the Caving Church's approach to worship, but they claim more biblical support for their activities, quoting many examples of significant encounters with God in caves such as David taking refuge in the Adullam cave (1 Sam 22:1), Elijah fleeing from Jezebel and hearing God's still small voice in the Horeb cave (1Kings 19:9-18), and maybe even the manger of Jesus' birth was a cave, not to mention his burial and resurrection occurring in a cave.

SACC members responded with extra-biblical archaeological evidence that the times when Jesus withdrew into the mountains were actually to go mountain biking on a bike that God had created especially for him, because this was the most spiritually refreshing activity for Jesus to do. This deeply-treasured belief was regarded as mere speculation by the caving church and bitter arguments broke out.



Interdenominational disagreements

The caving church pleaded for more open-mindedness on our behalf, then further added to our anxiety by telling us that they had invited the Sunday Afternoon Climbing Church and the Sunday Afternoon Canoeing Church along for the afternoon as well. The climbing church claimed biblical support for their activities such as Moses climbing Mt Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) and Zacchaeus climbing the sycamore tree to see Jesus (Luke 19:2-4). The canoeing church claimed Moses canoeing the Nile as a baby (Exodus 2:1-6) and Jesus preaching from a canoe (Luke 5:3) as biblical support for their worship practices. SACC members replied that Jesus didn't actually like canoes at all and that's why he chose to walk across the lake rather than take a canoe (Matthew 14:25) and fell asleep during another canoe trip (Matthew 8:24).

At this stage we felt that the controversy and tensions involved in participating in inter-denominational events were too significant to be spiritually beneficial and thus we have chosen to remain true to our God-given vision of preaching the gospel through cycle-worship and not be swayed by these well-meaning but fundamentally misguided groups. Please offer baby-wipe prayers for us on this issue, cleaning away the smelly substances of dispute and preventing spiritual nappy rash. If you have any insights into how to proceed on this issue please email:

aretheyreallysavediftheydontbelievecyclingisthebestwaytoworship@cyclingchurch.org.nz

Newsletter 9. Concerning Cycling in Tongues

Dear Prayer Knights in Shining Armour,

Following the bitter disputes with the Sunday Afternoon Caving Church over interdenominational events, we at Sunday Afternoon Cycling Church earnestly sought the Lord for guidance on this matter. During one cycle ride an interesting phenomenon occurred where a strong and violent tail wind blew and what seemed to be tongues of fire came from heaven and separated, coming to rest on the helmets of all the cyclists in the bunch. We all began to cycle in different unique styles. Some pedaled with only one leg while kicking the other leg in the air. Others faced backwards on their bike while cycling along, while others rode with no hands and waved their arms ecstatically in the air. Still others didn't pedal at all but simply reclined on their bikes, enjoying the bliss of the experience, and relied on the tail wind for momentum.

We cycled like this for some time, gathering a curious crowd of other cyclists alongside us, each of whom was attracted to a particular riding style. We spoke with them explaining that we were not drunk but experiencing an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that we termed *cycling in tongues* (due to its similarity to the Acts 2 experience). After preaching the gospel, we prayed for the onlookers, and they too were filled with the Spirit and received the gift of cycling in tongues as well. We then cycled to neighbouring towns, and people everywhere began to cycle in tongues, to the extent that many SACC members became convinced that if you didn't cycle in tongues, you weren't actually filled with the Spirit and therefore not truly saved.



Cycling in Tongues

We went back to our well-meaning friends at the Caving Church and demonstrated this phenomenon to them, and explained as sensitively as possible that they were not truly saved because they hadn't experienced this outpouring of God's Spirit. Alas, they were not impressed with our experience, nor our theology, and cynically suggested we check the concentration of the energy supplements in our drink bottles. Thus they chose to remain in their darkness, with only their head lamps as a dim reminder of the true light they were missing out on. Their parting comments that we should be renamed the Sunday Afternoon Cycling Cult hurt us deeply, and therefore we have come to realise that it is probably not the most loving thing to force this truth upon those who are not ready to receive it.

Please sustain us with the baking soda of your prayers that our worship might rise to new heights and be as a tasty muffin for Jesus. If you have any thoughts on this subject or would like prayer to receive the gift of cycling in tongues please email:

whywouldtheholyspiritmakemedosomethingsodumb@cyclingchurch.org.nz

Newsletter 10. Concerning the Prayer of Jabez and Blessings-Indeed

Dear Prayer Samurai,

During one of our recent worship times in Sunday Afternoon Cycling Church, several cyclists had the same scripture impressed upon them from the Lord. It was 1Chron 4:10 which is a prayer that a chap called Jabez prayed. It goes “Oh, that you would bless me indeed and enlarge my territory, that your hand would be with me and that you would keep me from pain”. We felt called to pray this prayer once a week before the bike ride and see what blessings-indeed God would give.

After several weeks many became convinced that God wished to bless-us-indeed with new mountain bikes to replace our rather antiquated models with no suspension or fancy gadgetry. They decided that the bikes would have to be the most eye-catching and technically advanced models available to be classed as a blessing-indeed (rather than an ordinary everyday blessing). After considering several options we began to believe God wished to bless us with a model that had full suspension as well as a built-in LCD video screen, and speakers that could be used for multimedia gospel presentations during rides.

During one Sunday afternoon ride such a bike was sighted leaning against a fence with no owner visible anywhere. After waiting on the Lord for a few minutes it was decided that this bike was the expected blessing-indeed and that God wished us to keep the bike. However, just as we were about to cycle off, a cyclist emerged from some nearby trees with his shorts around his knees and used some rather un-blessed language to indicate the bike was not provided by God but in fact belonged to him.



Could this be God's blessing-indeed?

After being forcibly removed from the bike the SACC member in question felt in hindsight we should have focused more on the last phrase of the Jabez prayer (that you would keep me from pain). Others suggested that we should focus on asking for non-material blessings (such as greater joy on the up-hills, or a greater proportion of tail winds). The majority, however, still maintained that this was a clear lack of insight into the depths of the Jabez prayer, and instead insisted that we all pray the Jabez prayer every day until we experienced blessings-indeed.

We will keep you informed of any developments as they come to hand. If you wish to encourage us in this difficult time please email any experiences you have had of blessings-indeed to:

ajabezprayereverydaykeepstheblessingsflowingmyway@cyclingchurch.org.nz

Newsletter 11. Concerning the Prayer of Jabez and the Prayer of Job

Dear Prayer Cavalry,

As described in the previous chapter we have been praying the Jabez prayer faithfully every day, particularly emphasising the phrase “Oh, that you would bless me indeed”. Some interesting developments have occurred which we would like to discuss. Several competitions that had been entered some months before all resulted in three SACC members winning the latest mountain bikes available. They were equipped with front, rear and seat suspension, anti-skid brakes, an air bag, 52 gears, heated handlebars, LCD video monitor (touch screen) and speakers (surround sound), with a computer-controlled energy conservation system whereby energy gained from downhill sections would charge a battery which could be used to give extra power on the uphill.

Much encouraged by these blessings-indeed we began to pray the Jabez prayer on an hourly basis. Towards the end of that day a university research student approached us to trial some new cycle-mounted virtual-reality technology that they had been developing. Their system consisted of a helmet-mounted display system with inbuilt computer that could perform pattern recognition and collision detection calculations on objects such as approaching cars, and give pertinent warnings if required. An on-board global positioning system (GPS) and geographical information system could be consulted to forewarn the rider of any potential obstacles coming up on the cycle route as well as giving directions. It was even possible for the system to recognise different people types from gait, posture and body language analysis. Several SACC members became excited at the possibilities of using this system to automatically identify potential converts while cycling along.



The Jabez bike

Much encouraged by our blessings-indeed we began our rides with the new bikes and helmets. A great deal of satisfaction was gained from the use of the technology and many potential converts were identified and dazzled by the wonders of what God had blessed-us-indeed with. However, some serious problems occurred. Generally the people who had the new technology were so focused on operating the gadgetry, that they spent very little time looking at the scenery and thus missed out on the central aspect of our worship (i.e. the appreciation of God through his creation). Not only this, but they became so comfortable on their new bikes that over a few weeks they lost the calloused rear-ends and muscle tone in their legs to the extent that they could barely ride their old bikes if required. Some even stayed at home on Sunday afternoons to experiment with the setup of the system to optimise its performance and missed the rides altogether.

