

DIRECTIONS

Bringing news, views and inspiration to the Presbyterian Church of Queensland

JUMPSTART SCHOOLIES 2014



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You feel it coming; the excitement, the dread, the anticipated horror that hangs in the air; November is here. And you live on the Gold Coast...

You've seen the news, year 12 leavers are sold on this idea of 'the best week of their lives' that so often fails to even come close to that. For many, all they are after is a fun holiday to celebrate the completion of twelve years of schooling but the 'fun' they are after is often warped into something far worse than they anticipated.

Each year there are a number of school leavers who opt for a fun holiday to celebrate the completion of their schooling AWAY from the Gold Coast. And some of these students join us at Jumpstart Schoolies on Stradbroke Island for a week of kayaking, surfing, cards, beach, Cambus Wallus, sandboarding, Jesus, gelati, golf, mangoes, naps, paddle boarding, friends, four-wheel-driving, pool competitions, movies, snorkeling, and so much more!

What's on ...

Virginia-Banyo Presbyterian Church celebrates 50 years

The Banyo Presbyterian Church will celebrate 50 years since the opening of the Banyo Church building on Sunday 1 March 2015.

We are endeavouring to contact past members and friends to join us on the day, and to offer any information, photos, memorabilia that they might be able to contribute for the occasion. Please contact Annette Moran on (07) 3267 5666.



Study Tour of Israel and Jordan 2015

Late next year a group of intrepid Queensland Theological College (QTC) students will be walking where Jesus walked - literally - as they head off on a study tour of Israel and Jordan.

Led by QTC's Senior Lecturer in New Testament, Wesley Redgen, the group will experience firsthand the sites where Jesus's life and ministry took place, helping to bring the Bible to life.

Day 5 of the tour will see the group visiting Cana, the scene of Jesus' first miracle, and the village of Nazareth, while on Day 9 they will be visiting the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane and Bethlehem.

The study tour is also open to the wider public who can join as 'audit' students. Being an 'audit' student enables you to participate in the site tours and talks but with no requirement to complete the readings and assignments.

If you are interested in joining the group there will be an information evening in early 2015 that you can attend.

Please contact Belinda Hoadley (bhoadley@qtc.edu.au, Ph: 3871 9373) to register your interest and she will send you further information.



On Day 13 of the tour visit Masada, the last stronghold of Jewish resistance to the Romans, and the Dead Sea



Rev Dr Noel Wallis celebrates 50 years of ordination

This year celebrates Rev Dr Noel Wallis' 50 years of ordination (23 February 1965). His family have arranged a gathering at their home (13 Bridgeman Place, Forest Lake) on Saturday 14 February from 2.00 pm onwards. Certain persons from the Presbyterian and Uniting Churches have been asked to contribute a brief word after which afternoon tea will be served.

Very Rev Jack Knapp was a colleague of Rev Dr Noel Walls and asks that his congratulations be passed on.

Kids Club at Kenmore Presbyterian Church

by Rev Daniel Saunders

Who is the King, the descendent of David, the descendant of Eve who will defeat death, smash sin and make us friends with God?

In the first week of the Christmas school holidays Kenmore Presbyterian Church ran a kids holiday club.

There were children from church, the school where we have church and from parents who saw an ad in their school newsletter. But best of all, there were children who came because they were invited by the families in our church.

These children were invited to 'Follow the Clues' to solve the greatest mystery of all time. Through drama, songs, puppets, bible study, games, and craft, they discovered the unfolding promises of God and how they have been kept in King Jesus.



Kids found evidence



The church ran kids club in partnership with students from Evangelical Students and the

Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students (AFES) group at the University of Queensland.

This week of combined mission was great for our church as we were able to meet the students who we minister to through our support of AFES, and we also couldn't have run the club without them! They were bundles of faithful, gifted and serving energy.



The kids club concluded with our annual Christmas carols night outdoors—Carols in the Amphitheatre.

Once again a local carols night attracted all sorts of visitors—some from the kids club, and many from local suburbs—who were able to celebrate the Good News of the Christ of Christmas.

As part of our mission week we also sang carols in the local shops, letter-box-dropped invitations to our carols, and visited residents of the PresCare facilities in Thornlands and Carina.

Please pray with us that some of the kids who came to kids club might bring their families to church when KPC Kids starts again on Sunday, 1 February. And please pray too for relationships which Kids Club helped church families build with friends.



Kids singing

Briefly

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF QUEENSLAND (PCQ)

Did you know PCQ has their own website? You can find out who we are, what we believe, what we do, what is going on in the life of the church and where the nearest church is to you. Check it out at www.pcq.org.au.

MODERATOR-GENERAL

Did you know that the Moderator General of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, Rt Rev David Cook has a blog? Check it out each fortnight at www.presbyterian.org.au

USED STAMPS

WE CAN TURN YOUR USED STAMPS INTO MISSION SUPPORT

The Presbyterian Womens' Missionary Union (P.W.M.U) is collecting stamps to support our missionaries. Stamps can be left at Church Offices, Level 4, 19 Lang Parade, Milton Qld 4064 or call Carole on 07 3324 9309 or Margaret on 07 3285 6146 for other options or more details.

UNIT TO LET

CALOUNDRA, beachside units, from \$300/week. For details contact Ray on 0427 990 161 or rayandjean@hotmail.com

TELEPHONE DIRECTORIES

Any charges wishing to make changes to their entry in the White Pages should contact Church Office on 3716 2800 or email churchoffice@pcq.org.au.

NAOMI REED

Naomi Reed is a speaker and writer who lives with her family in the Blue Mountains. For more information go to www.NaomiReed.info

CHURCH OFFICE HAS MOVED

Did you know The Presbyterian Church of Queensland office has relocated to Level 4, 19 Lang Parade, Milton Qld 4064? Postal address: PO Box 1351, MILTON LPO QLD 4064 Phone: (07) 3716 2800 Fax: (07) 3716 2810 Email remains the same

MODERATOR-ELECT'S CHAPLAINS

The Moderator-Elect advises his chaplains will be Rev Matt Viney, email mattvkpc@gmail.com and Rev David Bailey, email davebailey@creekroad.org.au.

From the Editor

with Michelle Martin



Dear Readers

Happy New Year!

Welcome to the first edition of 'New Directions' for 2015. Hope you all had a wonderful Christmas with family and friends.

My Christmas break was spent with family, friends and a bunch of teenagers at CMS Summer School. CMS Summer School was both fun, challenging and rewarding. We learnt about the Kings of Israel and Judah, what the criteria is for a good and bad king. But most importantly that the Lord is God and we should listen to Him! He is the giver of life, fulfilment and salvation; His Word endures forever.

Many of you may have made New Years' resolutions and many not. I am one of the ones who has not but I do have goals I hope to achieve this year. Those of you who have resolutions or goals for 2015 I wish you well in achieving them.

Exciting News! The Church Office in Fortitude Valley relocated to Milton over the Christmas break. Please check out photos of the new office and the staff's comments on page 18.

Congratulations goes to Rev Lesleigh Hall who took up the position of Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly of Australia on 1 January 2015. We wish him well and God's blessings in this role along with his other roles.

A month has already passed for 2015 and school has recommenced. I wish God's blessings on all who are at school (teachers and students), university or college, starting a new job and anything else that is happening for you in 2015.

I look forward to sharing the news about life in the Presbyterian Church and the kingdom of God this year with you all.

Happy reading!

'Jumpstart Schoolies is far better than going to 'normal' schoolies!'

Jumpstart Schoolies @ Stradbroke Island in 2014

Amongst the various highlights of Jumpstart, it was Danny Mitchell bringing the Bible to us all each day that left the biggest impact on the schoolies. God was at work in the lives of these young people convicting them that no matter how busy their lives may be they need to accept God's invitation in Jesus to truly rest. To set aside time to enjoy God and what He's given us.

The time spent each morning in God's Word prompted discussions

that continued to flow throughout the whole day. One of the greatest things about this year's camp was the smaller size. This allowed for deeper connections with and between all of the schoolies. By the end of the week, no one wanted to leave.

Here's what some of our schoolies had to say:

"Jumpstart Schoolies is far better than going to 'normal' schoolies!"

"Definitely worth coming to! Best

week of my life."

"Wear sunscreen..."

"Wonderful week full of fun and friendships."

"Go to Jumpstart. It's the best week you'll have..."

Praise God for the wonderful week that we had. May He be glorified through the lives of these young people as they go out into the world living for Him in all that they do.



New Resource!



TEACH US TO PRAY:

The Lord's Prayer
And The Gospel Of Jesus

Edited by Greg Goswell and Greg Munro
Commentary and studies for personal and group use

1-7 copies \$11 per copy plus postage

8+ copies \$9 each plus postage

Great to use in your Bible Study Group!

AVAILABLE FROM:

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Reflections from a Year of Church Planting at South Bank

by Nathan Campbell

Creek Road South Bank opened its doors on the first Sunday in February 2014. It has been an interesting year. We've run two services—morning (10:30) and evening (5:00) on most Sundays. (Our venue, the Queensland Theatre Company, was unavailable during the G20, so we only had one service that week).

A year in and I'm encouraged by what God has been doing in and through the people who are part of our church family. We've got a great core group that has been in South Bank since the beginning, moving to South Bank from Creek Road Carina. The morning service sees up to 50 people, including children, from various ages, stages, and nations, meeting for church (with kids church) and a barbeque lunch. Our morning congregation includes up to 15 Iranian refugees, so we have the Bible Reading in both English and Farsi.

Our Cross Cultural Connect Pastor, Ryan Dehnert, takes our Iranian brothers and sisters through the talk earlier in the week to help them understand it. The night service is smaller, with up to 20 young adults.

There is one practical way you can help Creek Road South Bank reach more people—if you know people moving to Brisbane this year to study or work—Christian or not—we would love to help them settle in to Brisbane. Please send them to our new website welcometobrisbane.info.

We would love you to pray for us, visit us and send your non-Christian friends and family in the area to us. Please also pray that God will continue to raise up many more workers for the harvest in Brisbane.

Here are five reflections from our first year.

1. Brisbane needs Jesus, and it needs more churches to speak and live the Gospel.

The population of Brisbane is tipped to grow to three million people by 2020, that's a million more people than in the 2011 census. If we want to keep pace with this growth (so that we don't shrink), or grow, there's good reason to believe we need many more viable churches preaching and living out the Gospel in our city.

This means other churches are partners, not competition. It's easy to slip into thinking that you're competing with other churches, especially when visitors come to you one week, and join them the next. But this sort of thinking isn't just sinful, it's stupid. Brisbane needs more churches, there are plenty of lost people who need to hear about Jesus. We're on the same team. It also means we can't be anxious when we hear about new churches starting up nearby. There are plenty of lost people to go around.

2. The inner-city suburbs are hard to reach, and important places to have churches, but no harder or more important than the suburbs, the regions, and the outback.

The inner-city might sound

exciting, and strategically important, and there are countless buzzword-filled church planting books about the necessity of going where culture is shaped, but city people are not more valuable than country people.

Inner city ministry is different to suburban ministry, but it's not more glamorous, more difficult, or more important to God. It's different because the people are different.

We've had to work out how our location in the inner-city reshapes our church community, and what we need to do differently to our mother church in Carina, which is just 12km away.

We need more churches all over Brisbane, all over Queensland, and all over Australia, and we need people who are prepared to be part of these churches as they begin, and grow. This means stepping out of our comfort zones for the sake of the lost.

3. The thing our 'culture' needs to be transformed by is not 'culturally engaged' churches, but churches proclaiming and embodying the story of the crucified and risen Lord Jesus.

When we talked about starting up in South Bank, one of the things we talked about was going to where our city's cultural heartbeat is. Not because we wanted to be a hip church at the centre of our culture, but because we want the Gospel story to be faithfully presented alongside all the big narratives of our culture.

Using the methods used by other 'storytellers' in our culture—the advertisers and the arts—is important, but our use of these methods needs to be shaped by the Gospel. Often this means subverting these mediums, just like Jesus changed the meaning of the Cross for His Jewish and Roman audiences. The way we teach and live out the Gospel should be shaped by the people around us—not just the culture shapers (who need the Gospel), but also the unlovely and the unloved, those at the margins of our society. Historically, it's that sort of love for the marginalised which has been at the heart of the church's ability to transform culture.

This history has helped me think about living out the Gospel in South Bank. To this end, we've been seeking to love refugees and the homeless. Our love for our refugee brothers and sisters, and their joining us to praise Jesus, is a picture of the people of God in the New Creation.

I've been building a working relationship with Micah Projects, an organisation committed to loving and caring for the homeless in Brisbane. Making sure the Good News about Jesus is front and centre every week, and having this love for the people of Brisbane, including those at the margins, intentionally built into our DNA right from the word go is part of our contribution to the cultural landscape of our city.

4. It is harder to get people to join a church on the basis of need than it is on the basis of satisfying their own wants.

'Church shopping' is such an insidious, consumer driven phrase.

If every person who had visited our church while 'church shopping' had stuck around in our first year then just about all the reasons people gave for not sticking around—mostly about size and ministries for their kids—would have been addressed.

The consumer mentality that we bring to the world around us where we shop around looking for the best deal, or the best fit, for us, is a massive challenge to church life. This is the struggle for small churches all over our city.

Having been part of a couple of bigger churches, my observation is that the struggle for big churches is breaking down this mentality for the people seeking anonymity in their packed pews. As followers of Jesus we're all called to be part of the body of Christ, we're all called to serve one another, and the lost.

5. God is good. His Word works. Success is His.

Thinking that the success or failure of a church is down to me, or to our core group, or to any of us, is a dangerous trap to fall into. But it's so easy. On a Sunday where a few of our families are away on holidays, or when our night service drops below 10 people—when five of them are in the band—it's easy for me to feel responsible, and to feel like it's all a waste of time and energy. But God is in control and He is good.

It's an incredible privilege for all of us to be children of God, to have been brought into a relationship with him through Jesus' humiliating sacrifice on the Cross, and through His resurrection. It's an incredible privilege to play whatever part we're called to play in the body of Christ—the church.

It's an incredible privilege to tell the story of the Gospel, and to live it. The story of the Gospel is a reminder of this privilege, and our responsibility to use this privilege for the sake of others.

It's easy to get caught up in numbers—but the number that really matters, I think, is that in our first year, 100 new opportunities for the people of Brisbane to hear the Gospel preached in church, and the Gospel has continued to shape our community week in, week out, which is how we grow to be more like Jesus.

'As followers of Jesus we're all called to be part of the body of Christ, we're all called to serve one another, and the lost.'



by Roland Lowther

Perhaps you have heard the phrase 'window on the world'? Usually it is used with reference to books, television programs, songs, or various other forms of media providing us with a glimpse of the *unfamiliar world*. For those of us who have grown up watching children's television, and have seen the ABC program *Playschool*, looking through a window (whether round, square, or arched) as a means of visually expanding our horizons, is a familiar concept.

However, children's television aside, our technologically advanced world is filled with all manner of electronic 'windows' that give us easy access to the world. However, as access to the information through these windows becomes easier and quicker, the world as it is presented to us loses its mystery. Of course, those providing us with these 'windows' are very willing to provide the accompanying rationalization for the content: why that war is justified, why we need those consumer goods, why that seductive movie has to be watched, and so on. Yet, it is inevitable that the world *out there*, through constant engagement within this interpreted media dialectic, will so determine what (and how) we think, that the difference between fantasy and reality will be lost. Taken to its logical conclusion, windows become mirrors; mirrors in which reality is reflected as an image of its deluded self, not objective otherness!

But what if there was a window that we could look through; a window untainted by the agendas of false reality and self-delusion that showed us things as they really were? Where could we find such a window that we might look through it and see clearly things as they ought to be? Such a window would seem out of place in the metaphorical edifice of the world, and yet the world so desperately needs such a window to shed light on its delusional self.

When Jesus Christ came into the world He provided such a window; a view into a reality that was 'not of this world'—God's kingdom. Jesus shed light on the world and exposed it for what it was—false. Although many were fascinated by His person, what He taught, and what He did, in the end they crucified Him because He did not act according to the patterns of their artificial reality; He did not seek and promote human power, glory, and riches. Yet, some viewed the reality Jesus presented for what it was—the truth. They joyfully embraced Jesus' humble message, and were saved from the consequences of falsehood, attaining eternal life. In Jesus' material absence, the authentic followers of Christ continue to provide this window into God's eternal reality.