Some concern was expressed that maybe we had prayed the Jabez prayer too many times and had consequently received too many blessings. The example of Solomon was quoted who was unexpectedly blessed with material wealth and honour, despite only asking God for wisdom (1Kings 3:13). At the end of his life his riches and honour had corrupted him and he turned to false gods. God became angry at him and tore the kingdom of Israel from his rule (1 Kings 11:9-11).

Wishing to avoid becoming corrupted by the blessings we had received, an alternative prayer was proposed called the prayer of Job. This can be prayed whenever you feel that you are experiencing too many blessings, or if the comforts of life are resulting in spiritual lethargy, or if you are becoming conceited about your blessings and need a thorn in your flesh (2Cor 12:7) to keep you humble.

The prayer of Job is as follows:

Oh, that I might have this request God,	Job 6:8
that you would be willing to crush me,	Job 6:9
that you would wear me out and devastate my entire household.	Job 16:7
Pierce my kidneys and spill my gall on the ground.	Job 16:13
I cry out to you, O God, but do not answer.	Job 30:20
When I look for your light then may darkness come	Job 30:26

The daily saying of this prayer should soon return you to a manageable balance of blessings in your life, at which point you can cease praying either prayer.

WARNING: should you accidentally pray the prayer of Job more times than is required, simply recite the prayer of Jabez continuously until the situation is rectified. If the situation has not resolved after seven days of continuous recitation, (e.g. your gall is still spilling) then please contact our trained counsellors at the Prayer of Job Institute, or attend one of our frequent Prayer of Job seminars.

We look forward to hearing many testimonies of how you have achieved an optimum balance of blessings in your life and have avoided the corruption of too much comfort. Please email such testimonies to:

ifonlyprayerwaslikeamagicformula@cyclingchurch.org.nz

Newsletter 12. Concerning the Prayer of Jabez and Enlarging Our Territory

Dear Prayer Stormtroopers,

As described previously we at Sunday Afternoon Cycling Church decided to daily pray the Jabez prayer every day “Oh, that you would bless me indeed and enlarge my territory, that your hand would be with me and that you would keep me from pain” (1Chron 4:10). A further development that we would like to share is that many SACC members have become convicted by the call to “enlarge our territory” and believe that God wishes us to increase the length of our bike rides which will in turn result in blessings-indeed. It was proposed that we increase the average length of our bike rides by 10% every week (because a 10% tithe is usually associated with more blessing). Some members of SACC expressed concern that this 10% increase could, in theory, continue indefinitely and it was not clear just how much territory God wanted us to cycle around. Some thought that once bike rides had increased to the extent that they began at sunrise and ceased at sunset then we could consider our territory sufficiently enlarged to be an acceptable act of Jabez worship, although some thought that we could continue increasing the length and do all weekend/overnight cycle rides. Others went even further, believing that God wished us to seek independent means of financial support so that we could cycle as full-time Christian missionaries, continually enlarging our territory and sharing the resulting blessings to our full potential.



Calculating the optimum Jabez routes

While the majority of SACC members agreed that this was a noble goal, it would in fact cause major identity issues for SACC as cycling would no longer be performed predominantly on a Sunday Afternoon during the standard anointed worship times (see Newsletter 3). Thus it was agreed that we should attempt to maximise the territory that could be cycled around within the anointed time slot.

Debate then arose as to whether it was the territory enclosed by the perimeter of the bike route that was significant or simply the length of the ride. If (as the Jabez principle suggests) it is the enclosed territory, then the geometry of the ride becomes very significant. For example, a ride around a circular route which has a circumference of 32 km will enclose approximately 77 km², whereas a 32 km ride around a square route will enclose only 64 km². Obviously it is best to cycle as fast as possible within the allotted time to maximise the distance travelled, however cycling several times around a small route would not be as spiritually blessed as a single circuit around a larger route. Furthermore cycling along a road and then returning by the same route would technically enclose no territory whatsoever and so would violate the essence of the Jabez prayer completely. We have begun investigating routes around the city and we will name the ones that enclose the most territory “Jabez routes”, and will introduce members to Jabez mathematics to help them determine for themselves the best routes to cycle around. If you would like to learn more about Jabez cycling please email:

whyiseveryonebikingsofast_stuffjabez_ifeelmoreblessedbikingslowly@cyclingchurch.org.nz

Newsletter 13. Concerning the Prayer of Jabez and Being Kept From Pain

Dear Nonviolent Prayer Activists,

We have been praying the prayer of Jabez for some time now and have begun to reflect on the implications of the last two phrases, “let your hand be with me and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain” (1Chron 4:10). We began to believe that if God’s hand were indeed with us, then surely God’s hand would prevent us from having any accidents and hence we would be kept from experiencing pain. This was confirmed by reading other passages such as Psalm 37:24 “if someone slips they will not fall for the Lord upholds them with his hand”, and Psalm 91:10-12 “no harm will befall you, he will command his angels to guard you in all your ways, they will lift you up in their hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone”.

We began to slowly develop our faith in God’s hand protecting us by cycling faster and faster on the downhills, while attempting steeper and more difficult routes with larger jumps. The first few rides proved to be very exhilarating, with the knowledge that God’s hand was with us giving us new confidence to tackle previously unattempted routes. Tragically, during one ride, one SACC member bumped into a tree suffering a small graze, while another got a speck of dust in their eye. Both experienced a small but distinct amount of pain which raised some theological difficulties as to why this had occurred. Several possibilities were considered which were:

- These two people had sinned and God’s hand was no longer with them.
- These two people did not have enough faith or had not prayed the Jabez prayer often enough.
- God had withheld his hand for some (as yet unknown) greater purpose.
- Satan is attacking the group which is an encouraging sign that we are achieving great victories in the spiritual realms and he is becoming worried.

These injuries led some SACC members to begin doubting whether they were under the protection of God’s hand if they experienced any pain whatsoever. For example, during one uphill bike ride, some members felt pain in their legs and immediately stopped biking, worried that God’s protective hand had left them. Others argued that God would allow us to experience a certain level of pain and suffering for the greater purpose of developing perseverance, character and hope (Rom 5:3-4) as well as improving muscle tone. While some pain could be anticipated we could still be confident that “God is faithful, he will not allow us to be tested beyond what we can bear” (1Cor 10:13). The suggestion was made that a more appropriate interpretation of the Jabez prayer would be “...so that I will be free from *too much* pain”. While some thought this was just showing a lack of faith and that even a small amount of pain was unacceptable, many were curious to determine the level of pain that God would let us experience before it was deemed *too much*. We proposed a grueling 24 hour cycling event of increasing difficulty in order to see at what stage God would intervene and hence we would know that our experience of pain had become *too much*.

A group of SACC members set out at 8am on a cold rainy day, cycling into the head wind along the flat for a couple of hours in relative comfort, followed by several more hours of minor discomfort, until the uphill section resulted in some significant (but bearable) pain. The first limit of *too much* pain occurred on the downhill through gorse scrub when one rider fell directly into a large gorse bush. As he continued to cycle, wondering why he was in so much need of so much character development and where God’s hand had got to, he reached the road at the bottom in a bloodied state, and a passing motorist stopped and offered him a ride. This was taken by the cyclist as a sign that he had reached his God-determined pain threshold and so he went home.



God's protective hand allowing an acceptable level of pain to be experienced?

The other riders continued to cycle with increasing exhaustion resulting in a number of people straining muscles, or falling off and suffering minor injuries, but all with no *obvious* interventions from God. Some debated whether their multiple flat tyres were a sign from God that they should rest to reduce their pain levels, or an attack of the devil to prevent them from developing more character. Eventually the riders all fell asleep during one rest stop around 4am, just before they were about to attempt cycling up an icy mountain river gorge. This caused some confusion when they awoke halfway through the morning (i.e. after the 24 hour event should have finished). Should they continue the event to push their pain levels back to new heights, or stop riding believing that God had caused them to sleep as a sign they had reached their limit of *too much* pain after only 20 hours of cycling?

In a rare occurrence in SACC we all unanimously agreed that the sleep was indeed sent from God, and that we did not need to continue the event. We also resolved that we should return to praying the original Jabez prayer and aim to experience as little pain as possible for quite some time.

We appreciate your prayers in these matters which are like thermal underwear, preventing the cold winds of the enemy's attacks from causing spiritual hypothermia. If you have any insights we would appreciate your contributions to our understanding of pain and God's protecting hand. Please email them to:

whoneedscharacteranyway_iagreewithjabezandprefernopainplease@cyclingchurch.org.nz

Newsletter 14. Concerning the End Times

Dear Prayer Ninjas,

In this newsletter we would like to share about a rather disturbing event that happened during last weeks SACC meeting. We met a woman who was riding a scarlet coloured mountain bike whose brand name was "The Beast". She had ten different warning devices or "horns" mounted on her handle bars and many rather offensive bumper stickers attached to the bike. She was looking for people to join her on a cycle tour of seven local hills, and was promoting the use of several new products for cyclists which were:

- A new helmet which featured a friction grip mechanism that eliminated the use of straps but did leave three distinct sets of double parallel lines on your forehead for some time after wearing the helmet.
- A super-robust and light-weight titanium drink bottle (anodised to a golden colour).
- A fluorescent purple jacket embedded with many lines of high intensity flashing LEDs which gave excellent visibility when switched on, as well as a very eye-catching glittering effect somewhat like jewels.
- A new energy drink made principally from Coke and vitamin B.

Many SACC members were convinced that this was what has been prophesied in the book of Revelation. In Rev 17:3-4 it states "I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was dressed in purple and was glittering like gold and precious stones. She had a golden cup in her hand filled with abominable things".



Meeting the woman prophesied in Revelation 17.

Then in Rev 17:7-9 an angel said “I will explain the mystery of the woman and the beast she rides... the seven heads are the seven hills on which the woman sits”. Also in Rev 13:15-18 it describes how the “beast forced everyone small and great, rich and poor, to receive a mark on their right hand or forehead so that no one could buy or sell¹ unless they had the mark which is the name of the beast or the number of his name. This calls for wisdom, if anyone has insight let them calculate the number of the beast for it is man’s number. His number is 666².”

Meeting this woman has prompted speculation that the end times are upon us and this signals the imminent rise of the Anticyclist³ and the consequent return of Jesus. One SACC member even received a picture of two men biking up a hill: one disappeared and one left standing still (I wish we’d all been ready). This is a very complex subject and will require much debate to discern how God would have us respond to this encounter. Please cover us with the frost cloth of your prayers, that we might not suffer spiritual frostbite from engaging with such evil, and may sprout some tasty veggies in God’s garden.

1. Translator’s note: the Greek words for “buy or sell” imply the transaction or “process of movement” of round objects such as coins, but can equally be applied to the movement of other round objects such as wheels and sprockets. Therefore SACC translators believe this passage is best translated “no one could cycle unless they had the mark of the beast” and is actually predicting the restriction of cyclists who don’t have the approved friction grip helmet that leaves the mark of the beast on their forehead.

2. Two parallel lines represent the number 6 on a bar code (0110 binary coded decimal where 1 is a line and 0 is a space). Three sets of two lines therefore represent 666.

3. Anticyclist and Antichrist are synonymous terms.

Newsletter 15. Concerning the Rise of the Anticyclist

Dear Prayer Ambassadors,

Being convinced of the imminent rise of the Anticyclist and the subsequent return of Jesus much debate has occurred as to an appropriate response. Two possibilities have emerged for us to consider further.

1. Become filled with fear and withdraw from cycling on established cycling routes lest we become contaminated by the evils and deceptions of the Anticyclist. Alternative Christian-only cycle routes could be established with all cyclists having to sign their agreement to a doctrinal basis before being allowed to cycle on them. Await the rapture to escape this world before the evil becomes unbearable. Under no circumstances should we attempt to alleviate the suffering of people or the environment as these evil things must occur before the return of Jesus, hence any reduction of these evils will only delay his return.
2. Preach passionately about the terror the Anticyclist will cause and scare people into joining SACC. To aid this process, many charts could be drawn to predict when this terror will occur. All world events should be interpreted as a direct fulfillment of the prophecies in the apocalyptic books of the Bible (no matter how obscure). In particular we should be alert for signs of the anti-cyclist such as decapitation for not wearing the approved helmet (Rev 20:4), the sky being darkened with car fumes (Rev 8:12), seas turning blood red from oil spills (Rev 8:8), grass and trees being cleared to make room for more roads (Rev 8:7), increasing sunburn due to the depletion of the ozone layer (Rev 16:8), the abomination that causes desolation¹ (Daniel 11:31) etc.



A SACC member preaching on the end times

A couple of SACC members attempted to suggest that the book of Revelation might have been referring to the Roman Empire and structural evil in general, and that the real message of the book is to struggle against the evil of the anti-cyclist, believing that those who actively resist the evil and overcome it, shall receive their reward (Rev 14:12-13). These suggestions were disregarded by the majority of SACC members as being an overly academic watering down of the literal-sensationalist interpretation.

While some disagreement occurred as to which response was best, most agreed that once raptured, heaven will be a pretty good place to be. Some people, however, did express concern about the description of the heavenly Jerusalem in Rev 21:21 which features a “great street which is of pure gold like transparent glass” and wondered about issues of wheel traction and the provision of off-road cycling. Further concern was expressed about the practicality of heavy golden cycle helmets (Rev 4:4). Generally it was felt that God would have considered these important issues and that we can trust Him with such profound mysteries and look forward to a cycle-friendly afterlife.

Please offer up penicillin prayers, protecting us from the infections of the enemy, and keeping us spiritually healthy for the difficult times ahead. If you would like to report any fulfillment of end times prophecy please email:

mostchristiansthroughouthistoryalsosaiditwastheendtimesbutthistimeims**sure**itsforreal@cyclingschurch.org.nz

1. The abomination that causes desolation is commonly thought to be anything that desecrates God’s place of worship which in the SACC context clearly equates to the increasing use of the private motor vehicle that considerably detracts from the SACC experience of worship.

Newsletter 16. Concerning Communion and Transsubcyclation

Dear Encouragers in our Glorious Task,

A decision has been made to expand our experience of cycle worship to include communion. This does raise issues of how to perform this solemn ceremony. Many thought that to genuinely be part of SACC it must be performed while cycling using bread and some form of beverage from a common drink bottle. A trial run was conducted during one particularly bumpy mountain bike ride which resulted in the bread being reduced to a pile of crumbs by the time communion was taken. The blessing was altered slightly to make it more appropriate “this is my body, shaken to smithereens for you.” A handful of crumbs was then distributed to all members while continuing the ride. Many initially found this experience less than spiritually enlightening, although some found significance in the metaphor of Jesus’ body being made up of many small parts (crumbs). Others agreed that the metaphor of the crumb suited *some* members of SACC, but they did wonder at the significance of the crumbs that were blown away during the distribution of the elements before they were ingested. Maybe they represented backsliders?

Once ingested, the crumbs recombined with saliva to form a surprisingly difficult to swallow glob. A number of people while cycling vigorously and trying to swallow their glob of crumbs found difficulty in breathing adequately, resulting in slightly lowered oxygen levels to the brain and an intriguing metaphysical feeling of spiritual wellbeing or elation.



SACC Communion

This process of *transformation* of the crumbs into a glob, *sub-normal* levels of oxygen, and *elation*, all while *cycling* has been termed the doctrine of transubcyclation and it looks as though it will become a central feature of SACC's practice of communion in the future.

Thank you for dribbling the golden syrup of your prayers onto the pancakes of our lives, that we have had this sweet and satisfying experience. If you have any further suggestions for enhancing our experience of communion please email:

ilikeportwineforcommunionbutawholewaterbottlefullmakesmewobbleonthedownhills@cyclingchurch.org.nz

Newsletter 17. Concerning Fundraising

Dear Prayer-Mongers,

In this newsletter we would like to bring to your attention the somewhat sensitive issue of finances for Sunday Afternoon Cycling Church. We do not believe in church buildings (other than personal garages in which to maintain our instruments of worship) or professional cycling priests, and so we avoid the major expenses of more traditional forms of church. However, there are a number of ministries that we would like to contribute to financially as a church such as:

- Establishing a bike bank so that the poor (those without bikes) can join us.
- Supporting overseas cycle missionaries and/or sending a team of SACC members overseas short term.
- Developing educational resources particularly for children to learn the glories of cycle-based worship.