Empowered by the Spirit of God, these genuine followers of Christ bring the truth of God's Word to bear on the world: serving, loving, giving, preaching, and revealing Christ and his Gospel as they go. Such Christians provide an aperture for God's kingdom to break into this lost and deluded reality. Nevertheless, the power of the world's influence is strong, and Christ's followers are under constant attack to conform and become mere mirrors; having the shiny appearance of a window but reflecting the vain principles and self-serving values of a fearful world.

Against such a background the New Testament apostles offer both encouragements and warnings. John exhorts us, '*Do not love the world, nor the things of the world*'; and by so doing wants us to keep our focus on the father's agenda that our love for Him might be extinguished by temporal distractions. 1John 2:15-16. James challenges us toward a pure and undefiled religion that sets aside our selfish agendas and by considering the needs of those less fortunate and keeping ourselves uncontaminated by worldly agendas, values, and morals (James 1:27).

Being faithful to these challenges is not without cost, as Christ reminds us; if the world hated Him for opening the window of God's truth on its falsehood, they will hate His followers for the same reason (John 15:18). The secularizing power and prevalence of the modern world is ubiquitous. Avoiding being overrun by it, whilst simultaneously making a stand for the truth which exposes its falsehood, requires nothing less than the power of God.

Yet as authentic Christians, making such a stand is our only real option, because capitulating to the world forsakes the Gospel of Salvation. If the lost world is to embrace the 'real' Gospel of Christ, they must know the truth and knowing the truth hurts (initially). In such an endeavor, we should be encouraged by the Apostle John's words, '*You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*' 1 John 4:4 NIV. Will we be a mirror, merely a sanctimonious reflection of the world's values, or a window into God's kingdom, shining forth the eternal truth and glorious hope, a hope offered to all who embrace Christ as Lord?



Myth Busters: Christianity

by Glenn Hohnberg



When I was growing up (and some suggest that I still am), I went through a phase of loving all those ancient Greek myths—Hercules, Medusa, the Titans and others that have disappeared like wisps of cloud in my mind. In fact, I was reading them so long ago that it is hard to remember just how old I was, what I was doing at the time and why I was getting into them.

And that pretty much hits myths on the head. They are stories that might have some determinable basis of fact but now are no longer determinable, if they ever were. They are stories, characters or events that were invented at some point by someone and we’re not really sure when or why—but it doesn’t really matter. They are made up and in the case of legends so much time has passed we can’t know.

So does Christianity fall into this category? Is Jesus just a great big whopping myth?

What about if I told you that we can get within five years of Jesus’ death and know what the Christians thought about Jesus. Yes, that’s right—according to some hard work that a bunch of historians (not mythologists) have done we can know what Christians thought about Jesus

within five years of His life and death. I hope you’ll admit that it might be hard work to get a really good myth going in just five years.

To prove my bold statement of five years let me show you the method the historians used and then let me show you what the early Christians thought about Jesus.

The method of Historians

Sceptical scholars—scholars with degrees and doctorates who are not Christian—see certain parts of the Bible as valid and reliable historical documents. They don’t treat the Bible as inspired or the whole set of books as trustworthy, but they do treat certain parts of the Bible as valid, reliable critical source documents for history.

One part of these valid, reliable historical sources is the writings of the Apostle Paul. The New Testament includes 13 letters written by Paul. Sceptical scholars accept that six or seven of these were written by Paul. Unanimously, they accept:

- Paul’s letter to the Philippians (Philippians)
- His first letter to the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians)
- His letter to the Christians in Rome (Romans)
- His first and second letter to the Corinthians (1 and 2 Corinthians)
- And finally, Paul’s letter to the Galatians (Galatians).

Scholars treat these as reliable historical documents because Paul is an authoritative source. He has a critical mind, he was in the right place at the right time, he knows the other people who were in the right place at the right time and scholars have clearly established who he is.

Using just the writings of Paul in 1 Corinthians and Galatians we can know what the Christians believed about Jesus within five years of Jesus’

death. 1 Corinthians provides the content and Galatians provides the critical timeline:

30 AD
Jesus died.

32 AD
Paul was converted on the road to Damascus.

35 AD
In 35 AD Paul received what he taught the Corinthians. We know this from Galatians 1:18, *“Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days”*.

Paul was converted in 32 AD. Three years later he went to Jerusalem to be acquainted with Peter. However, the word acquainted doesn’t quite capture the meaning here. It is more like the word interview or gathering eyewitness news. Paul went to interview Peter. He stayed with him and also met with James.

Given Paul’s use of the technical word received, this is the most probable time for when Paul received the creed of 1 Corinthians 15.

We also know that Paul was teaching the same thing from 35 AD to 49 AD. Fourteen years after visiting, Paul returned to Jerusalem in 49 AD and checked with the apostles what he was teaching. He got a thumbs up from the leaders:

“Those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me.” Galatians 2:1-6.

51-52 AD
Paul visited Corinth in 51-52 AD. We know Paul visited Corinth around this time because of two things:

- First, the Inscription of Delphi was written in 51-52 and dates Gallio as proconsul of Achaia.
- Second, Paul was in Corinth at his time according to Acts 18:12. The Jews tried to get him to appear before Gallio.

When Paul was in Corinth in 51 AD, he taught the Corinthians what he had received from the apostles:

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received”, 1 Corinthians 15:3.

This is even more significant when you know that the words received and delivered are technical Rabbinic words for formal teaching and explaining. This was no casual conversation.

57-58 AD
In 57-58 AD Paul writes the first letter to the Corinthians. In chapter 15, Paul lays out what he taught them when he was in Corinth.

“Now I would remind you, brothers, of the Gospel I preached to you, which you received,” 1 Corinthians 15:1.

He then goes on to lay out the Gospel with them. We’ll get to that.

At the end of this section, Paul shows that what he just said is the bona fide version of the church:

“Whether then it was I or they (the other apostles), so we preach and so you believed,” 1 Corinthians 15:11.

In other words, Paul is saying “The other apostles and I teach and preach the same thing. If you don’t like me and what I say, go talk to apostle Peter or talk to James. You’ll get the same answer.”

As you can see, Paul received the formal teaching in 35 AD. This was within five years of Jesus’ death. However, there is a further dimension here. What Paul received was an already formalised creed from before 35 AD. The rhyming structure of the creed is the give-away here. The creed was written to be easy to repeat and memorise in ancient Greek. So, we are to look back to even before 35 AD.

This pretty much knocks the whole

myth concept on the head. Paul tells us what he was told and when he was told it. If we lived at the time we could have gone and checked with the people he conferred with in the churches in Corinth, Damascus and Galatia.

So, what is it that the Christians believed about Jesus before 35 AD?

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.” 1 Corinthians 15:3-7.

- In short:**
1. Jesus Christ died for our sins. He wasn’t an example and he wasn’t a martyr.
 2. Jesus was buried. Jesus really did die, he didn’t faint or pretend to be dead.
 3. Jesus came back from the dead three days later. He was resurrected.
 4. Cephas (also called Simon Peter) saw the resurrected Jesus himself.
 5. All the twelve apostles together saw the resurrected Jesus.
 6. This all happened just as their Scriptures (our Old Testament) laid out. The prophecies stated in the Old Testament have been fulfilled.

This article first appeared at citybibleforum.org/city/brisbane/blog/myth-busters-christianity. Used with permission of City Bible Forum.

Pray, Live, Serve...but what if our work feels inconsequential?

by Naomi Reed

Sometimes, we’re tempted to think that, compared to other people, our work, or life, isn’t very important or exciting. Maybe our contacts are limited, or our life stage keeps us mostly at home, or our gifts feel inconsequential, or our daily routine is too ordinary.

Last year, I went to Malaysia to interview a lady who had served in North Africa for twelve years with her husband and four sons. The family lived in a small desert town and both Helen and her husband had trained as GPs, planning to work in community health. As I travelled to meet Helen, I was excited, anticipating her story and thinking about all the things I could ask her. But as we chatted, the thing that stood out to me the most was that Helen also felt inconsequential.

Apparently, the family arrived in their desert town in 1990 and set up house, surrounded by sand. A visitor arrived and said there must be soil down there somewhere, so they dug

and dug, and there wasn’t any soil at all, just sand. The four boys loved it, though, thinking they were living in a giant sand pit. The country was also, at the time, a secular state, which meant that their contacts were limited, and monitored by the government. During the day, while Helen’s husband was mostly out working in community health, Helen needed to be at home, schooling their sons. On top of that, she found it particularly difficult to make local friends, within a police state. Sometimes she felt her ministry was too small.

But over time, Helen made one friend, whose name was Amina. Amina would come over every day to help Helen with the boys and they would speak in French and Arabic. Every morning Helen and Amina would have a break and drink tea together over a green and white tablecloth. It went on for years and over time, Amina put her faith in Jesus. She became the first Christian



in the whole area. Then, within a few years, there were hundreds of believers in their country.

At the end of our conversation, Helen said to me, “We never know the fruit that God brings from the small things, even when we think we’re inconsequential, or when we’re just drinking tea and chatting with one person, in the desert.”

And it’s the same for all of us today, in our small things.

Bringing Mark’s Gospel to life on Social Media

by Nathan Campbell

Eight characters from Mark’s Gospel are coming to life at Creek Road this term, and online via Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. The characters are inviting people to engage with the story of Jesus in the same way people have always been invited to participate in the story—by watching, listening and following the central character: Jesus.

Mark tells the story of Jesus through the eyes of different eye-witnesses, providing multiple perspectives on his life, teaching, and call for people to join the Kingdom of God through his death and resurrection.

The word ‘Gospel’ is a media term, describing a particular genre and communication method, common in the first century. Creek Road Media has designed an approach to telling Mark’s story using these distinctives, and trying to find modern communication methods similar to the Gospel format.

Jesus: Watch, Listen, Follow is a multimedia retelling of the Gospel.

Each week, as Creek Road’s preachers work through Mark’s Gospel, the Media Team will be producing a documentary journey, filmed on location where the events of Mark’s Gospel took place, while the characters will appear on Sundays, where they’ll take part in the Kids Church, and be available to tell their part of the story to anyone who asks, but they’ll also be tweeting, taking photos, and telling the story of Jesus through social media for the entire series.

You can join the fun, and invite others to immerse themselves in the story of Jesus, by visiting watchlistenfollow.org and engaging with the characters in the online environment. They’ll be interacting with people in real time, in character, all hoping to invite people to do what the original characters in Mark’s story did—help us to see Jesus as he really is, the Son of God and King of the kingdom of God.



WENDY HENRY TALKS WITH CAROLYN RUSSELL ABOUT HER STORY—HER LIFE, WORK AND MINISTRY (PART 1)

Wendy H: *Hello Carolyn. Welcome to Girl Talk! It's hard to believe that although we've met on various occasions, we've never really had the chance for a good chat. So today, that changes; and over an imaginary coffee I hope to get to know you much better and share your story with others at the same time. Let's start at the beginning...where did you grow up and where do you live now?*

Carolyn R: I grew up in the country (Murgon in the South Burnett) and have many fond memories of it. My family says I have the smell of eucalypts imprinted on my DNA. My father was a cabinet maker and my mother a music teacher. It was a small farming and dairying community—very cohesive and friendly—full of servant hearted people. Currently I live in Aspley, where we built our home in 1986, after prior time in Stafford Heights and Alderley after I left university and was married.

WH: *As part of that journey where did you study and work?*

CR: My early schooling was all in the country town; primary and high school were right next door, within easy

walking distance. I recall developing a love of learning new things and discovering patterns in life and in the world, which enthralled me. At high school I continued music, drama and languages, not really able to decide whether the scientific route (leading to medicine) was the final one. I chose to study medicine at the University of Queensland which required me to live in a university college. But my love of music, languages and drama moulded me in my 'out of hours' activities. Eventually I became a doctor at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital in Herston and then studied General Practice with the Family Medicine Program.

WH: *So what does your life look like now on a daily basis?*

CR: Quite busy, though very fulfilling. The focus now of all my work, is around mental health and counselling. So, after leaving my home and garden, husband and dog in the morning, I work as a general practitioner (GP)/counsellor at Foundations Counselling Centre in Brisbane. This follows 18 years in my own medical practice, and prior to that a few years working for other people or in hospitals. My medical

work continues to inform my current practice, which is predominantly mental health related. I do a lot of assessment for psychiatric illness, as well as seeing people with mood issues (depression and anxiety) and marital or relational issues. As well, I teach young GPs in their formative years, and do some work in primary care organisations in developing countries, teaching mental health. I return to my haven at home—where my husband manages a great deal of the home care and does his own work from there—and really enjoy our time together.

WH: *And where does your family fit into all this?*

CR: My family has at times taken a back seat, and for them, the demands of my medical practice have sometimes been quite costly, even though we have worked hard to be with them and develop trusting relationships with each other. It has been wonderful, and I am very thankful, to have a husband who has understood my passion for my work and the talent that has been nurtured there. He has served our family faithfully as a dad and husband, working to create a home where we could all flourish. He is a professional as well, so we've had to balance many competing priorities in our lives. Our children are now grown up and are all pursuing interesting lives and serving others.

WH: *What about your faith... when and how did you become a Christian?*

CR: Actually it's almost impossible to put a date on this. I grew up in a family where both Mum and Dad loved and served Jesus and I was taken to church related activities from when I was in utero! My knowledge of the Word comes from years of hearing it faithfully read in our home and in our Anglican congregation in Murgon. So, I knew of Jesus Christ and his Father from a very young age. I think I was one of those obnoxious kids who knew all the answers at Sunday School and Religious Education. But it was not until high school, at a girls camp in Noosa, that I understood Jesus as the Judge of the whole earth and that I would be judged—as well as lovingly and fully rescued—from the place where **my** sin and attitude toward God had put me. So I trusted God as a wonderful Provider and Father, because my parents did, and I knew great security in this. However, coming face to face with God and His true character as a teen, was the next and more individual step for me, after the covenant family God had given me.

WH: *Was there someone or something that helped or encouraged you, as you grew in your knowledge and understanding of the Gospel?*

CR: There have been many, and for that I am grateful to God. My father was a pray-er, and a model in Christian life. I would go with him to services as a young child, lying on the pew and listening as he read the Word or prayed when he was on duty to do this. I am still moved, and can hear his voice in my mind, speaking the wonderful words of the Anglican prayer book: **We do not presume to come to this thy table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your**



Carolyn Russell

manifold and great mercies We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy table ... He continued to point people to Jesus this way throughout his whole life, in a self-giving and sacrificial way—even as a man in his 80s, doing odd jobs around the town for the 'older folk'!

Another person was a minister who, during my university years, greatly encouraged me with his calm and authoritative teaching, in understanding the Gospel and its relevance to me, as a young Christian attempting to find a life worthy of the Lord. He became the Archbishop of Sydney—Rev Harry Goodhew. His openness to people coming to speak about their dilemmas, and his welcome in any situation, was like being in the presence of God. I didn't ever leave his office without edification.

WH: *How does being a Christian affect what you do in your work?*

CR: The opening of Foundations Counselling Centre was a result of being a Christian who was a medical practitioner. It was clear to me and a few close friends, that people in the community and the churches needed support in managing mental health issues. Some wanted to understand how faith played a part in either preventing or assisting recovery from mental ill health. So, we set up a place where faith can be discussed if the person desires that. As I work (as a very flawed human) there are many times when I am not a good witness to the Lord Jesus. Tiredness, overwork, irritability and hunger, as well as my own illness, challenge me to remain able to support others in their struggles. I am learning to be more open to my own vulnerability, and to care for myself when I am too stretched. Also I am learning that any suggestion or intervention that I make (in either the secular field or with Christians) must be compatible with the attitudes expressed by Jesus Christ—never hopeless, always loving, thoughtful, kind, patient and self-controlled. Even if the actual name of Christ is not mentioned, the life of Christ must be seen. He needs

to be honoured and glorified.