Thus we began to seek the Lord for strategies to raise some money. After a time of worship on our bikes then some prayer, we set a faith target naming the amount of money we wished to raise. We all felt that we should achieve this by having regular bike-athons and seek sponsorship for every Sunday afternoon bike ride. We were greatly encouraged after our first week of seeking sponsorship for a 30 km bike ride with an average sponsorship of two dollars per kilometre per rider.

Sadly we noticed a trend that in subsequent weeks it became more difficult to attract sponsorship, until after a month we had an average of half a cent per kilometre for a 100 km ride (which represented a single person being sponsored by his mother).

A little mystified at this failure to reach our faith target we again sought the Lord for methods of raising finance. The Lord then laid on our hearts that we should organise a mobile cake stall, and seek to sell the cakes to passers-by during a special Saturday ride (not wishing to violate the Sabbath). The following Saturday all began well with every member baking at least two items and there were many sumptuous cakes, biscuits and slices displayed invitingly on front and rear carriers. At our meeting point we were encouraged to sell one item to a pair of joggers, but as we began to cycle it became more difficult to attract the attention of people in order to sell them our produce. After two hours of cycling without a sale, we stopped at a local park to seek the Lord's will. One member received a Scripture from Deuteronomy 14:22 "Be sure to set aside a tenth of all the food you produce. Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and oil and the first born of your flocks in the presence of the Lord your God at a place he will choose so that you may learn to revere the Lord your God always." This was confirmed by another member feeling the Lord impress upon them Deuteronomy 12:5-7 "You are to seek the place God will choose, there bring your offerings sacrifices and tithes. There in the presence of God you and your families shall eat and rejoice in everything you have put your hand to."

Having cycled a reasonable distance we were all a little hungry and we believed God was wishing us to begin the practice of tithing, which from these scriptures appears to be setting aside a tenth of our produce to have a celebration of God's goodness and provision.

The park seemed to be the place that God had chosen for the celebration and so we sacrificed several trays of biscuits that were the least sellable items (some had broken after a series of potholes).



SACC mobile cake stall fundraiser

These represented approximately a tenth of our total produce, and we did indeed rejoice in God's presence and revere the Lord as we consumed them. Resuming our bike ride, we expected to see God's blessing on our sales, having been faithful in observing the principle of the tithe, but we were saddened to ride for a further hour with no more sales. Again we stopped at a park to seek the Lord's guidance and we received a Scripture from Leviticus 27:30 "A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain or fruit, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord. They must not pick out the good from the bad or make any substitution." Everyone felt deeply convicted that the broken biscuits we had chosen represented the worst of our produce to offer as our tithe and they had in fact been as a stench in God's nostrils. Therefore we decided to offer a further tithe of our produce and chose a couple of the most impressive looking cakes from our selection and we again rejoiced in God's presence (with reverence) as we ate. We continued to cycle and managed to sell one more item, but sales were lower than expected, so we continued to offer tithes of our produce at every park we passed (eating them with rejoicing and reverence as directed in Deuteronomy). We concluded our ride when we had one tenth of one biscuit left, having sold only two items of our produce throughout the day.

While the cake stall was not a great success financially, many members reported feeling that their reverence for the Lord and his commands had significantly increased throughout the day's ride and were keen to repeat the cake stall on subsequent weeks. Others felt that the principle of the tithe might be better applied to SACC members' incomes and we will keep you informed of any developments in this area. We would greatly value your prayers for our financial situation. If you have any leading from the Lord in regard to raising money for these valuable projects please email:

weactuallyvalueyourprayersmorethanyourcontributions_yeahright@cyclingchurch.org.nz

Newsletter 18. Concerning Tithing

Dear Prayerists,

In this newsletter we would like to keep you up-to-date with developments in raising money for the various projects we would like to contribute towards financially as a church. Previous attempts to raise money were not that fruitful, and so we began to feel that we should take the issue of tithing our incomes more seriously. We directed all SACC members to give one tenth of their income (gross) into an offering bowl to be passed around during every Sunday afternoon worship time. We encouraged our members with scriptures such as Malachi 3:10 “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, test me in this says the Lord Almighty and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing you will not have room for it all. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops and the vines will not lose their fruit”. We also quoted Deuteronomy 8:4 “Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during those 40 years in the desert”. From these passages we suggested that if we tithed then we could expect God to protect us from punctures, prevent our tyres from wearing out, stop our chains from rusting and ensure our feet never suffered from swelling.

We also exhorted members to give the full 10% quoting Malachi 1:13-14 as a warning “when you bring injured or diseased animals and offer them, should I accept them says the Lord. Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable sacrifice but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord.”



Technical difficulties experienced during taking up tithes and offerings

During our first attempt to take up the offering on a Sunday Afternoon Cycling Church ride we experienced a few difficulties. The logistics of passing a bowl from bike to bike, extracting one's wallet from a pocket or bum-bag, placing money into a brown offering envelope, writing the tax-deduction number on the envelope, and steering all at the same time proved quite challenging, although most managed it. One person, however, while balancing the bowl on their helmet, tragically spilled the contents of the bowl down a grassy bank, which did result in a somewhat frustrating delay while the money was retrieved. We counted the money at the end of the ride and were surprised at how little we had received. Could it be that SACC members are very poorly paid, or maybe we had not retrieved all the money that had fallen down the bank?

The following week we had passionate readings from Malachi and Deuteronomy, then took up the offering during our ride, only to be disappointed again. On the third week, after an extensive reading of Leviticus, several people experienced punctures and one person fell off resulting in a rather nasty swollen foot. Furthermore, we experienced torrential rain throughout the whole ride. One rider (somewhat irreverently) suggested that maybe the rain was God's idea of throwing open the floodgates of heaven as described in Malachi 3:10, as the offering we received certainly could not be mistaken for a *flood* – more of a stagnant puddle in reality. Then it dawned on us that perhaps some members were not putting in the full ten percent of their income, and as a result, we were not experiencing God's protection from swollen feet (Deuteronomy 8:4), or tyres wearing out, or even worse, some of us could be under God's curse as described in Malachi 1:13-14. Fear and trembling overcame our group and for a few weeks we experienced very healthy offerings indeed, but alas it did not last long.

Fearing more swollen feet, we invited members to have a time of confession, at which point most people admitted that they did not find taking up an offering every week an edifying experience. Instead, they would rather make a yearly donation, and not have to worry about juggling an offering bowl every Sunday. Furthermore it appeared that our members' generosity was stretched over several giving commitments and that SACC was not the only recipient of their gifts.

Reluctantly we agreed to cease the practice of giving one tenth of our incomes to SACC and encouraged people to give as directed in 2Cor 9:7 "give what you have decided in your hearts, not reluctantly or under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver." Curiously the following week we received a couple of very significant donations, which should enable some of our ministry goals to be achieved.

Please be as prayer-accountants, investing wisely in eternal riches on our behalf and finding spiritual tax-dodges for us. If you would like to make any contributions cheerfully and without compulsion or reluctance please email:

shouldiseepodiatristorstarttithingtofixmyswollenfeet@cyclingchurch.org.nz

Newsletter 19. Concerning Overseas Mission

Dear Supplication Soldiers,

While cycle worship in New Zealand is progressing steadily, many members of Sunday Afternoon Cycling Church (SACC) feel led to engage in mission to those less fortunate than themselves overseas. This was confirmed by a word from the Lord received by one member based on Luke 4:18-19

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me
to preach good news to those without bikes,
recovery of exercise for the lazy,
to set at liberty those who think worship is just singing,
and proclaim the acceptable cycle ride of the Lord.”

We conducted some research into various mission strategies that have been tried in the past, and discovered that previous attempts at overseas cycle-mission had focused their efforts on donating bikes to individuals in need, with a tract explaining the four spiritual laws of cycle worship. This resulted in large numbers of people converting just to receive a free bike without developing a genuine heart for cycle worship. A further problem was that people became dependent on outside experts to maintain their bikes: these experts were often unavailable and consequently many bikes fell into disrepair.



The cycle dependency-cycle

To avoid these pitfalls we have decided to set up a small loan scheme in situations where bikes are not available, with a community-owned board administering the pool of loan bikes for people to use. Training will be given to enable them to maintain their own bikes, and income can be generated to cover maintenance costs by hiring these bikes out when they're not being used for cycle events. Thus the people become truly empowered to control their own cycle worship.

The issue of who to target was more difficult to resolve. Many thought China would be an ideal place to begin, with such a strong cycling ethic already in place in the indigenous culture. The similarities to SACC would be many and this would act a wonderful bridge for the gospel. Others felt God's heartbeat for the truly impoverished cycle nations held captive by the dark and evil cult of private motor vehicle use. Thus it was suggested that the United States of America should be selected as the most needy country to send missionaries to.

Please keep putting the batteries of your prayers into the torches of our lives that we might shine forth for the glory of God. Please email any suggestions concerning mission strategy to:

pleasedontsendmetoamericawherethefreewaysgetrestlessatnight@cyclingchurch.org.nz

Newsletter 20. Concerning Short-Term Mission and Encounters With Other Faiths

Dear Shareholders in Prayer,

We have some very exciting news to share with you in this newsletter regarding our involvement in overseas mission. We have long felt called to minister to those overseas and so, after much fundraising and prayer, we raised enough money to send a small team of SACC members and their bikes on a short-term mission to the Philippines where we believed God wished us to minister. We started cycling around various villages explaining the gospel with the aid of an interpreter and demonstrating cycle worship, exhorting people to become believers and join us. As we cycled along one section of road between villages we encountered a group of Buddhist monks dressed in saffron robes, cycling along the road in the opposite direction, chanting as they went. We stopped and inquired what they were doing and they explained that they found cycling the best way to meditate on the teachings of Buddha and contemplate the eight-fold pathway to life that they were practicing in their lives.

Somewhat confused by this encounter, we continued riding only to come across another group of cyclists with a number of women wearing veils and men wearing turbans. We again stopped and talked and found out they were Muslims who believed that Allah wished them to cycle five times a day at the appointed prayer times and recite their Salat (prayers). They had to make some compromises regarding the prostrating section of the prayer but, other than that, had found it a very rewarding way of worshipping Allah.

We began to debate what these encounters could mean for our mission strategy. They had obviously received some revelation from God regarding the truth of cycle-worship, yet they were expressing this in terms of their own cultural belief system, which did not include belief in Jesus and must therefore be as a stench in God's nostrils.

We met up with these groups again and explained the gospel clearly to them, including statements that only Christian cycling-worship is acceptable to God. They responded by saying that all cycle routes lead to the top of the mountain. They were quite happy that we biked the Jesus route, but they were convinced that their own route was equally valid and we could all gain more spiritual insight by sharing our inter-faith cycling experiences.

Not convinced by these godless philosophies, we began to seek the Lord as to how to respond. One SACC member (who we later nicknamed Baalam) felt strongly that we should take steps to prevent the purity of cycling-worship from being perverted by these other groups and so he cycled off to pray a curse on their bikes so that they would know the power of the True God. As he cycled to meet the cyclists of other faiths, he experienced a number of mechanical problems with his bike. First, the handlebars mysteriously loosened and he rode off the road into a rice paddy. He became very angry with his bike and hit it with his bike pump before resuming riding. Next, his wheels loosened and the bike lurched into a wall, scraping his leg. Again he beat the bike with his bike pump at which point God miraculously enabled the bike to speak, and it asked him why he was beating it with his pump. After having a rather odd discussion with his bike for several minutes, his eyes were opened and he saw an angel who was responsible for loosening the nuts on his handlebars and wheels.



An angel seeking to prevent “Balam” from cursing those of other faiths

Realising that he might have been acting presumptuously in seeking to curse the Buddhist and Muslim cyclists, he repented, and asked the angel what he should then do. He was instructed to pray for the other groups, that they would continue to respond to God in the best way they knew (cycling) and to bless the cyclists by gifting them his own bike. Baalam had to spend the last few days of our mission as an observer rather than a cycle-evangelist which he initially found very frustrating. However, as he watched the Buddhist and Muslim cyclists pass by again and again, he noticed that they were never changing gears as they rode up and down the terraced rice paddy tracks and roads around their villages. He managed to catch them as they neared the top of one hill and demonstrated the use of gears which they were very impressed with. This opened up a wonderful opportunity to talk about the joy and well-being he experienced in worshipping Jesus by riding a bike. While they didn't convert, they expressed some interest in trying Jesus cycle worship, but sadly we ran out of time on our short-term mission trip to follow up this opportunity further before we returned to New Zealand. We did leave them several tracts explaining the four spiritual laws of cycle worship and will be in further contact to monitor their spiritual progress.

Please give thanks that we have been able to impart some light into these dark places and pray that our seed sowing will bear fruit in due course. If you would like to be part of another short-term mission trip please email:

ireallywanttoseetheworldsoiwillcallitmissionandgetotherpeopletopayformyticket@cyclingchurch.org.nz

Newsletter 21. Concerning the Creation of the Bicycle

Dear Persistent Prayer Widows Nagging God on our Behalf,

Much interest has arisen from the revelation in Newsletter 8, that there is archaeological evidence that Jesus withdrew into the mountains to go mountain biking. Sadly, there is not room in this newsletter to go into detail about that evidence, but it has prompted an interesting discussion regarding the origins of the bicycle as God must have provided Jesus with a bicycle *ex-nihilo* (created from nothing). While contemplating this intriguing possibility one day, a member of SACC fell into a dream that we would now like to share in this edition of our newsletter for your edification.

The dream began with God creating the heavens and the earth, but the earth was void of the ideal leisure activity, and God said “let there be wheels” and there were wheels. Then God separated the wheels, calling one the front wheel and one the rear wheel, and that was the first day.

And God said “let there be an expanse between the wheels” and it was so, and God fixed that expanse in place with the frame at the rear and the forks at the front, and that was the second day.

And God said “let the spokes of the wheels be gathered to one point” and it was so, and God called the point of the spokes the hub and the circumference of the spokes the rim. Then God said “let the wheels produce a covering”, and so the wheels produced tubes and tyres each according to their kind, skinny slick road tyres and fat knobby mountain tyres, and that was the third day.

And God said “let there be lights on the expanse of the frame and let them serve as signs to mark the passing of the bike in safety” and so God made the greater light to govern the forward visibility and the lesser light to govern the rear. God also made reflectors on the expanse of the frame, and that was the fourth day.

And God said “let the frame teem with levers and sprockets and derailleurs and brakes” and so God created the great gear changing mechanisms and every moving thing. And God saw that it was good and said be fruitful and multiply, and so there were 3 speeds, then 12, then 18, then 24, and that was the fifth day.

And God said “let the frame produce a seating device” and it was so, and God made seats each according to their kind, skinny hard racing seats, wide padded granny seats and mountain bike seats with inbuilt suspension. Then God said “let us make handle bars in our own image¹, left and right we shall make them, and let them rule over the wheels and gear changing mechanisms and over all the moving parts of the bicycle” and so God created the handlebars to determine the direction of the bicycle, and that was the sixth day.

And God saw all that he had made and it was good. By the seventh day God had finished the work and decided to have a day off relaxing, and so went for a jolly good bike ride around several galaxies. Thus the dream ended.

1. Translator's note – “in our image” uses the metaphor of a king whose signature ring bears his *image*. The king uses his *image* to convey his intentions or authority by placing a seal on a letter, or giving it to a messenger. In a similar manner the handlebars reflect God's image because they are used to convey God's intentions over the direction of the bike and have authority over the other parts of the bike.