WH: *And is it possible that your work has had an effect on how you live as a Christian?*

CR: Most definitely so, and in many ways! One in particular comes to mind...as I have worked among persons struggling with mental health issues, or in general practice, I've learned about the reality of suffering and seen it in many situations. To come to terms with this, I have been forced back to reading the Word, to learn about the promises of God, in Christ, **IN** suffering! This was so important, since a realistic discussion with suffering people, about the presence of God, is essential for a Christian who is also a doctor. False promises of healing, or of a particular outcome, are not in any way honouring of our God. My job must be to point others to God's promise of being present **with** people, by his spirit, through whatever comes in this world. If they are not Christians, then to be present with them as 'Christ with skin on' is still the requisite character.

WH: *How interesting! I'm looking forward to hearing more of your thoughts when we continue this conversation very soon. Thanks Carolyn!*

Note: The second part of this chat with Carolyn will appear in the next edition of *New Directions*.

‘My job must be to point others to God's promise of being present with people, by his spirit, through whatever comes in this world.’

WOMEN @ PRAYER ...

He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Isaiah 40:29-31

- Give thanks and praise for God's promises and His faithfulness to fulfil them in our lives, as we trust in Him.
- As we reflect on the recent holidays and the reason for our celebrations—the birth of Jesus—give God the glory for sending His promised Saviour to our world.
- Praise God that through Jesus we can become part of His family and pray that we might treasure the earthly families in which He has placed us.
- Ask God to forgive our sinfulness as flawed humans and praise Him that because of Jesus' suffering on the cross we can look forward to an eternity with Him.
- Pray for those who are facing extreme suffering in their lives and ask God to give us His words of comfort as we point them towards Jesus and the promise of His presence, through the Holy Spirit, whatever situations life might bring.
- Pray especially for understanding about the effect that mental illnesses have on individuals, their families, those who care for them and treat them and ask for wisdom as we reach out to them with God's love.
- Praise God for the opportunities that 2015 might bring for us to know Him more closely as we study his Word and pray faithfully, to share the truth of His promises with others and to keep looking forward to the wonderful promise of Jesus' return.



Be Connected with WMPCQ through the website + newsletter
www.wmpcq.com , or email pcqwomen@gmail.com .

For C (and Other Women of Brisbane)

by Nathan Campbell

Late last year a young woman, C, Lpoked her head in to Creek Road South Bank and asked if our church is “conservative or progressive”. Here is an edited excerpt of a blog post I wrote following our interaction.

I’m not a big fan of sticking to either label. As a church we aim to stick to what the Bible says, and who it says Jesus is, which means we’re conservative—but we also think Jesus is for everybody, and that rather than giving people a rule book about how to live, we want them to meet Jesus, hear the Good News about the radical sacrificial love displayed at the cross, and live in response, being transformed to be the people God created us to be.

This frees us to be genuinely progressive, and radical, on all sorts of social issues, as we choose approaches that open up the opportunity for people to be truly transformed for the better, by the death and resurrection of Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit.

C was particularly interested in our position on men and women in leadership, and on homosexuality (especially gay marriage). I’m not sure how interested she was in hearing the rationale for these positions—she decided that our church wasn’t for her when she heard that the Presbyterian Church of Queensland limits eldership and preaching to men.

C had been part of churches in the past—even working for a large church in Sydney—but left because she had not found a church that fitted her needs.

The church needs women like C who are passionate about people and equality, and especially progress—so long as this passion is shaped by God’s view of people, equality, and progress, and we see God’s view of people, equality, and progress at the Cross, and in the transformation God brings to the people who cling to it.

The Gospel is the key to fixing the sort of gender issues that plague the church and society at large, where men cling on to power and authority—weaponising leadership, rather than leading like Jesus (the Good Shepherd who lays down his life

for his flock).

When we put our trust in Jesus, we’re all called to take up our cross and follow him—this cross-shaped life changes how each one of us thinks of, and uses, all aspects of our identity to love and serve others, including gender.

It breaks my heart that C did not feel welcome to join our church. That, in her mind, she came to another church that disappointed her. It breaks my heart that she didn’t stick around to listen to us, to meet the remarkable women in our church community, and the men. It breaks my heart that a ‘conservative’ stance on gender might get in the way of people meeting Jesus, because they won’t come through our doors to see how such a stance plays out in real lives.

Our church—and every church I’ve been a part of—is home to strong women, thinking women, gifted women, who wrestle with what the Bible says, who Jesus is, and how that should play out in their lives. I’d love C, and others, to meet these women, hear their thinking, and see how even grappling with this question can help us understand more of who God is.

It breaks my heart to think that C, and others like her, think that by being part of the system I am robbing my wife and daughter of the opportunity to fully be the people God made them to be (a paraphrase of her words, about the effect on women generally, not them specifically).

C was strong, kind, and polite. She didn’t make this observation to offend or belittle. She was motivated by her passion for others. She’s just the sort of woman the church needs.

It breaks my heart that it might be true, that she might be right that ‘conservative’ churches might stop women meeting their full potential. It worries me that our churches—my church—might be places that value being conservative over constantly progressing, always reforming, always growing to become something closer to the church the Bible calls us to be, a church full of people shaped into the image of Jesus.

This progress and reform doesn’t

mean throwing tradition under the bus. It doesn’t mean reinterpreting passages that we don’t like. There are certain things we must conserve—certain things we are called to hand on from generation to generation so that the Good News about Jesus continues to be told.

The Gospel calls us to be counter-cultural; to live lives different to the people around us; to be remarkable. And this call—this cross-shaped call—needs to transform the way we approach gender and leadership. Sometimes this will mean we’re more conservative than the society we live in, other times it will mean being more progressive than the society we live in.

When it comes to gender, part of being counter-cultural is structuring our churches in a way that communicates something about the God who made us; telling the story of humanity as the Bible tells it. Which is why I think both Jesus and Paul, when speaking of gender and marriage, speak of Genesis as providing the structure for our relationships as Christians. Structuring our relationships, and our gatherings, according to the story we’re trying to live out—the story of the Bible—is part of telling that story.

The Bible’s story of the redemption of God’s people—both male and female—equally—begins with God creating male and female, both in the image of God, both valuable to God with equal dignity.

The Genesis account is comfortable suggesting Adam and Eve are completely equal, and completely able to bear God’s image, while performing different functions. They are different, but equal (the way we phrase this concept must emphasise the equality, rather than the difference, while acknowledging both).

Our gatherings should communicate that every human has equal dignity and value in God’s eyes; regardless of the role they’re playing in the gathering. I think Jesus is serious when he talks about the first being last. I think he models a counter-cultural approach to value

and importance when He launches His kingdom by dying on a cross.

So I’m left with questions. Do our gatherings currently communicate that we hold women in such high esteem (and all people) that we would lay down our lives for them in a heartbeat? Do our gatherings communicate that any Christian submission echoes the submission of the Son to the Father in the Trinity, the Son who says ‘not my will but yours’ and goes to the Cross?

This act is voluntary. It does not break the unity of the Trinity such that the Son is less God than the Father. It must be possible for submission to be such an exercise of freedom that neither party becomes greater or lesser in nature than the other, first in the Trinity, and then, in our churches.

One thing I would have loved to have been able to express to C, or to others disgruntled with the church, is that church is ultimately not about us. When it comes to church, it’s not what we want that is important, it’s what God wants. So it appears that what’s important to God is that our churches are made up of people—men, women, and children—being transformed by the Holy Spirit, always progressing to be more like Jesus.

What’s important is that our churches are communities that celebrate women and their gifts, giving space for these gifts to flourish, and to be used for the flourishing of others, to be places where women feel safe, where they know they will be listened to, and their contributions heard and valued; because they should be communities that do these things for every member of the body.

I want to lead a church like that. Leadership doesn’t come through a title, and whatever titles we give our leaders don’t indicate a change of quality in God’s eyes. Christian leadership isn’t about making other people submit, rather, it is defined by our sacrifice for the sake of others. Our leader, the head of the body we serve, the one who sets the example that we follow, is Jesus.

I’m struck by how often Paul calls people to imitate him, as he imitates Christ. We’re all called to follow

his example—every person in our churches is called to live this way, regardless of your title, your position, your gender. I know it’s easy for me to say this, I have a title, I have a position, I am a man. But we’re all called to submit. Submission is costly. It always comes at the expense of the one doing the submitting. There’s no escaping the truth that women in the church are being asked to pay this cost. But for this cost to have value it has to be voluntarily paid—as a result of people wanting to imitate Jesus.

Imitating Jesus is the key to real progress—and the key to real, eternal flourishing (it’s also the key to short term pain and cost).

I know what this cost looks like because I live with someone paying it. My wife is incredibly gifted. I have no doubt she could do most of the things I can do, and many things that I can’t, if she were in my position. The fact that she isn’t, and doesn’t seek to be, is a testimony to the Gospel. It teaches me about Jesus. She leads me towards progress in this way. Her approach to life, and her sacrificial approach to her gifts, shows me that she wants to imitate Christ. Every day I am grateful to God that I get to be married to such a gifted woman who is eager to use her gifts, but also eager to forgo using her gifts, for the sake of others.

We’re not going to be truly progressive as a church without conserving the Good News of Jesus and building our churches around his story—and being prepared to hang on to that when the world around us wants to move us away.

We’re not going to progress as a church—to allow the women in our churches to truly thrive—without hearing from women like C who are strong, passionate and prepared to speak. Which is why it really is a tragedy that C, and others like her, are not joining churches like ours. Which is why I’m still sad, months later.

This article first appeared at www.st-eutychus.com on 3 November 2014. Used with permission.

POSITION VACANT

ASSISTANT MINISTER AT GATEWAY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Challenging Ministry For An Assistant

A challenging ministry position is available for an Assistant Minister at Gateway Presbyterian Charge. Gateway Church is an inner Brisbane suburban ministry, and has two preaching places in Ascot and Nundah. Gateway has a unique missionary opportunity, with a number of Sudanese refugee families worshipping on a regular basis, and through them, contact with other Sudanese refugee families. Gateway has other nationalities worshipping regularly also, and has people of all ages—young families, teenagers, young adults and the elderly.

Currently we are endeavouring to maintain the following ministry groups - Bible Studies, Play Group, Youth Fellowship, Young Adults and Women’s Ministry.

Outreaches include:

- After School Programs, Free Family Fun Day in a local park, men’s and women’s outreach dinners, etc. There is involvement in overseas and local missions.

A heavy emphasis is placed on teaching and preaching the whole counsel of God, with an emphasis on spiritual growth, evangelism and discipling. Great importance is placed on pastoral and diaconal care (visiting and helping people in the field). There is a regular fortnightly service in the Anyuak language. The man of God we are seeking would be committed to the Inerrancy of the Bible, the Presbyterian beliefs and practices as outlined in the Westminster Confession of Faith, have a real love to minister to people from different nations, a desire to see people grow in the knowledge and nurture of Christ and exercise compassion for the lost. While administration and management skills are important, the man we are looking for would not be tied to his office nor a 40 hour week.

The Session will welcome new ideas and methods (in conformity with the Bible) to enable the kingdom of God to grow. It is envisaged that the right person will succeed the current minister within a reasonable time. Enquiries to the members of Gateway Session, 68 Charlton Street, ASCOT QLD 4007, email crb@aapt.net.au.

JOHN KNOX: THE TRUMPET BLAST OF SCOTLAND (3): THE DISPLACED EXILE (c.1554-56)

by Steven J. Lawson, Pastor, Christ Fellowship Baptist Church, Mobile, Alabama, USA

The third of nine articles published by *Banner of Truth* which will be printed in *New Directions* to commemorate 500 years since the birth of John Knox.



As fire tempers steel in the glowing flames of a furnace, the heated afflictions in which John Knox frequently found himself were sovereignly used by God to shape and strengthen him. Through these fiery trials God forged the metal of Knox's character and formed his convictions.

In July 1553, Mary I, the only surviving child born of Henry VIII and his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, ascended to the throne of England.

'Bloody Mary', as she would be known, abruptly ended the Protestant reforms of her brother, Edward VI. In their place, she imposed her strict Catholic beliefs on the English people.

From 1555-58, her reign of terror would result in the burning of nearly three hundred Protestant believers at the stake. Commanded to cease their reformed worship or suffer fatal consequences, many chose to be condemned as heretics and were burned at the stake.

Already an exile from Scotland in England, Knox now became an exile from England in Europe. This departure launched him into yet another season of heated trials. For six years, from 1554 on, Knox would spend most of his time abroad in Europe, yet he never lost hope that he would one day preach again in his native land.

Flees to Dieppe, France (1554)

Mary arrived in London on 2 August 1553. On 16 August, the first two reform-minded leaders were arrested. The prebendary of St Paul's Cathedral, John Bradford (1510-55), was imprisoned in the Tower of London, and the London preacher/Bible translator, John Rogers (c. 1500-55), was confined to house arrest.

The next month, the Bishop of Gloucester and Worcester, John Hooper (c. 1495/1500-1555), and the famed Bible translator, Miles Coverdale (c. 1488-1569), were both imprisoned. Hugh Latimer (c. 1487-1555), previously a royal chaplain to King Edward VI, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556), were both sentenced to the Tower. These acts of aggression sent many Protestants into hiding and drove others into neighbouring countries.

With danger lurking, Knox was forced to move about England before fleeing to France (January 1554). For

him the choice was stark; refuse the Mass, which he believed to be an idolatrous ritual, and be martyred, or escape from England to safety. Though many chose to stay and face the danger, Knox was encouraged to choose exile, although this would mean for him a prolonged period in which he would not see his future young wife, Marjory Bowes. Conscious that others were giving their lives for the Gospel, Knox's departure troubled him greatly. While he understood that it may be necessary for the greater cause of the Gospel, he was deeply sensitive about how his actions would be perceived by both friend and foe. He wrote:

I have in the beginning of this battle appeared to play the faint-hearted and feeble soldier (the cause I remit to God), yet my prayer is, that I may be restored to the battle again.

On 20 January 1554, Knox sailed for the Continent, landing at Dieppe, a thriving port-city on the Normandy coast of France. Ironically, five years earlier, he had escaped the French to find refuge in England; now he was fleeing the English in order to find safety in France. While there only a few short weeks, he wrote a powerful piece addressed to the Church of England titled Admonition to England. It was the first of several letters written and published during his European exile.

In the Admonition, Knox pleaded with England not to succumb to the false gospel of Rome:

O England, England!... wilt thou yet obey the voice of thy God, and submit thyself to his holy words? Truly, if thou wilt, thou shalt find mercy in his sight, and the state of thy commonwealth shall be preserved.

Knox compared the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, to 'Nero' and declared Mary I of England 'more cruel [sic] than Jezebel'. He called for believers 'to flee from idolatry', a reference to attendance at the Mass. Even if the government commanded its citizens to take the Mass, Knox counselled, they must obey the higher authority of God. While in Dieppe, he also finished writing his Exposition of the Sixth Psalm, a call for the patience of believers during this time of unjust suffering.

Knox gave serious thought to the political and spiritual condition of Scotland and England. As he pondered the persecution, he began developing a radical theological position:

Citizens under a Catholic monarch might overthrow the government rather than violate the word of God by taking the Mass.

This deep-seated conviction would become 'Knox's special contribution to theological and political thought'.

Other reformers, such as John Calvin and William Tyndale, had stressed that Christians should remain subject to the authorities in their countries, and if necessary offer passive resistance when called upon to obey man rather than God, and suffer the consequences. For Knox

however, a return to the papacy and the Mass must be resisted at all costs.

Travels to Switzerland (1554)

Leaving Dieppe, Knox travelled across France to Switzerland in order to visit a number of cities that were sympathetic to the Reformed cause. His goal was to consult the leading figures of the Reformation on the question of obedience to a ruler who forces idolatry and condemns true religion. Knox first travelled to Geneva where he discussed this matter with the leading reformer, John Calvin (1509-64). The great Genevan theologian urged submission and caution.

Knox next journeyed to Lausanne to meet with another noted reformer, Pierre Viret (1511-71). At last, he made his way to Zurich where he interacted with the highly regarded reformer, Heinrich Bullinger (1504-75).

This tour complete, Knox made the journey back to Dieppe (May 1554), where he stayed for the next three months, anxious to hear news from England and Scotland. If the news was good then he might be able to return and resume his ministry. But reports from the north side of the Channel were far from encouraging.