God creating the first bicycle

We trust you have been encouraged to learn the truth of the origins of the bicycle as we have. We have always suspected that God would not leave the development of such a significant part of his cosmos to random chance and now this vision has confirmed this belief. Thank you for your prayers which have been as bifocal spectacles in our lives, focusing the details of God's truth on our spiritual retinas, while also enabling us to see the bigger picture of the importance of the bicycle in the universe. If you would like to contribute to our understanding of how God created the bike please email: shouldthisvisionbeinterpretedliterallyorfiguratively@cyclingchurch.org.nz

Newsletter 22. Concerning Bicycle Evolution and the Bikreation Institute

Dear Mountain Movers in Prayer,

Following the vision of God creating a bicycle in six days in the previous newsletter, there has been much persecution and vicious attacks on what has become a core belief of SACC. This has emanated mainly from non-Christians or very liberal Christians who claim that the bicycle was not in fact created directly by God but evolved over several centuries through a process of random design improvements and natural selection, and is indeed still evolving. This group (who are no longer considered welcome at SACC meetings) point as far back as the development of the wheel in ancient times, which developed into chariots; then to the front wheel driven bicycle with wooden tyres in the 19th Century, which developed into the penny farthing; then the rear wheel chain-sprocket driven bike with pneumatic tyres by the 20th Century; then to models with gears, then suspension; then finally in the last *brief* few years, models with brakes that actually work. This whole theory (and we stress it is only one theory among many) excludes God almost completely from the existence of the bike, which we consider to be one of the most significant parts of God's world.

We have responded to this very serious threat by forming the Bikreation Institute to help us develop a strategy to counter these godless lies. Our first thrust was to question the historical reliability of their bike-evolution timelines. We developed an alternative system for dating bikes based on the build up of rust on bearings, which varies from season to season (more rust in winter) and hence gives an indication of the number of years that the bike has existed. Adjustments had to be made for the level of grease present, and the latitude of the country (which affects the severity of the winters).

We successfully applied this technique to a bike extracted from the deserts around Nazareth and showed that it was indeed around 2000 years old, and is probably the very one that Jesus himself rode and therefore one of the first to have been created directly by God.

The next strategy we developed was to expose the fake models of bikes on display in museums, which supposedly provide evidence to support the theory of the evolution of bike design. Two approaches have been tried: one was to suggest that God miraculously created these fake models and placed them in garages where museum staff would find them – all to test our faith in the doctrine of bike creation. The other approach (which is more widely favoured) was to suggest that these bikes had been incorrectly assembled from a single *fossil* of God's original design and never actually existed as models in their currently assembled form.

The liberal Christian evolutionists responded with attempts to compromise the purity of the bike creation doctrine. They suggested that it was impossible for a bike to have been built from scratch in six days, and perhaps the six days actually refer to the six eons of time over which the bike evolved. Another suggestion was that God may have been involved in inspiring the occasional engineer with a design feature, and so the bike has technically both evolved and been created by God at the same time.

The non-Christian evolutionists were more scathing, suggesting that a group of monkeys locked in a room for several centuries with the appropriate material and tools, could eventually assemble an entire bike, and that God was completely obsolete in the development of the bike.

They pointed to changes within our lifetime such as the extinction of the Raleigh 20 and Chopper designs, the dramatic increase of gears and suspension, and the variance of tyre width.

Bikreationist scientists pointed out that these were merely examples of micro-evolution or naturally occurring variations within a species of bike and not of macro-evolution or the development of an entirely new bike which could only come as a creation from God. When asked to clarify whether a tandem or a tricycle would constitute an example of macro-evolution or not, the Bikreationist scientists became quite irritated at what they saw as a deliberate attempt to confuse the truth of their doctrine and so have taken a break from further dialogue until things have cooled down a little.

Please inflate us with the bike pump of your prayers, that we might be effectively cushioned against the potholes of these godless philosophies, and experience the minimum friction possible on the road surface of our lives. Email any suggestions for countering these attacks on our foundational beliefs to:

neverletevidencegetinthewayofabeautifuldoctrine@cyclingchurch.org.nz

Newsletter 23. Concerning Baptism

Dear Prayer Bombers,

We have some exciting news to share in this newsletter. Many of the new members of SACC have been expressing interest in the sacrament of baptism, both for themselves and for their children. This has raised some interesting debates about how we should perform this ceremony. We always strive to be as biblical as possible in the practice of our faith and therefore we initially suggested that baptism should be for adults who have made a conscious decision to be a cyclist for Jesus. Because Jesus was baptised in a river, we suggested the best method was to cycle out to a ford over a local river, make the appropriate prayers and confessions of faith, then the baptisee (candidate for baptism) would ride their bike as fast as possible through the ford in order to maximize the sprinkling that occurred. On the other side of the river other cyclists would gather around the baptisee and offer prayers and words of encouragement as they cycled along.

Initially, this process worked very well, and we had several very encouraging baptisms. However, seasonal variations did result in some challenges. During winter the ford became very muddy and baptisees became sprinkled with mud rather than water which was thought to be an inappropriate symbol for someone's sins being washed away. During the summer months the level of the ford lowered to the extent that it was only a few centimetres deep, and so the baptisee barely wet their shoes while cycling through. Other SACC members had also been thinking that a full immersion baptism would be more biblical. Thus we located a deeper swimming hole in the river and directed the baptisee to cycle as fast as possible over the bank of the river and splash down into the water so that they and their bike became fully immersed. This proved to be a very spirit-filled experience, with many members feeling great joy.

Such was their joy that they often wished to repeat the baptism several times every week which raised some theological questions about rebaptism, both for adults who wished to repeat this baptism, and those who were now adults who had been baptised as an infant and wished to be rebaptised in this way.

SACC members were divided over this issue, with many believing that infants have been baptised for centuries in the Christian tradition (eg. the jailer and his household in Acts 16:33) and that it was a very meaningful ceremony. Therefore to rebaptise someone who had already been baptised (even as an infant) was a direct violation of Eph 4:5 which states that there is to be only one baptism. They further wished to get their own infants baptised which did raise some technical concerns as follows:

- The infant should be old enough to sit up by themselves in a bike seat on the back of an adult's bike.
- A harness should be fitted to ensure the child did not fly out of the seat when cycling over the river bank.
- Helpers should be at hand in the river to ensure the child was not submerged for longer than 30 seconds.

Other members opposed infant baptism believing that it was meaningless unless the child could cycle by themselves into the river (and make their own confession of faith). Several adults who had been baptised as infants were subsequently rebaptised causing some tension with those supported infant baptism.



The SACC method of baptism

Others went even further, wanting to dedicate their bikes to God's service by baptising them, and wished to repeat the ceremony every time they obtained a new bike. This practice led to further contention and much debate until the following principles were laid down to govern the practice of baptism in SACC.

- It is more appropriate to dedicate your bike to God's service by anointing it with oil rather than baptising it.
- Baptism is encouraged only when a person can ride a bike by themselves (exceptions are made for disabled persons who are allowed to ride on a tandem into the river).
- If a person wishes to make multiple rides over a river bank, (with or without confessions of faith and receiving words of encouragement), they may do so, but only the first time shall be considered a genuine baptism.
- Being sprinkled by riding through a mudhole or puddle is not sufficient to be recognised as baptism by SACC.
- The faster a person rides and the further they end up out in the river does NOT equate to a better baptism or better salvation.

Please continue to pray for us, offering water-wing prayers to aid our spiritual buoyancy and prevent us from being submerged by these disagreements. Please email any testimonies of glorious baptism experiences to:

willmybikebesavedifitsnotbaptised@cyclingchurch.org.nz

Newsletter 24. Concerning Healing

Dear Prayer Sumo-Wrestlers,

Several members of SACC were deeply challenged last week when one member experienced a puncture in her tyre. She was just reaching for her puncture repair kit when some other SACC members rebuked her for her lack of faith, and encouraged her to lay hands on her tyre and pray for the miraculous healing of the wounded tube. We all gathered around the bike, laid hands on it and claimed its healing in Jesus' name. After praying for several minutes we sensed that we had achieved victory in the spiritual realms and the tyre was pumped up and remained permanently inflated.

Very encouraged by this miraculous healing of a puncture, we began to believe that God wished to heal all the mechanical difficulties we experienced, and that to take a bike to a repair shop was as a stench in God's nostrils and demonstrated a major lack of faith. We experienced a number of other notable healings, such as the lengthening of one front fork which was shorter than the other, and two batteries in a bike light being raised from the dead back to three Volts.

A more challenging situation then presented itself. While out one Sunday afternoon, a cyclist fell off several times in unusual circumstances, and we sensed that their bike had become demon possessed and was throwing the rider off. As we began to pray for the bike, it threw itself to the ground with its wheels spinning by themselves. It made rather disturbing graunching noises and froth began to issue from the tyre valves.

We commanded the demon to name itself and the graunching noise intensified. One SACC member with a gift of interpretation believed it to be the demon of lust, and that whenever the demon possessed bike passed another bike it was attracted to, it would throw the rider off in an attempt to get closer to the object of attraction. We thus named the demon and commanded it to leave this bike frame and go to the abyss. The demons begged not to be sent to the abyss and so instead the whole bike shook violently as they left and entered a group of tricycles at a nearby kindergarten. The tricycles then hurtled riderless through a fence and down the road to a scrap metal merchant where they threw themselves into the metal compactor and were crushed. All graunching and frothing in the bike ceased after the demons left, but the wheels were left completely seized up. Worried that the demon had left the bike permanently damaged, we continued to pray and soon it was restored to full function.

Another notable healing occurred to someone who was not even a SACC member, nor riding a bike. As we were biking along one day we noticed a young man in a wheelchair who was straining to move the wheels of his chair around even though they were only moving along a flat footpath. We sensed God wanted us to pray for healing in this situation, and so we gathered around the young man and laid hands on him and his chair. After several minutes of prayer we all heard a distinct click as the brake pads snapped into the correct alignment and the wheels were set free to move as God intended them. Amazed at this dramatic miracle, the man in the wheelchair became a believer there and then, and although he wished to accompany us on all our rides, we encouraged him to begin his own fellowship more suited to those in wheelchairs.



Healing the demon possessed bike

While these were great victories, some problems were encountered. Chains were a major source of contention between SACC members. If a chain were to squeak or become arthritic, should we anoint it with oil as instructed in James 5:14, or was this attempting to solve the problem by worldly means and thereby denying God an opportunity to show his glory by miraculously healing it (John 9:3)? Furthermore, many people were reluctant to lay hands on a chain to pray for its healing due to the difficulty of cleaning their hands afterwards. After much debate, we agreed that anointing with oil was biblical and, therefore, was not in danger of becoming as a stench in God's nostrils, and so was an acceptable practice for chains (but not for punctures as this can cause the tyre to slip when riding afterwards).

Thank you for your prayers which are as hot air in our balloons allowing us to soar to great spiritual heights for the glory of God. If you have any testimonies of miraculous bicycle healings please email them to:

godalwaysanswersprayer_eitheryesnonotyetoitoyourselfyoulazyslacker@cyclingchurch.org.nz

Newsletter 25. Concerning the Salvation of Backpedalers

Dear Prayer Guerillas,

In this newsletter we seek your prayer support regarding a difficult question about the salvation of someone who has backpedaled (backslidden). This situation began some time ago when we were very encouraged by a non-believer becoming involved in SACC rides, professing faith, praying the cyclist/sinner prayer, being baptised (in the recognised SACC manner) and being a regular worshipper with SACC for several months. Sadly, after their initial enthusiasm had waned, they only came riding occasionally, and then one Sunday afternoon they were seen driving in their car around the hills. We were devastated that they had slipped back into the depraved behaviour of their non-Christian past and felt God wished us to challenge them about this.

When we caught up with them at a car park further down the road, we expressed our deep sorrow and anguish that they had obviously lost their salvation by choosing to drive a car when they could have biked around the hills instead. Their response surprised us in that they showed no remorse for their actions and firmly believed that, once they had prayed the cyclist-sinner prayer, they were saved and were assured of their entry into heaven whether they continued to go for rides or not.

Thus began a great debate about whether or not this person had actually lost their salvation. Some believed that once your name is written in the Lamb's book of cyclists¹ (Rev 20:12) it would never be erased no matter what evil actions you had subsequently performed. Others believed that to take a car when you could have biked was "blaspheming against the Holy Spirit which is an eternal sin and will not be forgiven" (Mark 3:29).

Furthermore, they viewed salvation as a process, and that we need to "continue to work out our salvation with fear and cycling²". Others received the following word from the Lord after reading 1Cor 3:12-15. If anyone cycles on the road (foundation) of Jesus riding a gold or silver or aluminium alloy or wooden or straw bike, their bike riding will be shown for what it is because the judgement day will bring it to light. The fire will test the quality of their bikes – if what they ride survives the fire they will receive their reward, but if their bike is burned they will suffer loss, but they themselves will be saved. They argued that this person was obviously riding a straw bike which would not survive too well in the test of fire, but they themselves could still be saved. This wise interpretation seemed to resolve our debate, but the backpedaler concerned did not seem too worried about the quality of their reward in the afterlife. We continued to discuss the relative merits of gold and silver bike frames as we resumed our worship, and prayed that the backpedaler would one day be led to upgrade their straw bike to at least a wooden one.

Please offer CD ROM prayers – backing up the volatile hard drives of our younger member's faith and keeping the data of our fellowship intact. If you have any words of encouragement to offer those struggling to maintain their cycling worship regularly, please email it to:

agoldbikesoundsprettyheavyandsofttome_illstickwithaluminiumalloyforthislifeatleast@cyclingschurch.org.nz

¹Cycling and "having a life" are synonymous terms and hence "book of life" and "book of cyclists" are equivalent concepts.

²Some translations prefer "fear and trembling", however the Greek words for the shaking action of trembling and the up and down leg motion of cycling are so similar we believe it is quite correct to translate this as "fear and cycling".



Attempting to reach paradise on a straw bike

Newsletter 26. Concerning Community

Dear Fellow Cyclists on the Road of Faith,

During recent worship times, we at SACC felt God convict us about the rampant individualism that is infecting our society and many parts of the church. It is a travesty that many people in our towns and cities do not know their neighbours' names, let alone offer any care for them. Sadly, in the church we are not that much better, only seeing each other once a week, and not genuinely sharing our lives on as deep a level as Jesus did in the community of his disciples. As a result of this conviction we began to feel that with each of us biking on individual bikes (or in nuclear units with only your own child on the back), we were being forced into the world's mold (Rom 12:2) and that we should seek to transform our cycle worship to a more community-conscious model. We tried riding in a tight bunch of individual bikes so we could all converse, which was a minor improvement, but we felt it was not radical enough to be truly counter cultural and hence be a true witness to the model Jesus advocated.

Other experiments were made with tandems and four wheel pedal bikes, but in the end we believed Jesus wished us to follow his example by having communities of twelve gathered on one bike, and thus we began to design our community cycle. The first model with two wheels and twelve seats (like an extended tandem) did not perform particularly well due to the entire weight of twelve people resting on only two wheels. The final design resulted in a very successful series of frames and wheels, articulated at each handlebar, as shown in the diagram.



The community cycle

There were many benefits of biking on such a community bicycle:

- The stronger members of the community could help those who were weaker.
- There were fewer tyres per person which resulted in less consumption of material goods, and a simpler lifestyle as Jesus advocated.
- The slipstreaming effect of being so close behind each other made cycling together much more efficient.
- The close proximity allowed much greater sharing of personal lives.

However, there were some sacrifices required that several people struggled with. The need to go in the same direction as the whole group meant that individual people were not free to do as they wished e.g. explore side tracks, go over jumps, leave early etc. Maintenance on the bike had to be coordinated over all community members and some were more willing and capable than others which resulted in some tension. While these issues need to be addressed it has been clear that the benefits of community cycling definitely outweigh the problems and it has been a great source of witness to everyone we met when out cycling.

We ask you to be like prayer worms, breaking down the smelly vegetable scraps of individual selfishness and producing a rich compost of community. If you would like to become part of such a cycling community please email:

communitysoundsgreatbuttryingtogeteveryonetooagreeistoomuchwork@cyclingchurch.org.nz

Newsletter 27. Concerning the Growth of SACC

Dear Visionary Virtuosos,

In this newsletter we seek your visionary input. Some concern has been expressed about the lack of numbers involved in SACC. After some debate about quality versus quantity, a church growth consultant was invited to join SACC for a few sessions and make recommendations about how to attract more members to this emerging, cutting edge church structure. Initial comments from the consultant included relief that we did not have the average church demographics of 60-80 year old females, and some flippant remarks about cycling up fewer hills. He then proposed three options for the future style of SACC for us to consider.