The situation in England was deteriorating and the threat of widespread persecution was getting worse. Out of deep concern for his brethren back in England, Knox wrote two letters during his stay in Dieppe; the first, 'A Letter to His Afflicted Brethren in England', and the second 'A Comfortable Epistle Sent to the Afflicted Church of Christ'.

The letters sought to encourage the believers in England to remain faithful whatever oppressive measures Mary was to introduce. These warm pastoral letters were marked by words of comfort for those who were sure to suffer persecution. Knox began:

Dearly beloved in our Saviour Jesus Christ, hope you against hope, and against all worldly appearance. For so assuredly as God is immutable, so assuredly shall he stir up one Jehu or other, to execute his vengeance upon these blood-thirsty tyrants, and obstinate idolaters.

With no prospect of an immediate return to England, and with Knox keen to deepen his grasp of Scripture, he returned now to Geneva in order to sit under the teaching of Calvin and to study Greek and Hebrew.

By the late spring of 1554, some 800 English Protestants, rather than face charges of heresy in their homeland, had left England and taken refuge on the continent of Europe. A large number found safety in some of the larger cities of Germany and Switzerland. Knox now joined those who had found their way to Geneva, 'Europe's city of God'.

Tempestuous pastorate in Frankfurt-am-Main (1554-55)

Knox however would not be long in Geneva. Some 200 Protestants had fled England and settled in Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany.

Frankfurt was a thriving centre of

commerce with good communication links. An English speaking congregation was soon established here in June 1554.

Among the refugees were such notables as John Foxe (1517-87), the author of the famous martyrology; William Whittingham (c. 1524-79), the chief translator of the Geneva Bible; and Christopher Goodman (1520-1603), a close friend and colleague of Knox.

The English church issued a call to the Scottish reformer to come and serve them as one of their two pastors. Calvin encouraged Knox to accept the call, and in November 1554, Knox was, somewhat reluctantly, on the move once again, this time to Frankfurt to take up the work of pastor of the English church.

Unknown to Knox, he was about to walk into a firestorm of controversy. An increasingly bitter dispute soon arose over the use of the Second Book of Common Prayer – a book about which Knox had serious concerns, particularly over its instruction for communicants to kneel when taking the sacrament.

The Frankfurt congregation was divided between a minority who strongly held that the use of the Prayer Book was essential and a majority which was content to follow the more straightforward order of worship that had been prepared by Whittingham and which was also in harmony with the French pattern of worship approved by the Frankfurt authorities at whose pleasure the English congregation were allowed to use the Church of the White Ladies for their services.

The minority received support from English exiles on the Continent, particularly Strasbourg. There was also a strong emotional element in their attachment to the Prayer Book that had been drawn up in better days by Archbishop Cranmer, who by this time had been arrested, tried, and condemned for heresy, and who now lay languishing in jail, awaiting martyrdom at the stake. If they rejected his book would they not in effect be rejecting him too in his hour of greatest need?

Knox refused to use the Prayer Book, but suggested a compromise arrangement, that he would confine himself to preaching while his fellow minister would lead the congregation in worship. This compromise was not acceptable to the minority and was rejected. In the event two new orders of worship were then prepared.

The first was put together by Knox, Whittingham, Foxe, Anthony Gilby (c. 1510-85) and Thomas Cole (d. 1571), but was immediately rejected by the minority who were wedded to the Prayer Book.

A second order was then drawn up, which was basically a stripped down version of the Prayer Book services – a 'Liturgy of Compromise' – which also left out the responses said by the congregation. Initial signs looked promising. For just over a month this liturgy was used with relative harmony. But with the arrival of Dr Richard Cox (c. 1500-81), once Dean of Christ Church, vice-

chancellor of Oxford, and tutor to Edward VI, the harmony was abruptly brought to an end.

Cox and his friends insisted on saying the responses in loud voices during the service. The newcomers refused to be silent when ordered by the elders to hold their peace. Knox, who was in the congregation, remonstrated with them but Cox insisted that they would do as they had done in England and that they 'would have the face of an English Church'. Knox pointedly replied, 'The Lord grant it to have the face of Christ's church.' This exchange opened up the old divisions and deepened them.

Those who had agreed to the compromise liturgy now voiced their agreement with Cox to reintroduce the Prayer Book service. Knox was bitterly disappointed to see Thomas Lever (1521-77), his co-pastor, go back on the compromise.

Dr Richard Cox was a man who has been justly described as 'energetic and overbearing', one used to getting his own way. Cox now engaged in something of a 'dirty-tricks' campaign. He tipped off the Frankfurt authorities to the seditious remarks Knox had made a year earlier in the Faithful Admonition about the Emperor Charles V being 'no less an enemy of Christ than ever was Nero'. This spooked the authorities who had an uneasy relationship with the Emperor and who did not want to be identified with such sentiments. So within just a couple of weeks of Cox's arrival in Frankfurt, Knox was ousted from the congregation and expelled from the city on 26 March, 1555.

Meanwhile, back in England the burning of the first reformers had begun. The first Marian martyr was John Rogers, the Bible translator who completed Tyndale's work, and lecturer at St Paul's Cathedral. He was burned on 4 February, 1555 in Smithfield, London.

Five days later, on 9 February, John Hooper, the Bishop of Gloucester and Worcester under Edward VI, and Rowland Taylor, the Rector of Hadleigh, Suffolk, were also executed – Hooper in Coventry, Warwickshire, and Taylor in Suffolk.

Return to England and Scotland (1555)

Uncertain about his future, Knox travelled back to Geneva once again, where he remained for several months. Arriving in April 1555, Knox explained to Calvin the events that had transpired in Frankfurt. Calvin wrote to Cox and the majority party, rebuking them for their rigidity. He defended his fellow reformer, saying, "I cannot keep secret that Master Knox was, in my judgment, neither godly nor brotherly dealt with." It was another trial that would serve as a preparation for the struggles Knox would face in his work of reformation in Scotland.

As Knox arrived in Geneva, an English-speaking congregation was forming, one that Knox would later serve as pastor. But for now, he had his sights set on another mission. He made his way to England, where his young bride, Marjory Bowes, awaited him.

continued page 15

Introducing James Woollett...

What's my story? Well my story is of a young teen who has grown up in church, attended a Christian school and found himself in a whole new world that is university (at Queensland University of Technology (QUT)). A world where blind tolerance is the chief virtue and consistent apathy the best practice, where students are either completely focused on getting that seven or just scraping through. A world where the deepest topic that gets broached with the people around you is the ethics subject that everyone takes at some point (and even then the conversation only lasts till the end of the class).

What did a young guy from a rather Christian background get up to in his first year at university? He studied and went home. That was it.

But that didn't last in second year. God used Student Life to change me, to change how I lived and where I was going. From the very first conference where I was trained in how I can share my faith, to an older student coming alongside me, discipling me and taking me out to share the Gospel with complete strangers!

I never dreamed that by the time I finished my engineering degree I would have worked as a part-time missionary on the QUT Gardens Point campus and be raising support to continue full time.

So many people have asked me why I would not go into a job aligned with my degree. My best answer to that is:

"Of all the things that a person can live for in the world, the only one with meaning, everlasting meaning, is God. How can I live for God? By actively engaging in the Commission He gave us (Matthew 28:18-20). Where can I make the biggest impact? The very place where all the leaders of tomorrow are being moulded, university."

Since my time as a student leader in 2013 God has increased the number of students involved in the Student Life movement—so much so that there is now a group of five core student leaders who have a heart for Kelvin Grove and are attempting to start a movement on that campus.

I will be joining them there in helping a new sustainable movement grow. What does that look like? Among other things it includes: coaching and training students in evangelism, discipling students one on one, training students in how to lead a multiplying movement, training them in discipleship and practically providing them with skills to be a disciplemaker.

What I hope to see one day, is multiplying movements of students passionate and active in sharing Christ, through word and deed, all trained to be disciplemakers no matter where they go.

Life at Queensland Theological College from a Student's Perspective

by Katie Allan



It's been said that "true and sound wisdom consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves". This helps to describe my thoughts of Queensland Theological College (QTC).

At QTC academic demands were real but the stronger driving force was growth in students' relational knowledge of God and his goodness. Also the recognition of our own fallenness and our constant need of a Saviour. There's a genuine desire to guide students toward being wise for salvation through faith in Christ, and to equip them for Gospel service.

Like many students, my introduction to QTC involved significant life changes: relocating, finding a new church, leaving behind

work (and income!), and establishing new friendships. Throw in adjusting to study again after a 15 year hiatus and it really was a shock to the system! But I knew I was in a good place.

I'd enrolled in the Graduate Diploma of Divinity—a one year course which I thought would give me a good foundation to continue teaching English as a second language in a ministry context. Overhearing discussions between upper-year students about what they were learning soon convinced me that one year would not be enough. Four years on, and I'm about to graduate with a Masters of Divinity.

QTC is blessed with high calibre lecturers, and concerned and very competent admin staff. I really appreciated my lecturers. They're not only academically gifted, but approachable and pastorally driven. While teaching and guiding students, they still consider themselves students of the Word, striving and struggling to grow in their relationship with God.

And the community at QTC was great. I enjoyed the student body's diversity—in age, background, personality, family situation, and denomination. Particularly encouraging was the number of female students—young and old—with a range of gifts and ideas for serving in God's kingdom. They really are a growing resource that the church can benefit from.

The whole college community gathers for chapel at the start of each week. With unashamedly Bible-

centred teaching, staff and students are encouraged in the Gospel together. There's the constant reminder that the truths of the Bible are not only for us but for our local communities in Brisbane, Queensland and beyond.

Being at QTC was sometimes challenging. Studying theology was completely different to my previous studies in science. It's personal. I often felt confronted and embarrassed by how poorly I knew my Bible. At times I questioned the genuineness of my faith. I saw the passion and faithfulness of my fellow-students; I felt tested by the words of theologians throughout the church's history; and I was humbled by the seriousness of God's Word, made richer by studying it in Greek and Hebrew.

Thankfully, overshadowing my personal insecurities, there grew a greater conviction of God's sovereignty and grace, the generosity and efficacy of Christ's work, and the power of the Spirit to transform and sustain a weak person like me.

Even as a soon-to-be QTC graduate, I feel that there is still so much more to learn of God and His Word, and myself. I don't have all the answers, very few of them in fact, but I do feel better equipped to ask good questions.

My time at QTC has given me a bunch of really helpful tools so that I can more effectively understand God's Word and wisely direct others (and myself!) towards Jesus. It's just what I needed, as I now look forward to working at my local Presbyterian church and at QTC.



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Over Three Decades Visiting Prisons

Inside Out Chaplaincy talks to Arthur McDonald to get an inside look at the work of a prison chaplain

by Danielle Stott

Would you willingly go to prison? Would you undergo security checks and enter the most uninviting place? Would you like to offer hope to society's most wayward individuals?

Many years ago Beaudesert local, Arthur McDonald, answered 'yes' to these questions. Arthur, a family man and a retired carpenter, was honoured recently at the Palen Creek Correctional Centre's 80th celebrations for his outstanding three decades work as a volunteer prison chaplain.

"I remember a time when prisoners would drive themselves into town to attend the local church service. After church they'd drive themselves back to prison," reminisces Arthur.

A lot may have changed since Arthur's first days as a chaplain but perhaps the human condition remains the same.

"Inmates are just as keen to hear about God now as back then," says Arthur.

"You'd be surprised at the number of times I've heard inmates thank God for coming to prison. They're too busy out there, up to no good. Inside they have time to reflect and connect to God."

The reason Arthur decided to become a prison chaplain is simple. "The Scriptures say it's something Christians ought to do" Matthew 25:36.

Even with such Biblical encouragement perhaps a lot of people would feel intimidated going into a prison.

"You know, I've never felt threatened—never. And I have found being a chaplain, you are quite well received in the prison. It's a supportive environment to work in."

As a prison chaplain, Arthur weekly visits inmates. He organises a chapel service and Bible study groups each week. He also leads discussions on current affairs with a focus on Biblical values and morals.

For Arthur, Prison Chaplaincy is centred in a love of God and people, as well as humility.

"Prison chaplains really have to love the Lord," he explains.

"I think you have to be prepared for the fact that everything you say won't be helpful to others. I cringe when I think of some of the things I've said, especially in those early days. I've made mistakes. I've learnt to say sorry.

"I never preach to the inmates. I like that quote 'preach the Gospel and if necessary use words' (Francis of Assisi). That's what prison chaplaincy is primarily about; it's about just being there for the guys. It's about acceptance.

"Don't get me wrong, I do use words. I tell the guys the Good News of the Gospel. I tell them that being a Christian will change the way they treat each other. And when an inmate is nearing release I tell him that I'm sending him out into the world as a missionary. I know some guys take that seriously."

The veteran prison chaplain knows personally how opening your heart to the pain and chaos of the world can be a costly road to travel.

"Sometimes you're a sitting duck; you're taken for a ride. Sometimes you don't know what to say. It can be confronting. You come face to face with all kinds of suffering."

"I've found the hardest thing is when inmates would come up to me absolutely beside themselves because their wife or mother is having problems on the outside. The guys are totally helpless. They get really miserable. So I tell them they can pray. I've always emphasised prayer."

With such an emphasis on prayer it makes sense that Arthur has never felt pressure to get results.

"My job is just to be faithful. It's God's job to transform people. And I have seen amazing results. Those guys often don't have much support. Finding God does bring personal transformation."

Now on the eve of his retirement, Arthur is aware that there is a tremendous need for more volunteer chaplains to go into prisons. And there's nothing more he'd like to do than encourage other Christians to give prison chaplaincy a go.

"For me being a prison chaplain has been the greatest blessing." He smiles and adds, "and you know it's the one place you have a captive audience."

Arthur is now 80 and has delayed his retirement until mid-January. "There's a guy inside who I've had good chats with. I told him I wouldn't retire until he gets out on parole. In a way we are getting parole at the same time," he jokes.

It seems fitting that Arthur would delay his retirement for the sake of an inmate. It seems that's just the spirit of a prison chaplain.



Joshua Cocks (Arthur's pastor at Beaudesert Baptist), Arthur McDonald and Jesse Caulfield at celebration service at Palen Creek Correctional Centre

Picking Yourself Up (East Timor)

by Rev Robert Benn

I felt terribly sorry for that family. They had worked well, and successfully. Their business was thriving. But their legal friend had let them down tragically. The business folded. They went through the courts—bankruptcy.

Scratching together what they could, they clawed their way back to rebuild. They did. And then came another major blow! I grieved again for them. Given time, up they stood again.

My admiration for them grew in leaps and bounds.

That's what happened to a nation during the past decades. Timor Leste.

When I arrived in February 2000 at the time that our own (presently) Governor General Sir Peter Cosgrove was in charge of International Forces for East Timor (INTERFET), not only Dili was on fire...but most of the country. A radical reaction from the pro-integration Militia!

Some one-third of Timor Leste's population had either died, been displaced or had become refugees in other countries, including Australia.

But now, Timor Leste has gained her independence.

This new nation sure needed to claw her way back to self-determination, self-preservation and increasing degrees of self-reliance.

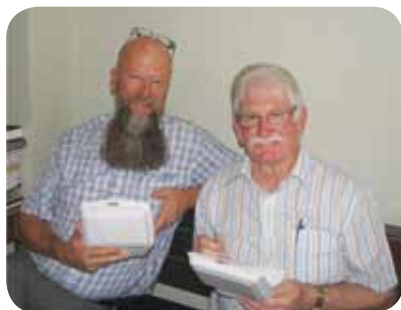
Timor Leste, due to the Portuguese legacy is predominantly Catholic.

But there are protestant churches as well—mainly of the 'reformed' or pentecostal kind, but also a growing number of the more independent kind.

The Presbyterian Church of Australia (PCA) has entered into a formal partnership with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of East Timor.

It is this partnership in the Gospel that took our minister in Darwin, Rev Rob Duncanson and myself back to Timor Leste recently.

This time, for what?



L-R: Rev Rob Duncanson and Rev Robert Benn

In the past we (or the growing team of helpers) had been there for relationship building, Bible teaching, giving a hand with rebuilding, visiting the congregations and other church institutions, etc.

But this time...just to sit and talk. To enquire about the strengths and weaknesses of our partnership, and ways in which we would address the weaknesses and make the strengths stronger.

'Just to sit and talk.' Well, yes. But with an eye on the questions of seeing

the Gospel at work, we can set aside that little word, 'just'!

This was a significant time. For over the years a bond has been established; a mutual trust; a special relationship; one that is pictured on the framed Partnership Agreement, "*I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now...*" Philippians 1:3f.

The nation is now in a good position. One in which there is growth in peace, stability and economic progress.

The church is always a challenge to us as we visit, for there we see a special commitment to evangelism, prayer and faith in an awesome God...partly learned through the horrific days of the wrecking of their country, displacement of her people, the loss of goods and in some cases family members. In other words, they have been through the 'refiner's fire' and the 'manifold trials' of which the apostle Peter speaks.

It's always a challenge to us, who live so comfortably.

Do they have issues that need to be addressed, and problems to solve? Of course! Which church doesn't? But the openness and willingness of our dear friends there to allow us into the ups and down of their personal and church lives gives us a very big 'heart' to continue to build this special Gospel relationship.

Have they picked themselves up again, after such a trying time? Yes, for sure. Clawed their way back? Yes. And in so doing, proved again the faithfulness of the LORD their God? YES.

And one more note. As they have done that, they have shown us (who are part of a growing team of helpers), that despite or because of affliction we can press on with confidence in our Eternal Sovereign God of all grace.

For that we thank them very sincerely.

Very soon, the new church in Dili will be officially opened. The event will be something like the 1934 opening of The Church of St Andrew in Canberra, our church in the Nation's Capital.



Dignitaries will gather, from church and state. The village folk, who are participating with the city

congregation in this great event, will be there. Partner churches will play their part. Our own Moderator General of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, Rt Rev David Cook will be the guest preacher.

Together we will sing, "To God be the glory, great things he has done". With special passion!

I thank Rev Kevin Murray and the Australian Presbyterian World Mission (APWM) team for the privilege of spending this week 'just to sit and talk'...and of course, to bathe the whole process in prayer for this fledgling church in Timor Leste.

And of course, if you wish to "*lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes*" Isaiah 54:2, we sure can use your help. Just contact the APWM office: Rev Kevin Murray, 81 Shaftesbury Road, Burwood NSW 2134, phone 02 8073 7490 or email national@apwm.org.au.

(As the then National Director of the Australian Presbyterian Church of Australia, Robert Benn was the first person from the PCA to visit Timor Leste immediately after the Militia activity. He has visited many times, and continues to work with the APWM team for Timor Leste).



Rev Robert Benn preaching in Indonesian translated into Tetun language



Church congregation on Sunday morning



Ministers, Elders and other leaders in Dili

'I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now...' Philippians 1:3f.

Partnership

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALIAN PRESBYTERIAN WORLD MISSION



2015 #1

81 Shaftesbury Road, Burwood NSW 2134

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The Australian Presbyterian World Mission exists to glorify God by facilitating the spread of the gospel to people overseas and Aborigines within Australia.

MOTOR YAT: The Doors Have Opened

As the civil war in South Sudan continues, Motor Yat remains in Ethiopia serving in refugee camps. He writes "People are coming to centres on Sunday for Bible studies, choirs and women groups are practicing.

We are planning to distribute some hymnbooks to the centres. We need your prayers so that this need can be fulfilled. People have left South Sudan because of the war in greater Upper Nile. They have left everything behind.

We are praying for the needs of refugees in the camp to be fulfilled in God's time. They request some Nuer Bibles for some elders and ministers but it is very hard to get the Nuer Bible. The ten Presbyterian centres in the camps have a need of, ten



MOTOR YAT PREACHING

blackboards [or white, green etc.] for adult education in the Churches. The aim is for adults to learn to write and read the Bible in their mother tongue.

This is the time for them to learn because they have enough time in the camp.

In Ethiopia, I have been connecting with the ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Gambella, sharing the gospel. More recently I have had meetings in the head office in Addis Ababa, and we discussed how I could partner with the Church in Ethiopia. The office is very keen to work with me and the wider Church in Australia, in the future, God willing.

God opened many doors for me to preach the gospel among Ethiopians in Addis and the rural areas. I have seen Islamic missions growing very fast in Ethiopia especially in rural areas because of the support they offer to needy Ethiopians."

Ministry Opportunity in Vanuatu Lecturer: Talua Ministry Training Centre

APWM is looking for a full-time lecturer for the Bachelor of Ministry program at the Talua Ministry Training Centre, Vanuatu. We need someone with a Master's degree in a theological discipline, preferably a research Master's degree. Cross-cultural

experience would be a great advantage.

Appointments to Talua are for 2 years and commencement would be from mid-2015 onwards.

Please contact Kevin Murray kevinmurray@apwm.org.au or 0421 366 720 to find out more.



TALUA BACHELOR OF MINISTRY CLASS

UPDATES

Mount Magnet: Surendra & May'an Wesley

We praise God that Surendra & May'an Wesley have been granted a visa to serve in Australia. They arrived in Australia in mid January and will commence service in Mount Magnet possibly in mid March. In the meantime they will be meeting with APWM and PIM representatives, various supporters and undergoing orientation to PIM ministry.



National Office

We bid farewell to our Office Administrator, Rob Falls, who has left APWM to take up a ministry internship with the Evangelical Union at Sydney University. We have created a new full-time position called 'Director's Assistant' and will soon be filling the role. In the meantime, if you want to contact the office by email please continue to use the address national@apwm.org.au

John & Kara Dekker In mid-December John & Kara's support level was at 75% and we are looking for pledges to meet the remaining 25%. If you would like to join their support team then please contact the APWM Office very soon. They will be commissioned for service at Talua in Vanuatu on Saturday 14th February



at the Frankston Presbyterian Church commencing at 3:00pm.

Joshua Ling (Macquarie Chapel, NSW CMS, Australia) Joshua serves with the Church Missionary Society as a Partnership Facilitator and was recently approved as an APWM missionary.

Joy Hill (Donvale, VIC, Pioneers, Hungary) will be returning to Hungary in early March 2015. She will serve as personal assistant to the Budapest Pioneers team leader as well as serving the wider team.



Stephen & Naomi L (Hurstville, NSW, SIL South Asia) A few years ago Stephen was refused re-entry to the country where he had been working on a translation for many years. Stephen and Naomi are now in Thailand where they will continue their translation work.

Joy Venning (Canterbury, VIC, APWM National Associate, South Asia) writes "November has been a dream! With classes finishing up and exams out of

the way, this month has had much more time for different opportunities. Probably the biggest (and most delightful) change I've noticed this month, has been in relationships with the women on campus. Despite some language barriers, cultural differences, and age differences, it's been so great to spend more time with the women that God has placed me among. It's been wonderful to form deeper friendships with some mothers who are my neighbours, and some of my students. There are at least 50 women on campus here, who I interact with daily, so there have been heaps of opportunities to spend time together:

- I spend most morning chai breaks checking in with my students
- Some of my neighbours pop by in the evenings for tea and a chat
- I've been able to spend some time with the girls in my Bible study outside of the group
- Some of the senior students meet me each week to talk about their practical ministry that week
- It's been great to spend more time visiting some of our faculty wives and their newborn babies
- We've made a few shopping trips to help some families prepare for the winter

I'm really thankful that these relationships have been flourishing, and I learn a lot from spending time



together. As friendships grow, the women are open to talking more deeply about life, and sharing their struggles and concerns. We often speak of God's faithfulness, and his deep love for us through Christ. It amazes me again and again how the simple truths of the gospel apply so clearly in so many different situations that I've never had to think about before. It's wonderful to pray for these women who are quickly becoming dear friends."

Alex Kowalenko (Carlingford, NSW ECM, Portugal) writes

"For the last 9 years I have been working with the Portuguese Bible Institute, training the next generation of evangelical leaders in the Portuguese church. The work has been challenging, but in the end rewarding and exciting, as we have seen many trained men and women go into Portugal and be involved in pastoral work, church planting, theological education, youth and children's ministry, and outreach ministries.

Over the last 9 years my capacity to work in Portugal has also increased, as I have become more fluent in the language, I am understanding more the Portuguese culture, and grown in conviction that this ministry is effective as it multiplies workers and leaders in Portugal, with the aim to strengthen the Portuguese evangelical church and also to

reaching out to the wider Portuguese community with the good news of Jesus Christ."

Laszlo and Eva Mihalyi (Donvale VIC, Pioneers Australia, Romania) write about a recent camp for teenagers

"At the end of this camp we gave each camper a newly translated, just released Bible, thanks to the funds received for this purpose from PWMU (Victoria). Such a great blessing, indeed. Most kids did not own a Bible or the one they had at home is an old translation and difficult to understand today. Do pray that they will start reading and searching for the truth.

We are finding that working with children is getting harder and harder every year. More and more children are coming from broken families with parents divorced or working abroad, from homes where neglect, alcohol and abuse is their daily experience. We find with most of them that it is virtually impossible to teach them and their attention span is so very short and they are not interested in anything except modern technology like mobiles with internet access. It is difficult to even have a conversation with some of them... This seems to be a global problem."



“AFTER THIS I LOOKED AND THERE BEFORE ME WAS A GREAT MULTITUDE THAT NO ONE COULD COUNT, FROM EVERY NATION, TRIBE, PEOPLE AND LANGUAGE, STANDING BEFORE THE THRONE AND IN FRONT OF THE LAMB. (REVELATION 7:9)”

FOCUS ON JAPAN



GRACE CITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN JAPAN ASSEMBLY

Kevin Murray was recently in Japan to attend the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Japan, visit the Evans family, hold talks with Church leaders and talk to the leaders of the Osaka Presbyterian Church where Nathan and Tomoko Stewart will be serving.

John and Rosemary Evans and family are doing well in Japan. Due to the arrival of some new team members they had to move house earlier this year and are now living in a strategic location. John

continues his study of Japanese and in late 2015 they will return to Australia for home assignment. When they do return to Japan, they and the Chiba City church planting team will be moving towards establishing a congregation. This year the family has battled some common bugs and colds that come with a young family. It's encouraging to see the growing number of Australians who are being led to serve in Japan.

approximately 70 people who had a genuine heart for reaching people with the gospel. Two years later that congregation has moved to a larger building to accommodate the growing congregation. This congregation is what we might classify as 'International' in nature as it has a considerable number of non-Japanese in attendance.

However, many congregations are like the Osaka Presbyterian Church with few members, many of whom are women. For that reason, it is hoped that in mid 2015 Nathan and Tomoko Stewart will head to Japan to assist the Osaka congregation in outreach. In discussion with the leaders of the denomination it is clear that our partnership is valued and it is a great encouragement to our brothers and sisters.

PRAYER AND FINANCE Response Form

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81 Shaftesbury Rd, Burwood NSW 2134

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Please also email finance@apwm.org.au telling us that you have made a deposit and provide the name of the missionary that you are supporting.

Enquiries

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www.apwm.org.au/supporting/finance

Grace City

While some of the churches in Japan are struggling, others are experiencing very encouraging numerical growth. Two years ago I visited the Grace City congregation and was excited to see a congregation of

Bangladesh: A letter to all Presbyteries and Congregations

At its meeting held on 24th October 2014 the APWM National Committee withdrew the responsibility for the management of the Bangladesh field from the APWM NSW Committee according to the authority set out in the GAA Constitution Procedure and Practice (The National Code). Further the APWM National Committee decided to conclude the partner relationship with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Bangladesh as of 30th November 2014.

The result of those decisions means not only that the Presbyterian Church of Australia has no Partner Church presence in Bangladesh, but also that it is currently improper for anyone to seek to represent the Presbyterian Church of Australia or APWM in Bangladesh unless explicitly authorised to do so by the APWM National Committee.

The APWM National Committee also makes it clear that "monies should not be raised for or sent to the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Bangladesh, its heirs or successors in the name of the Presbyterian Church of Australia." We therefore ask all congregations of the Presbyterian Church of Australia not to raise or send money for this work that is not supported by the Presbyterian Church of Australia. We also ask that individual members of the Presbyterian Church of Australia be aware in their giving to God's work through missions, that this work is not supported by the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

In Christ Jesus, Alex Shaw, Convener APWM National Committee



Meal for Mission

Each year we encourage congregations to hold an annual 'Meal for Mission' as a way of raising awareness about overseas cross-cultural mission and as a means of providing financial support for APWM's overseas projects. We encourage you to choose a country from the list that can be found at www.apwm.org.au/partner-churches/ There you can download information sheets about each of our Partner Churches. Please encourage those in the congregation to give the cost of one meal toward the work of overseas mission



Including APWM in your Will

If you would like to include APWM in your will, then you may like to use these words as a guide:

"I give to the Presbyterian Church Property Trust for the National Committee of the Australian Presbyterian World Mission [here insert a description of the bequest together with the amount of money or description of property or other gift] free of testamentary charges and duties for [here insert 'its general purpose' or the specific purpose you desire] and I declare that the receipt of the Secretary of the Trust shall be sufficient to discharge to my Executors."

Please provide this wording to your Solicitor when seeking advice and assistance in drawing up your will.

What's It Like to Live in Japan?

Asher Evans is the 16 year-old son of John & Rose Evans where the family is part of a church planting team located in Chiba, outside of Tokyo.

Where is home?

Aaaah... that's difficult because I have some friends here but I also have friends and family in Australia. While I would probably consider Australia to be home, it's really where the family is.

What do you enjoy about living in Japan?

There are a lot of different experiences. You can even get things that you wouldn't be able to get at home in Australia. Living overseas broadens your mind. I like to try new things so it is always interesting getting out there and seeing a new event or trying new food.

What's something that's difficult about living in Japan?

The two main difficulties are language and culture because they are so different. At times it can be hard to know what to do so that you can fit in. Although it isn't specific to being in Japan, one difficulty is the

uncertainties that come with being a missionary. For example we recently had to make a very sudden trip to Australia and it was hard going back and attempting to keep up with school.



How is your life in Japan different compared to what it would be like if you were living in Australia?

In Australia I was homeschooled and now I go to the mission school which has a lot of different nationalities. Here I am able to experience various festivals which often only happen in Japan. This all broadens my perspective.

What encourages you about the Church in Japan?

It's really encouraging to see young people. I think that the average age of someone attending church in Japan is 60 years. It's good to see the young people that do attend church. These are the future leaders of the church.

What is Your Purpose in Life?

Granville Pillar lectures at a university in Hungary and writes "In my Oral Communication Skills class, within the context of the topic: What is Your Purpose in Life? I posed the question: 'What are the two most important days in your life?' To my surprise, one bright student gave the answer I was looking for: 'The day you are born, and the day you find out why you were born.' This was the catalyst for some deep and interesting discussions on their priorities, problems and purpose in life. As with any question I ask of them, my students always ask me to give my response. I was able to share openly my testimony, and tell them when (August 14, 1977), where (in a hospital bed in Johannesburg), and what God showed me what my purpose in life was (to love God, and to love others, which I said summed up the basic teaching of Jesus). Following on from this, I said that my mission in life, which is the practical application of my



GRANVILLE & IBOLYA PILLAR

purpose, was to make a difference in the lives of my students, for the good, through my teaching, and my love for them. This was one of the few opportunities I have had this semester to speak openly to my students about my main motivation for what I do, and about the One who is behind it all. We know that Jesus has sent us here to plant the seeds of the gospel in the minds of our students, and it is our prayer that in His sovereign will and providence, these seeds might be watered, grow and, through the work of the Holy Spirit, will bear fruit for the kingdom.

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A Strategic Ministry in Sub-Saharan Africa

by Ian McIver

As many readers will know, sub-Saharan Africa is one of the front lines for the advance of Islam around the world. Christian missionary work has long recognised this, and such missions as Serving in Mission and Sudan United Mission were established in the latter part of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century for the express purpose of spreading the Gospel and the love of God in sub-Saharan and central Africa, partly as a counter to Islamic influence.

Westminster Theological College in Uganda

In the last few years a new ministry has come into being that could have a far-reaching strategic impact for the training of future Christian leaders in Africa. The Westminster Theological College and Seminary was established about fifteen years ago by the Presbyterian Church in Uganda and is already training future pastors and leaders from a number of African countries.

Facilities and Students

About five years ago the move was made to new facilities on the shores of Lake Victoria in the greater Kampala area. The campus facilities, located on a ten-acre site, include a lecture room building, library and administration blocks, five dormitories that will sleep a total of about 125 students, and a large dining room. A new library is presently in the process of being built.