Option 1. Develop a seeker service style where a highly professional group lead (entertain) from the front with little or no audience (bunch) participation (so pre-Christians don't feel threatened). This also includes a simple gospel presentation that in no way engages the minds of existing believers. In the context of SACC, this would mean the eldership team wearing colour-coordinated lycra clothing, and cycling very quickly and skillfully around relatively technical routes, whilst others all watched in the hope that they would gain much spiritual insight from the process.

Option 2. Develop a niche market church in which surveys would be conducted to determine a person's passions. Members would then focus their energy into a ministry based around that gifting. This option would most likely lead to a number of SACC cells to cater for different passions. A preliminary survey shows that many of the young male members believe God wishes them to develop a niche in encouraging more females to become involved in the spiritual truths of cycle worship.



Power-encounter style Sunday Afternoon Cycling Church

Other examples of niche market churches suggested so far are the “2km downhill to a cafe SACC” and the “Grannies’ uphill and parapenting SACC”.

Option 3. Develop a power-encounter style church in which the congregation (bunch) is placed in an increasingly emotionally charged environment to make them open to God (not too much intellectual stuff), then words and prayers are spoken over the person who then responds in a dramatic manner (eg. falling over) as the Spirit ministers to them.

In the context of SACC the emotionally charged environment would be most easily achieved by placing people in dangerous riding situations, e.g. steep downhills with concealed obstacles. Other techniques such as mood music, passionate preaching on God’s love/wrath, heart-rending stories of woe and redemption would be more difficult to achieve in the SACC context. While not completely desirable, it was felt that the prayer and dramatic response section of the service would be best conducted when the bikes were stationary. While such actions as the laying on of hands can be performed relatively easily while cycling along, the logistics of a person being slain in the spirit become quite difficult when forward movement is involved. Some “catchers” have managed to keep the “dramatic responder” on their bike while still moving forward, but most find this technique a little awkward.

Please offer double strength cappuccino prayers to keep us alert to God’s perfect will and awake to his leading regarding the preferred style of SACC. Given the spiritual magnitude of the decision we are considering a fast in order to gain even clearer insight on God’s future desires for SACC. Please send any thoughts to:

ireallywanttojoinsaccandcomeoneveryrideparticularlythehillyones@cyclingchurch.org.nz

Newsletter 28. Concerning Inter-Generational Worship

Dear Prayer Support Crew,

Following the recent discussion in Sunday Afternoon Cycling Church (SACC) about church growth we realised that we had not fully considered a fourth approach to worship style which was to encourage inter-generational worship and include members of all age groups in the one cycle ride. We decided to trial this rather than resort to the alternative which was to send the kids to trainer wheel SACC, teenagers to extreme downhill SACC, adults to the standard road or mountain bike ride, and older people to relatively sedate road rides on old-style bikes with plenty of breaks.

A representative of each age group is now involved in planning SACC events to ensure no one feels left out, and the resulting general format of SACC rides is now:

- Opening prayer (Appendix A).
- Everyone fits trainer wheels and does two laps around the block to encourage the kids.
- Kids get on the back of adults' bikes if they are too young to ride themselves and all ride to the extreme downhill site.
- Older ones rest while teenagers lead others in the extreme downhill biking.
- Continued riding for all around a longer route with contemplation, then return home.



Intergenerational worship

Some difficulties have arisen from this format which includes:

- Elderly folk do not approve of the extreme downhill cycling claiming it is irreverent and they cannot enjoy their rest periods due to the noise of the teenagers' exuberant shouts. They prefer to cycle along flat roads as they have always done in the past before gears were invented.
- Kids tend to be sick when sitting on the back of a bike during extreme downhill cycling.
- Teenagers find the trainer wheel section beneath their dignity and tend not to participate fully.
- Kids get bored with the longer rides and repeatedly put their feet in the spokes to disrupt proceedings.

Despite the fact that no one group is entirely satisfied with this format, we feel it is worth persevering for the benefits gained from sharing cycle experiences between generations. A number of youth have been inspired by stories of cycle worship in the days before gears were invented, and the elderly find they do more cycling than resting if they have others to motivate them. Children also find the transition from trainer wheel church to adult cycling much easier if they have been included all along.

Please pray for us and be like prayer spiders, weaving a web of prayers, that we might catch the flies of disagreement and suck their body juices dry. If you have any suggestions as to how to make our inter-generational experience more harmonious please email:

surelyeveryonecanlookbeyondtheirownselfinterestinworship@cyclingchurch.org.nz

Newsletter 29. Concerning Fasting and the Anointing Ranking Score

Dear Prayeroholics,

Much debate has occurred recently about church growth and the most anointed church structure to maximise our effectiveness in mission. This has proved to be such an important question that the eldership of SACC believed God was calling us to fast in order to gain clear insight into God's will for our future. We felt strongly led to fast for three days, then have an extended time of cycle worship (approximately eight hours), before seeking the Lord's will. This proved to be a difficult concept for several brothers and sisters who claimed that the consumption of food (particularly cocoa-based products) is essential to the quality of spiritual experience and insight gained from SACC rides. A proposal was then made to fast in order to decide whether to make a stand on the issue of fasting. However, after much debate, the issue of whether to fast or not became secondary to the issue of how to test the spiritual worth of the many profound revelations that are being received by SACC members. The divine inspiration of the call to fast was seriously questioned and a method of clarifying God's involvement was clearly necessary.

After much more discussion it was proposed that a score be given to every SACC event and revelation called the Anointing Ranking Score (ARS). It is a score from -10 to +10, where +10 is unanimously held to be directly from God, 0 is neutral (or just very boring), and -10 is very evil. It is hoped that that use of our ARS will enable believers everywhere to test and clarify whether their worship and sermon experiences are anointed or not. It may even become common to hear a worship leader or preacher described as "having a great ARS" or "getting his ARS into gear" or "keeping her ARS in line" and the suchlike.

As an example of the ARS being used, we applied it to the question of fasting. Half the members voted +10 and half voted -10 and the average score was allocated at 0. Thus it was left to the conscience of individual members to decide whether they would fast or not, and the great conflict was wonderfully resolved. We would like to compile a database of worship experiences with their associated ARS that could be made available to all believers. Please email your ARS (with a brief description of the event) to:

encourageyourworshipleader_upyourARS@cyclingschurch.org.nz

We pray that this tool will be as valuable as a padded bike seat – preventing spiritual chafing and aiding circulation of the Spirit to vital parts of our life.

Newsletter 30. Concerning a Name for Inspired SACC Writings

Dear Believers in Biking,

It has come to our attention that many people are drawing great spiritual encouragement from the writings that have emerged from Sunday Afternoon Cycling Church (SACC) worship. It has been decided to circulate these writings more widely, that they might be spread to the ends of the earth, and people everywhere can know the truth of cycle worship. This does, of course, raise the issue of what to call these writings. After much discussion a decision was made for PROSACC – Profound Revelations Of SACC. Several other options were considered which are listed below for your edification.

- maSACCre – Most Anointed SACC Revelations & Epistles
- duraSACC – Divine Unctions & Revelations Accorded to SACC
- SACC-cloth – SACC Collected Letters Ordinances & Theological Homilies
- SACC barrow – SACC Bloody Anointed Revelations, Rituals Ordinances & Writings
- SACCriledge – SACC Revelations, Inspired Letters, Emails & Divinely Guided Epistles
- in-the-SACC – Inspired Notions, Theological Homilies & Epistles of SACC

Please bounce us on the trampoline of your prayers that we might reach greater spiritual heights for Jesus and that the gospel might spread via cycle worship to the ends of the earth. If you would like to obtain a copy of PROSACC please send an email to:

thestateofthechurchissodepressingireallyneedsomeprosacc@cyclingchurch.org.nz

Appendix A. The SACC Opening Prayer

Creator of all life,
we give thanks for this opportunity to ride our bikes.
We give thanks for the technology that's frees us rather than enslaves us,
for derailleurs and gear shifters, tyres and brakes,
the creativity of the human mind that enables us to participate in this experience.
We give thanks for the weather,
the sun that softens our confusion,
the rain that drenches us with peace,
the wind that dances with our mysteries,
the clouds that sculpt your enveloping love.
We give thanks for this time to sweat, to vent the frustrations of the last week.
We give thanks for the freedom of the journey,
the simplicity of the road,
the quietness of the hills.
May we experience the beauty of your world,
your healing in our souls,
and your challenge to live life in all its fullness.
Amen.