L-R: Library and Lecture building, and Administration building



New Library under construction

The student body comes from countries as diverse as South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Congo-Zaire, Cameroon, Malawi and Zimbabwe. Most of the students are African but at least one is a white Zimbabwean from Bulawayo who comes up to Uganda three times a year for about a month. He hopes to complete his degree by 2018!



Covenant Theology Class: students from five nations (Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda)



L-R: Michael (Ethiopia), Milton (Uganda Presbyterian minister), Come [Comay] (Rwanda), Cyrille (Burundi)

Academic Programs and Lecturing Staff

There is ready access to Entebbe International Airport about 20km away, and a steady stream of American, Canadian and other overseas visitors supplement the lecturing program of both the College and the Seminary.

These visiting lecturers, many of whom return on an annual or biennial basis at their own expense, help to provide lecturing for a range of degrees in Theology and Christian Education, including the Master of Arts in Christian Education and the Master of Divinity degrees. English is the medium of instruction for all courses and degrees.

Visiting lecturers lead busy lives and are therefore generally only able to give a week or two of their time each year. As a result the seminary program is based on intensive courses of 24 lectures in a week, rather than

the traditional pattern of lectures spread over a semester. It's not ideal, but given the eagerness to learn on the part of the students, it works well.

Ian and Norma McIver from the Caloundra congregation have used their long service leave to become part of the Seminary ministry for the second semester of 2014. Ian has taught four courses, each course being one week (24 lectures) in length, on Genesis, Covenant Theology, Introduction to Islam and a new subject in the seminary curriculum called 'Christian Ministry and African Realities'.

Lord willing and health permitting, visits by the McIvers to help with the lecturing at the Seminary will become an annual event during the second semester of each year.



Rev Emma Kiwanuka, Principal of the Westminster Theological College and Seminary

Student Life and Challenges

Altogether there are about 120 students in the College and Seminary and they come from a number of different nations and denominational affiliations in sub-Saharan Africa.

All are being immersed in a clear commitment to the reformed faith and are developing the skills needed to bring the Gospel and love of Jesus Christ to the rising generations in Africa.

Most or all of the students are sponsored for their fees and living expenses and all face considerable difficulties in their studies.

English is the second or third language for most of the students,

and for those who come from Congo-Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi, French is their second language making English definitely their third!



Rev Milton Lipa, Entebbe Presbyterian Church, Uganda and Rev John Stambolie, City Presbyterian Church, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe—both students.

Furthermore the College occasionally lacks water, electricity and internet access when these are cut off. Hot water for showers is a luxury that the College cannot afford. In spite of all these difficulties students are able to produce a good quality of work. They are without doubt motivated by the opportunities that they have been given that they otherwise would not have had.



Striking gold-bore finds water at 22L per minute.

Projects for Readers to Support

For those *New Directions* readers and Presbyterian Church of Queensland (PCQ) congregations that may be interested, a number of projects would be well deserving of support:

Harvesting the Sun:

Solar panning on each of the dormitory roofs could be installed to provide hot water for showers. A

congregation could make a project out of one of the dormitories and do so manageably at modest cost to individual members. At the same time an invaluable contribution would be made to the life of the College.

Helping to Fund the New Library:

Altogether some \$90,000 USD is needed to cover the cost of the building. At the moment the foundations and walls are in place but about \$60,000 more will be needed to complete the building. Any contributions towards the goal of a new Library would be very welcome.

Providing Library Books:

Retired ministers looking for a home for their books are invited to contact Ian McIver who can arrange for them to be shipped to Uganda as contributions towards the growth and improvement of the College Library.

Sponsoring Students:

Readers can be put in touch with the College to find worthy recipients for sponsorships that will provide an investment in the next generation of church leaders for Africa.

Further Contact:

The Westminster College and Seminary in Uganda has a strategic role to play in the training of future leaders for reformed and Presbyterian churches in Africa. It is commended to the prayers and support of members and congregations in the PCQ.

Further information can be obtained by contacting:

Ian McIver
3 Worthington Lane
Golden Beach Qld 4551
E: ianmciver@yahoo.co.uk

**‘Therefore
go and make
disciples of all
nations.’
Matthew 28:19a**

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Building Homes, Changing Lives

by Leigh Renaud



Marlo (3rd from right) and Olive (4th from right) in Marabut, Samar with KSCSI team

On 8 November 2013 Super Typhoon Yolanda made landfall in the Philippines and devastated the country. In the Philippines alone it caused over US\$2 billion worth of damage, took over 6,000 lives and injured over 28,000 more.

When Mitchelton Presbyterian Church (MPC) heard about this it was decided that their annual Christmas appeal would raise money to help people rebuild their lives. Several members of Village Church, a church within the MPC network, already partner with a school in Manila called King Solomon Christian School International (KSCSI (www.kscl.org.au)) and as such MPC partnered with KSCSI.

Ultimately the 2013 Christmas appeal, called 'Building Homes, Changing Lives', raised about A\$30,000. This has resulted in 20 housing projects, six livelihood projects and two churches being rebuilt. The people helped were in the Samar and Leyte provinces as well as Palawan (see map).



In November 2014, I, a member of Village Church, travelled to the Philippines to complete the final phase of the project with members of KSCSI.

During this phase I met with about 150 people, and estimate that there were probably over 200 people who directly benefited from the support. Each of them had incredible stories but if I was to summarise my trip I would say that the work we did was life changing.

This is the first time I have seen the results of an MPC Christmas appeal and whilst I was expecting it to have helped people, I did not fathom how far our donations could go, or how many people we would touch.

The money given has not only helped provide accommodation and livelihood for some of the poorest people in the world but has also given the ministry team at KSCSI an opportunity to share the Gospel with people who may not have had another opportunity to hear it.

I vividly remember watching as a family cried and then gave themselves to God. This was quite an experience to see people being deeply moved by the word of God and yet at the same time not know what was said to move them.

Reflecting on the time I spent in the Philippines I think that it has helped show me a real practical way that we are able to marry loving God and loving people.

The team at KSCSI has shown their love for their fellow man, helping them when no one else would. At the same time they showed who God is (through word and deed). They did this not because they feel obligated to but because they want to.

Finally if anyone gave money to the appeal and is reading this I would like to extend thanks from all the recipients. Everyone I met with was incredibly thankful for what we did for them. We have changed their lives; given them an opportunity to meet God as well as understand what Jesus has done for them.

Beyond fear in becoming friends with Muslims

by Sharyn Tidswell

Friendship not fear should be the response of Australian Christians to Muslims, said international speaker and missiologist, Rev Dr John Azumah.



Speaking at the annual Church Missionary Society (CMS) Summer School mission conference for Queensland and Northern New South Wales (NSW), Dr Azumah encouraged Christians to remove the barriers to engaging Muslims for the sake of the most gospel-poor people group in the world.

"We are not salesmen, advocates or judges. Instead we are called and sent to be witnesses for the Gospel. Our mandate is Acts 1:8," said Dr Azumah, once a Muslim who became a Christian. He is an ordained minister with the Presbyterian Church of Ghana and lectures at Columbia Theological Seminary at Atlanta, Georgia.

"As witnesses we cannot afford to be fearful, or allow prejudices or hatred, that the radical Islamic groups spread, to affect or influence our witness in any way."

With more than 62 percent of Muslims living in the Asia Pacific region, and nearly half a million in Australia, he said, there is a huge opportunity to reach out in friendship and compassion rather than fear and aggression.

"It's like a courtship. Your first approach is not 'Look at how awful

your family and home is'—you don't go attacking Islam, the Qur'an or Mohammed—but you build the relationship," said Dr Azumah.

"However, Christian witness is hampered by feelings of inadequacy, division and defensiveness," he said. "Christians need to be released from seeing witness to Muslims as a specialised task requiring 'magic bullet' training, and also from media-influenced prejudice towards Muslims.

"Christians are sharply divided on witness to Muslims: the soft versus the tough, grace versus truth approaches. But when we attack Islam it makes us look soft.

"I see myself as belonging to two families, two households: my spiritual Christian family and my Muslim family. I see prejudice on both sides but I see greater prejudice from Christians towards Muslims than Muslims towards Christians," said Dr Azumah. "Muslims hold Christians in high regard."

Dr Azumah said that an effective approach for engaging Muslims was to challenge them to read the Bible for themselves, rather than just defending God's word to them.

"Many Muslims know the power of the Bible more than Christians do. Why does Saudi Arabia spend so much money to stop the Bible getting into people's hands? When Christians try to defend the Bible, it's like trying to protect a lion from a pack of dogs. Open the gate! Release the Bible!"

As well as encouraging Muslims to read the Bible for themselves, Dr Azumah said they need to read it in our lifestyles.

"When a Muslim meets you for just five minutes, what gospel are you going to leave with them? You might think you have nothing to share with Muslims, but you do have a story to tell, just like the blind man in John 9. People couldn't argue with his story.

"I pray that we devote a passion and a heart to reach out to Muslims, not as Muslims but as human beings

created in the image of God. We need not to have elaborate training. All we need to do is reach out in friendship, in relationships, in love, and in compassion," Dr Azumah said.

"Some are very open and very eager to hear about the Christian message. I hope that when they are looking for us, we will be there to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to them."

Rev Dr John Azumah is speaking in January at CMS conferences throughout Australia. In the 1990s a bursary from CMS enabled John to complete a doctorate in Islamic studies in the United Kingdom. He later served as a CMS missionary to India in the early 2000s. He has written books, "Light on Islam", "What non-Muslims need to know about Islam" and "Let your light shine!"—Christian witness in a Muslim context available through CMS Queensland with Northern NSW.

CMS (the Church Missionary Society of Australia) is a fellowship of Christian people and churches committed to global mission, working with churches to set apart long-term workers who cross cultures to share the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For further information about engaging with Muslims, contact CMS Queensland with Northern NSW, email qld@cms.org.au, phone 07 3112 6530 or visit cms.org.au. Working towards a World that Knows Jesus.



Equipping Australian Christians to engage with Muslims at CMS Summer School



Pilot house in La Paz, Leyte



Night church in Coron, Palawan

'The money given has not only helped provide accommodation and livelihood for some of the poorest people in the world but has also given the ministry team at KSCSI an opportunity to share the Gospel with people who may not have had another opportunity to hear it.'

(continued from page 8)

From Geneva, he travelled 500 miles back across France to Dieppe, boarded a ship, and sailed to northern England or, more probably Scotland. Arriving in Edinburgh, he was reunited with his fiancée after a three year absence.

In Edinburgh, Knox established contact with Protestants in an effort to rally their resolve. At the time, Mary of Guise, the pro-Catholic Queen Regent, governed the nation. Protestantism was still regarded as heresy, a crime punishable by burning at the stake, though its private practice was somewhat tolerated. Knox was encouraged that small groups of reformation-minded believers known as ‘privy kirks’, or private churches – were meeting behind closed doors for Scripture reading and prayer. This development clearly impressed Knox, who wrote:

‘The fervency here doth far exceed all others that I have seen.’

For the next few months, Knox moved about the country giving instruction in the Scriptures to these small gatherings and administering the Lord’s supper.

The suppression of biblical truth had been heightened through a strict ban that had been issued against owning or reading Tyndale’s English translation of the New Testament. Knox, nevertheless, discovered that God’s word was not bound and that biblical teaching had spread.

He noted that some twenty years earlier, notwithstanding this their tyranny, the knowledge of God did wondrously increase within this Realm, partly by reading, partly by brotherly conference, which in those dangerous days was used to the comfort of many.

Amid this grass roots movement, Knox observed that many Protestants continued to attend Catholic worship and participate in the Mass. He believed such compromise was blatantly idolatrous and inexcusable. In a private debate in Edinburgh, he argued convincingly with reform-minded believers that taking the Mass must be forbidden. This bold conviction gained momentum and launched Knox on a preaching tour of the counties north of Edinburgh, where he stayed at Dun Castle, halfway between Montrose and Brechin, during the months of October and November 1555. Wherever he went, Knox discovered a growing interest in and an intense appetite for biblical truth. Encouraged, he travelled further south into the Lothians and preached there too.

S M Houghton noted that this constant movement marked Knox, identifying him as an energetic figure, ever restless to advance the Gospel:

John Knox was primarily a man of action... In the days of his strength, he loved to itinerate ceaselessly... [H]e was always preaching in season and out of season.

Such preaching kept Knox involved in controversy. His challenging the present religious order caused the

Queen Regent to summon him to Edinburgh to answer charges of heresy. Few believed this exiled itinerant would actually appear. But when he announced that he would, many Protestants responded with a pledge to march to Edinburgh to stand with their leader. When this was made known the authorities gave way. Knox marched on regardless and entered Edinburgh, preaching in various houses the cornerstone truth of the Reformation – justification by faith alone. Now, as he wrote, ‘The trumpet blew the old sound.’

An appeal from Geneva (1556)

Quite unexpectedly, letters were now delivered to Knox from the English speaking congregation in Geneva, imploring him to return and serve as their pastor.

Since his presence in Scotland was becoming increasingly hazardous, he decided to return to Europe, but this time accompanied by his wife and mother-in-law. He sent Marjory and Mrs Bowes ahead by ship to Dieppe, where they would wait for his arrival.

After further preaching in Scotland, Knox sailed for the Continent, arriving in Dieppe in July 1556. Another journey of 800 miles lay between him and his pastoral duties among the English exiles in Geneva.

The making of a reformer is never easy. Throughout this tumultuous season of Knox’s life, his character and convictions were being forged upon the hard anvil of adversity and hammered into a steely resolve. The threat of ‘Bloody Mary’ in England, his conflict in Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany, and his heresy trial in Scotland were providentially used by God to strengthen him for later leadership.

Each new difficulty was shaping him into an intensely focused individual who would lead his countrymen into the knowledge of God’s truth. Through these various providences God was preparing John Knox for his life’s work in which he ‘bestrode a certain kingdom like a colossus’.

The church of God is always in need of such leaders. If the kingdom of God is to advance, it will require bold men like John Knox to step forward and blow their Master’s trumpet. To be sure, the preparation of such men always comes at a high price.

As in the case of Knox, God in his sovereignty will use similar adversity and opposition as a means of refining and preparing the lives of servants of his Word. The divine flames remove the impurities from men’s lives in order that they may be used in kingdom work.

The present day cries out for such faithful servants, cut out of the same cloth as Knox, to restore the authority of God’s word in our churches. Such men will need the boldness of a Knox. They will also need, as Knox believed he had witnessed, God giving his Spirit in great abundance. May the enthroned Christ grant that again!

This article first appeared in the *Banner of Truth* magazine 2014. Used by permission of Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh.

Exodus: Gods and Kings

by Simon Stebbins

Hollywood has struck again. This time director Ridley Scott has taken aim at the Biblical book of Exodus in his attempt to spruce up the supposedly tired, old story of the exodus and adapt it to film. Of course, this is nothing new. Hollywood has long been known to rewrite history in its attempts to make it more entertaining.

How, as Christians, should we assess a film like this? Some would say that we should leave criticism aside, remember that this is a film made by a secular organisation. After all, at least it might be getting audiences to dust off their Bibles and read it for themselves. While no doubt, there is a range of opinions this article is my attempt at critiquing this ‘Biblical’ film.

I’ll start with some positive remarks. I’m glad a film has been made about Exodus. Actually, I enjoyed the movie. This is the first time a movie has been made detailing these specific events with modern special effects.

One benefit of Biblical movies is that they bring to life what are otherwise simply words on a page that need to be imagined, by filling in cultural details that are unfamiliar to modern readers.

Although the movie deviated from the Biblical account (I’ll get to that), it did stick to the backbone of the original story (which is more than I can say for the recent Noah movie).

The Bible is consistently on the best-seller list, and for good reason. Aside from making profound remarks about the nature of our existence and about our relationships, it also contains some great stories. The ten plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, the interactions between Moses, Pharaoh and God—all these elements make for a great story-telling. It is no wonder moviemakers have wanted to cash in on them.

It’s important that we understand where the film’s creators are coming from when assessing one of their creations.

In an interview with Esquire, Ridley Scott, the director of Exodus: Gods and Kings, explained his religious views, “I do despair. That’s a heavy word, but picking up a newspaper every day, how can you not despair at what’s happening in the world, and how we’re represented as human beings? The disappointments and corruption are dismaying at every level. And **the biggest source of evil is of course religion...** Everyone is tearing each other apart in the name of their personal god. And the irony is, by definition, they’re probably worshipping the same god.” (Of course, despite calling religion evil, he has no qualms about making a profit from this religious text.)

But, elsewhere in the interview, he had this to say, “I’m really intrigued by those eternal questions of creation, belief and faith. I don’t care who you are, it’s what we all think about. It’s in the back of all our minds.”

I think it’s fair to say that Scott thinks about the same big questions that we all think about, so in that sense he is ‘religious’, but he views all religions as being basically the same and with grave suspicion.

The film has been widely criticised

by a range of reviewers for having a confused vision. Considering his contrary views, as expressed above, this is hardly surprising. On the one hand, it seeks to appeal to religious viewers, but it also contains material which could offend them while appealing to secular, anti-religious audience members.

Overall, the movie follows the rough outline of the first 15 chapters of the book of Exodus, but there are many details which differ. Some differences are not so significant; for example, Moses waving around an Egyptian sword instead of a staff, or the ordering of the plagues.

Other differences are more significant; for example there is a poignant scene where Moses leaves his wife and sons behind to return to Egypt, but in Exodus 4:20 we are explicitly told that he took his family back with him to Egypt. Clearly, Scott thought that it would be more entertaining to tug at the heart strings of viewers by showing Moses leaving them behind.

Some differences seem unnecessary; in the movie, a white horse with blood red writing appears with a message to Pharaoh. I get that it was an attempt to produce a powerful visual effect, but wouldn’t it have been more powerful to see Moses—a Hebrew representing a race of slaves—say to, perhaps the most powerful ruler in the world at the time, “Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go?’”. Of course, this doesn’t work so well when Moses is portrayed as almost equal to Pharaoh.

The most significant difference between the movie and the Biblical account, is the way both Moses’ and God’s characters are portrayed.

In the book, Moses is described as a somewhat timid person. At the beginning of Exodus 4, Moses bargains with God, because he does not want to be the one to speak to Pharaoh. There is clearly a power difference between Moses and Pharaoh.

Despite having grown up in Pharaoh’s household, there’s no reason to believe Moses was on an equal footing with Pharaoh himself. The most that can be said is that he was able to have an audience with Pharaoh—a privilege the Israelite slaves would not have had. The fact that he was able to have an audience shows the providence of God, because God provided a way for a leader, He raised up to speak to Pharaoh, but in the movie Moses presumes the right to be equal with Pharaoh.

Moses spends most of the time in the movie as God’s (sometimes vehemently) unwilling servant. Even in the end, when he does have a more settled faith, he sees his relationship with God like a partnership rather than servanthood. This is a far cry from the description of Moses in Numbers 12:3, “*Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth.*”

The worst aspect of the movie is its portrayal of God as an 11-year-old boy. (However, I have read secular reviews stating that this was the best thing about the movie!). Although the credits state that his character has the

curiously obscure name of Malak, he represents God in much the same way that ‘the angel of God’ does. That is, this character can be interpreted as God’s messenger or God himself.

To be fair, as Scott has said, “Sacred texts give no specific depiction of God, so for centuries artists and filmmakers have had to choose their own visual depiction.” However, as a boy, he makes God look immature. I’m not saying a portrayal of God has to be thunder and lightning with a booming voice, but the themes of Exodus are weighty, in particular the tenth plague—the death of the firstborn.

Visualising God as a child does not cause the audience to be reverently fearful of him, and thoughtfully, respectfully consider his judgement. Instead, God appears as someone who spitefully takes human life because he is perhaps not adult enough to empathise and understand the true pain and horror of death.

To summarise, Exodus: Gods and Kings is an entertaining movie that brings the Biblical story to life.

Unfortunately, only a bare skeleton of the original story remains in the movie. The characters of God and Moses are significantly distorted, leaving viewers perplexed, because the movie attempts to appeal to both religious and secular viewers; just as Ridley Scott’s own interview comments are both anti- and pro-religion. In the process, the resulting movie leaves neither camp satisfied.

Although the movie might prompt some unchurched viewers to read the original story, it will unfortunately give others confusing misinformation; potentially exacerbating the Biblical ignorance of the general populace.

The main theme of the first 15 chapters of the book of Exodus is that God is patient, and does not forget His loyal love to His people. Despite languishing in Egypt, He kept His promise and delivered His people after 430 years. Yes, there were lessons for Moses to learn too, but mostly it is about God’s faithful love and awesome power. Nowhere is this more relevant to Christians than the description of the Passover; as a substitute for the life of each firstborn son, the blood of a lamb was sprinkled on the doorway so the Lord would pass over that house. The blood of a lamb, the firstborn son, substitutionary atonement—remind you of anything? (Psssst, it’s in the gospels.)

Although the movie is entertaining, and has the production quality one would expect from a modern Hollywood film, my advice is that the original account is more edifying for anyone wanting to know what God is really like.

‘The main theme of the first 15 chapters of the book of Exodus is that God is patient, and does not forget His loyal love to His people.’

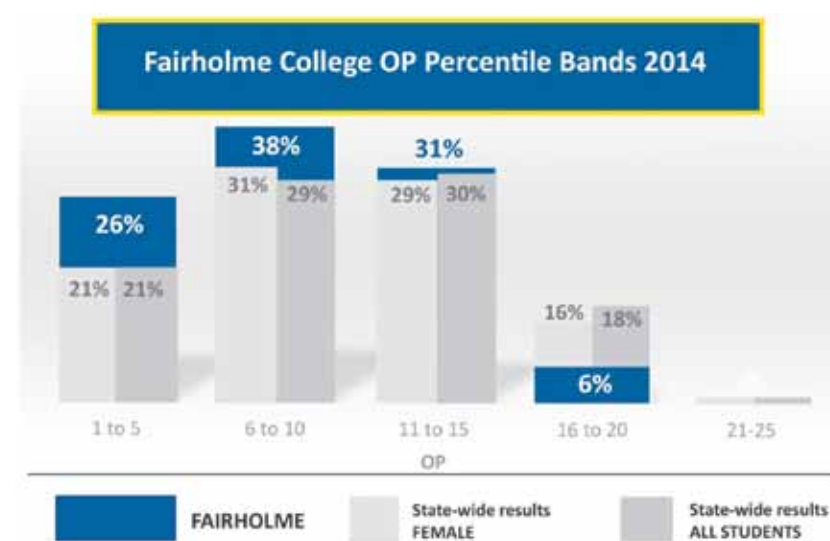
‘If the kingdom of God is to advance, it will require bold men like John Knox to step forward and blow their Master’s trumpet.’

Excellent 2014 OP/QCS Results and Tertiary Outcomes for Fairholme College Students

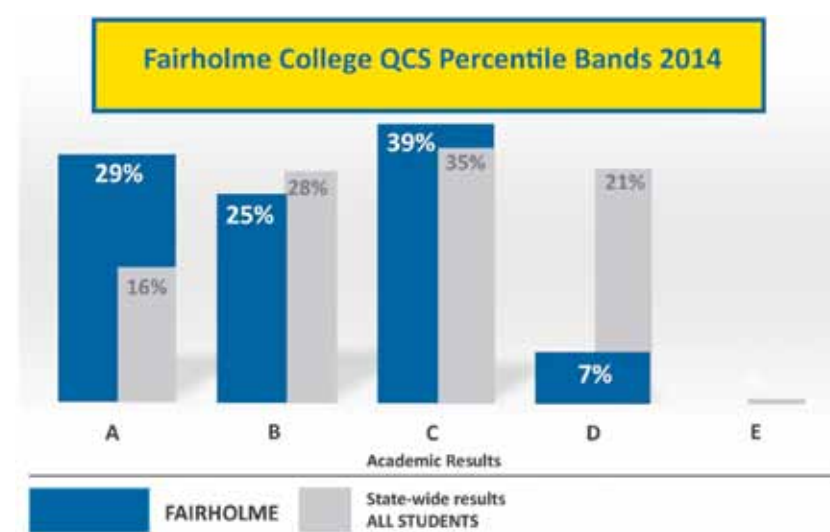
We are very pleased to present a synopsis of the Overall Position (OP) data for the Seniors of 2014. The achievements of these students are strong, with academic improvement most evident in the 1–3 band.

The results below are representative of commitment and hard work both individually and as a whole cohort as well as reflecting the strong educational and pastoral support that has been provided by a professional and dedicated teaching staff. We recognise particularly the work of Dr Carole Hill and her Queensland Core Skills (QCS) teacher team for their work in preparing the girls for the QCS tests.

- 26% of our girls achieved an Overall Position between 1–5
- 36% of our girls also completed VET Studies (Vocational & Educational Training)
- 94% of our girls achieved an Overall Position between 1–15



The OP score is used solely for tertiary education admission. It reflects each student's position in a Queensland-wide ranking order of overall achievement in Queensland Studies Authority—approved subjects. Overall positions range from an OP1 (the highest) through to an OP25.



The QCS test is a common state-wide test designed for Year 12 students which contributes information for the calculation of OPs and Field Positions and is used to rank students for tertiary entrance.

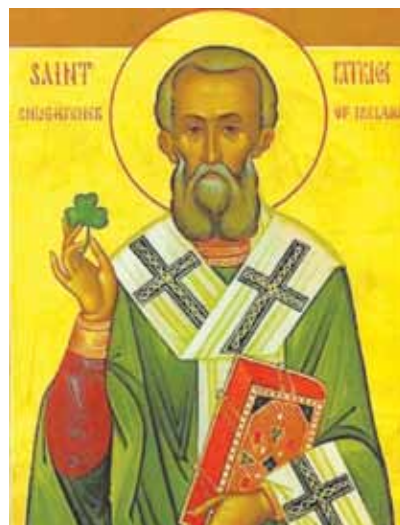
It is important to note that these figures do not capture other important qualities about each one of our school-leavers. They do not reflect their personal characteristics that will guide and inform the quality of their life. Our efforts throughout each girl's schooling have been focused upon developing appropriate pathways for the future within a tertiary educational setting, or the workplace and ultimately as contributing members of the communities to which they belong. We do have confidence in each girl's ability to make a positive difference in her chosen field.

On this occasion we also wish to acknowledge the achievements of those who have attained academic excellence. It is of interest to note that of the 26,121 students who were OP eligible in 2014 (14,668 female; 11,453 male) a total of 708 students were awarded OP 1 (366 female; 342 male). Of particular note, Fairholme College received six of the OP1s awarded to the female students in the state.

Thank you and congratulations to our Year 12 cohort and to all who have supported their learning journey thus far. We have great faith in their future.

St Patrick: Reclaiming The Great Missionary

by Mike Pettengill



Today most people know St Patrick for green beer, banishing snakes from Ireland, using shamrocks to teach the Trinity, or his walking stick growing into a living tree. Indeed, none of these legends has anything to do with the real Patrick.

However, the factual accounts of Patrick, missionary to Ireland, are even more compelling than the folklore. Telling the true story of Patrick provides an inspiring lesson in God's grace and mercy.

While other 1500 year old characters in history are difficult to research because too few writings have survived time, Patrick is hard to study because so much has been written about him. The bulk of the writings on Patrick are lore, fiction, and embellishment. In uncovering the real Patrick we must sift through ten fictional accounts of his life to find one factual work.

From Slave to Evangelist

As a teenager Patrick was kidnapped, taken from his home in southern Britain, and sold into slavery on the island of Ireland. During his six years as a slave he converted to Christianity and earned a reputation as a fervent evangelist. In the dark of the night Patrick escaped his bonds and fled Ireland.

Following a long journey home he entered theological training and full-time service to the Lord. God spoke to Patrick in his dreams and told him that he would return to Ireland and serve as a missionary to the people

who had kept him in servitude.

In 432 AD, 25 years after fleeing Ireland, Patrick returned to the place of his bondage. He did not return with malice in his heart, but as a missionary eager to convert the Irish.

Patrick served in regions of Ireland where outsiders had never traveled. While roaming through Ireland he preached to pagans and also instructed Christian believers. Patrick trained Irish helpers and ordained native clergy. He was bringing a new way of life to a violent, war-oriented pagan culture. His work was both groundbreaking and Christ-honoring.

"Daily I expect to be murdered or betrayed or reduced to slavery if the occasion arises," Patrick wrote while serving in Ireland. "But I fear nothing, because of the promises of heaven."

Many brutal kings and warlords felt threatened by Patrick's work. In order to obtain the favor of local leaders and to gain safe passage, Patrick paid penance, or bribes, to authorities. He used the rulers to gain access to their lands just as they used Patrick to gain wealth and favor with Christians. Of the bribes he paid, Patrick proclaimed, "I do not regret this nor do I regard it as enough. I am paying out still and I shall pay out more."

Missionary Ahead of His Time

In fifth-century Ireland women were a commodity. Selling a daughter or arranging a politically strategic marriage was common and advantageous to a family. Patrick upset the social order by teaching women they had a choice in Christ.

As God converted these women to Christianity, some became full-time servants of Christ in the face of strong family opposition. Patrick told women they could be 'virgins for Christ' by remaining chaste. This newfound control was appealing to many women, but it angered many men who believed Patrick was taking away their prized possessions.

At the time many scholars regarded Ireland as the end of the earth, or at least the edge of the inhabitable portion of earth. The collapsing Roman Empire supported many

beliefs that civilized society was drawing to a close. Politicians and philosophers viewed Ireland as barbaric and untamable.

Many Christians did not believe the Irish were worthy of being saved.

At that point in history, Patrick truly served as a pioneering missionary to a forgotten people. Patrick advocated learning among Christians. He promoted the ascetic life and monasticism. The Irish culture did not place great value on literacy or education. Patrick, however, promoted studying the Scriptures as well as reading books written by fathers of the faith.

Recovering the True Patrick

Patrick entered an Ireland full of paganism and idol worship. But just a few short decades after Patrick arrived, a healthy, Christ-honoring church was thriving. The Irish church was so strong that in the centuries to come it would send missionaries to evangelize much of continental Europe. Patrick's legacy lives on through the countless spiritual grandchildren he left to continue his work.

Patrick lived in a way that brought honor to God. His devotion and resolute obedience offer examples for all followers of Christ. Patrick stood in the face of great challenges and did not falter. His service, his life, and his unwavering commitment to spreading the Gospel of Christ are as commendable today as they were in the fifth century.

We as Christians have allowed the modern, secular customs of St Patrick's Day to steal away one of the greatest missionaries in Christian history and reduce his memory to leprechauns, green beer, and fictional tales. Let's take back our beloved servant of Christ and share God's glory achieved during the life of Patrick the missionary to Ireland. Let's share the true legacy of this great Christian evangelist.

This article first appeared on *The Gospel Coalition* website (www.thegospelcoalition.org) on 17 March 2014. Used with permission.



Final Assembly for 2014

Christmas Wrap Up

PresCare staff wore their hearts on their sleeves throughout the weeks leading into Christmas by coordinating a number of events and activities across the regions; from a dedicated Christmas party to thank Vela and Lake Sherrin's devoted volunteers, to Christmas lunches for our community care and residential clients, to the Day Therapy Centre picking up 11 of its clients in the PresCare bus and taking them to the local Christmas light displays.



L-R: Keith Black, Harold Cooper and Melinda Rutherford



Local Christmas lights display

There are many lovely memories to share, but one which stands out is the Christmas luncheon at Groundwater Lodge where one of our clients living with dementia experienced the greatest joy of all. A piece of music



Christmas card making at the Day Therapy Centre



Kawana Waters Community Care Christmas



being played on the dining room piano roused her memory long enough for her to recognise the man playing the piano was her husband. Even if it was only fleeting, it was heartening to see her remember who he was, and what he meant to her.



Santa (Rev Graeme McKay)



Vela Christmas 2014

PresCare believes in providing more than just physical care

Our dedicated team across Queensland provides friendship and care to thousands of individuals through our residential, community, independent living, allied health and chaplaincy services.

Different levels of care are designed to meet the varying needs of our clients while maintaining their independence, dignity and connection to the broader community.

For more information about our range of services, visit www.prescare.org.au or call us on 1800 773 722.



www.prescare.org.au
A Ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland

50 YEARS

PresCare
more connected

World-class Concierge Service adds value to PresCare's \$100 Million Premium Retirement Living Development

In a Queensland first, PresCare's Kingsford Terrace has partnered with Blair Lifestyle Management to deliver an in-house and digital concierge service to future residents of the retirement village, whereby they can seek assistance with anything from organising a holiday or party, to finding an anniversary gift or simply sorting out dry cleaning and parcel pick up.

PresCare Chief Operating Officer Mike Bosel said Kingsford Concierge was available to residents as soon as they put a deposit down on an apartment.

"This means that residents are all eligible for the benefits of this service before their apartment is even built,"

Mr Bosel says. "The addition of Kingsford Concierge to the lifestyle at Kingsford Terrace is another way PresCare is setting our development apart from other retirement villages in Queensland."

Managing Director of Blair Lifestyle Management Adele Blair says her team are very excited about the opportunity to deliver a concierge service to a retirement village.

"We believe the addition of a concierge service offers an added layer of excellence to any development," Ms Blair says. "In world cities like New York, Paris and London, a concierge is an expected service in premium apartment complexes, so for PresCare to add this service to

the offering at Kingsford Terrace shows exactly what standard of living residents can expect."

'The addition of Kingsford Concierge to the lifestyle at Kingsford Terrace is another way PresCare is setting our development apart from other retirement villages in Queensland.'

Guild Donates \$1000 to PresCare's Alexandra Gardens

Late last year, residents from PresCare's Alexandra Gardens aged care facility were kindly invited to the St Andrew's Women's Guild Christmas morning tea held at the St Andrew's Presbyterian Ministry and Conference Centre in Rockhampton.

A \$1000 cheque was presented to Kathy Lowe for PresCare Alexandra Gardens. Kathy, on behalf of the staff and residents, expressed PresCare's sincere gratitude for the generous donation and for the wonderful and ongoing support provided throughout the year by the St Andrew's Women's Guild.

This Guild continues to work tirelessly year in, year out helping staff at Alexandra Gardens provide client focussed care and services and to 'go the extra mile'.

The St Andrew's Women's Guild provides a very important sewing and mending service for Alexandra Gardens and always supports various functions, particularly the annual springtime garden party where they provide a wonderful array of cakes to sell to help raise money for the work PresCare does for residents and clients in the local Rockhampton area.



KINGSFORD
TERRACE

Premium retirement apartments in Corinda, Brisbane.

Upsize your lifestyle today. Concierge service, spacious apartments with extended living spaces - library, restaurant/café, lounge, gym, indoor heated swimming pool and beautiful landscaped gardens - only 20 min from the CBD.

With phase one due for completion in September 2015, Kingsford Terrace embodies security, support and choice with the peace of mind that comes from knowing it is operated by PresCare - a Ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland.



Wouldn't it be wonderful to live in a place with more rooms than you've ever imagined.



Kingsford Terrace & Display Suite
260 Cliveden Avenue, Corinda, QLD 4075

Call **1300 287 672** to view our display suite or visit kingsfordterrace.com.au

PresCare
more connected

Presbyterian Church of Queensland's Church Office moves to Lang Parade, Milton

by Michelle Martin



Office of Clerk of Assembly

The church office had been based at Amelia Street, Fortitude Valley since 1989. In January 2015 the Presbyterian Church of Queensland closed its office doors at Amelia Street and relocated to Lang Parade in Milton.

Many memories were formed during the office's time at the Amelia Street, and many people had come and gone through the office doors. It will be missed!

Now it is time to make new memories in the Lang Parade office. We look forward to meeting with all who come to visit the office and hope the visit is enjoyable!

Here are some comments from staff about the new office:-

"Very spacious and comfortable."

"It's spacious and functional with facilities that will aid a more efficient functioning for the various congregations and committees of the church."

Contact details for the office are as follows:-

Street: Level 4, 19 Lang Parade, Milton Qld 4064

Postal: PO Box 1351, Milton LPO Qld 4064

Phone: (07) 3716 2800

Fax: (07) 3716 2810

Email: churchoffice@pcq.org.au



Lesleigh Hall



Michelle Martin



Paula Watson



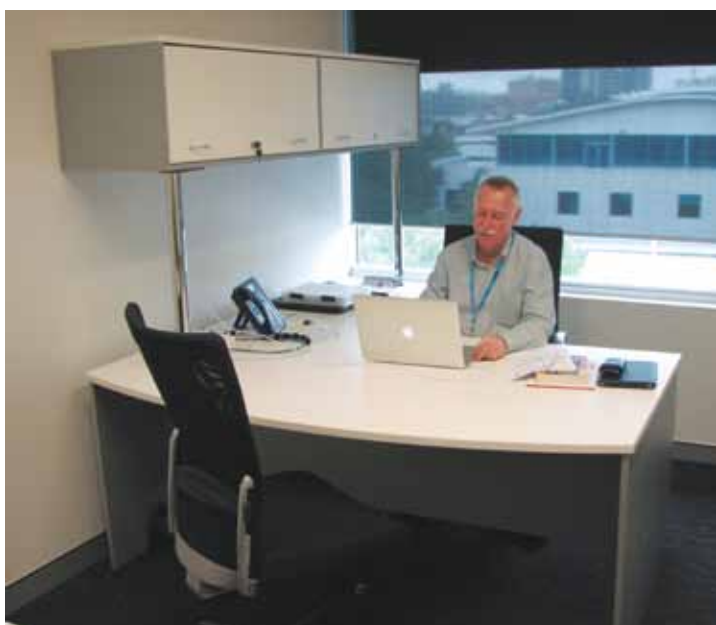
Jill Sketcher



L-R: John Mansfield, Joan Gregory, Lesleigh and Sharan Hall, Lynda Rackley, Ron Clark, Michelle Martin, Peter and Joy Barson, Margaret Hayes, Paula Watson, Jill Sketcher and Brett Donald at staff Christmas lunch 2014



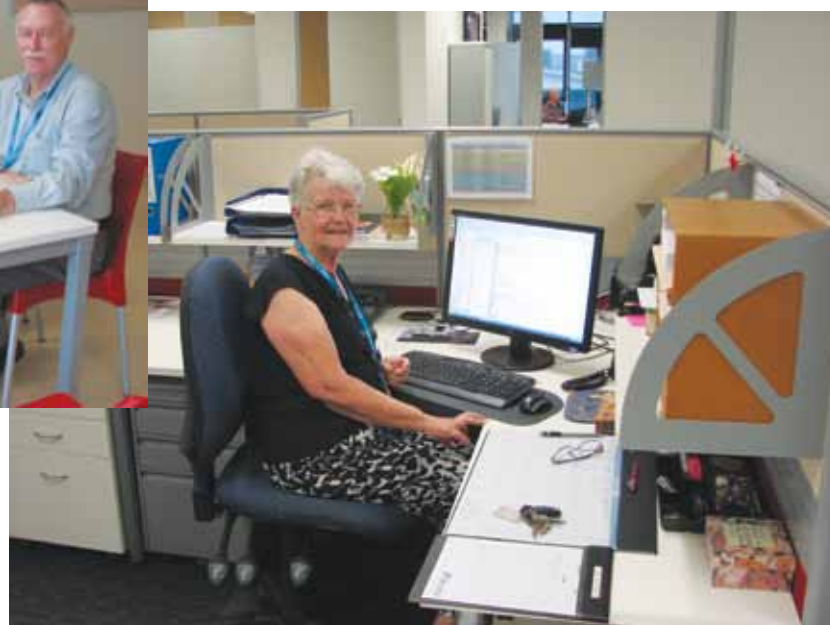
Margaret Hayes



Peter Barson



L-R: Michelle Martin, Margaret Hayes, Jill Sketcher, Joan Gregory, Lesleigh Hall and Peter Barson at Friday morning tea



Joan Gregory

VACANCIES



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The Presbyterian Inland Mission (PIM) is an inland and outback ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. It has an expanding network of patrol ministries, is responsible for a number of Mission Churches and has a developing range of caring, philanthropic and community assistance programs.

As a result of structural organizational change the PIM is seeking to appoint a CEO. This is a newly created position.

Essential requirements for the role are developed pastoral skills, proven business experience, preparedness to travel extensively throughout Australia and prior to commencement in the role, obtaining a current Working With Children Compliance Check.

The ideal candidate must be a change agent and have appropriate business experience. In addition, a demonstrated ability to work with initiative and facilitate strategic change in management services and processes is crucial.

The successful candidate will be required to monitor and maintain compliance with legislative, policy and contractual requirements. They must also be able to express a personal commitment to the values and beliefs of the organisation.

If you genuinely want to contribute to the lives of those in inland and outback Australia by utilising your pastoral, business and organisational leadership experience, then you are encouraged to apply.

A competitive salary package is offered.

General enquiries and a confidential discussion can be made by phoning Rev Les Fowler (0427 521083) or Rev Martin de Pyle (0420 981267). Email fowler@internode.on.net for application information. Closing Date for applications: **31 March 2015**

CAMP BUNYA MOUNTAINS

REQUIRE A CARETAKER/MANAGER

For its 80 bed facility situated on the picturesque Bunya Mountains, 45 minutes from either Kingaroy or Dalby.

The Management Committee is looking for a person or persons who are committed Christians, active, with some Handyman skills and motivated to provide a quality experience for our Clients. The Caretakers will be supported by a small active Management Committee.

Terms and Conditions will include (but not limited to and are negotiable):-

- Rent free two bedroom Cottage situated within the Campsite (full or partly furnished)
- Performance based Honorarium (Note: this is not a fully remunerated position)
- Part payments of electricity costs, telephone and internet
- Full or part time, long or short term tenures will be considered

For further information or to submit an expression of interest contact:-

Secretary (Vicki Whittle) on 0427590 519 or email tiganne@bigpond.com

Chairman (Mr Keith Bartley) on 0429 622 225

Director PCE (Rev Peter Barson) on (07) 3716 2851

This is an EXCITING OPPORTUNITY to be involved in revitalising the Camping Ministry at Camp Bunya Mountains!



APPLICATIONS INVITED

Presbyterian Inland Mission seek a Chief Executive Officer

The PIM are seeking to appoint a full time Chief Executive Officer. Future planning by the executive that commenced in mid 2013 identified the need for an intentional organisational restructure. It was recognised that for the PIM to continue to develop and progress its work, it required the skills and business acumen of a CEO.

Like all mission organisations, the PIM operates in challenging times. Global financial markets, government regulations, changing approaches of ministry, management limitations and a vast mission field make for a complex operating environment. The centenary year of the PIM provided the opportunity to look back with thankfulness and celebrate all that has been accomplished, but the executive knew they needed to look forward. They needed to urgently engage in mission specific planning that would ensure relevant ministry for the next one hundred years.

In January 2014, the full committee of the PIM resolved to review the organisation's governance structure and administrative processes. After meeting with members of the General Assembly of Australia Trustees, the need for organisational change was affirmed and they kindly offered ongoing help to ensure its implementation.

Central to their advice was the need for the PIM to obtain an employee to focus on management issues and who would work for the PIM in a way similar to that of a Chief Executive Officer. They also provided guidance for a remodelled governance/management structure and approach to business processes.

The PIM resolved that the Chief Executive Officer when appointed would be directly responsible to the Committee through its Executive. The Chief Executive Officer would take on all of the work presently done by the Superintendent and other duties as assigned by the Executive. The position title of Superintendent would remain but functionally the current role of the Superintendent would be absorbed into the position of Chief Executive Officer. The current Superintendent, Rev Stuart Bonnington, will remain as Pastor of the Fremantle Presbyterian Church and will assist the CEO transition in to his new role.

The search Committee is seeking expressions of interest from suitably qualified people with both business experience and pastoral skills. Those interested are welcome to call and speak with either Rev Les Fowler or Chaplain Martin de Pyle.

Presbyterians Help 'Stable on the Strand'

by Noel Wootton

Quite a few members of Townsville's Presbyterian churches participated in December's 'Stable On The Strand'—Townsville's Annual Christmas Festival.

It is a major event staged by the more-than-60 combined churches of Townsville, sharing with the community the promise of Christian hope.

Now completing its thirteenth year, it is designed as a 'seed' to encourage folk of all ages through the wider community to consider the story of salvation as offered by the Saviour Jesus Christ.

So many have heard only the commercial side of Christmas but need to hear the real story, and to respond in their lives.

The event involves a construction team setting up a Town of Bethlehem in beach-side Strand Park. Volunteer actors populate the town with its ancient citizens, stage entertainment, hospitality and services—together with prayer and pastoral care.

They are then joined by a total of 40,000 visitors—an average of 8000 a night. Surveys show that some folk travel long distances to experience 'Stable'—the nativity scene, Herod's palace, animals and arts and crafts of the old town, including a carpenter's shop.



The nativity scene in Bethlehem



Nailing at the carpenter's shop

Churchfolk respond enthusiastically to the annual call for involvement as the event presents a wonderful Christian witness to the people of the Townsville region, spreading tidings of great joy to all people.

There have been numerous reports of people who have been blessed by the message of 'Stable'.

Information is on the Website www.stableonthestrand.com.



Three wise men (Paul Compton on right, from Willows Presbyterian Church)



Carols beside the nativity scene



Traditional dancers on the Market Square



King Herod lines up his Roman guard

Carols at Caloundra Presbyterian Church in December 2014

by Robyn Sansbury

*Silent Night! Holy Night!
All is calm, all is bright
Round the virgin and her child;
Holy infant, so gentle and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.*

In 1818 the words of this lovely carol were put to music and sung for the first time in the little village of Oberndorf, a village near Salzburg in Austria, at the Christmas Eve service in the church of St Nicholas. The story of its beginnings and those of other popular carols formed the focus of the Christmas Carols service at Caloundra Presbyterian Church on Sunday evening, 14 December 2014.

Over 100 people filled the church in Caloundra to hear Mrs Grace Vine retell the carol stories before each one was enthusiastically sung by the congregation, with her son Bill taking the lead.

Young and old enjoyed the stories and the evening was aptly rounded off by Mr Jim Vine presenting a short but

sharp Christmas Gospel message.

The Vine family served the Lord with Open Air Campaigners for many years and still delight in using their musical talents from time to time.



Many who attended commented that they not only enjoyed the service but it was one of the best evenings they had attended. As the final carol, O Holy Night was sung; that alone was certainly evidence of the enjoyment of the evening by those who were there.

Afterwards everyone was directed over to the church hall where a delicious Christmas supper was served and the Nativity scene could be viewed.

Young and old certainly had their thoughts directed to that first

Christmas when the baby Jesus was born and laid in a manger.



Outside the church Christmas lights shone to tell those in the community that Jesus is the reason we celebrate Christmas and Christ is our light to those around us.

Each year many who attend the church work to present the Carols evening, and we are never disappointed at the response by those who come, not only from the church congregation but from the Caloundra community at large.

Connecting Creatively “What to do with bits of string...”

by Barbara Clark

Be Creative 2014 at Dakabin was a wonderful weekend filled with 'doing' and 'string'!

'Doing' filled up much of the weekend – women and girls doing the craft they love, sharing their passion for beauty and usefulness, thinking through their choices, creating precious and marvellous things. The Felt makers did in fact, transform 'bits of string' into beautiful and useful handbags of glorious colour combinations.

Others sewed, crocheted, knitted and painted under the aegis of patient and talented tutors while the auditorium buzzed with the hum of voices, sewing machines and the odd peal of laughter.

It was a terrific weekend for anyone wanting to hone their skills or learn a new craft. However, the sense of community and creativity went far beyond our common interest in craft. As we worked and shared over the weekend, we knitted and knotted together the threads of the challenge – the challenge of discerning what we hold precious and what is of eternal value.

During our workshops, God's gift of creativity oozed out of us and all around us as we spent the weekend 'doing'. We gloried in the knowledge that we are creative beings, made in God's image.

Some particularly talented 'doers' created skits and dramas that shocked us out of our complacency about what we cling to and what we hold on to as precious. Then we were challenged to consider what is of true value, how God can use our lives as we honour and love him, rather than cling to the security of our treasures and possessions.

Be Creative was an opportunity to experience the delight of fellowship with like minded women. Each meal made by other creative hands presented an opportunity to be quiet and relax, or to chat and make new friends. There were five women from

Roma church who attended, whom God preserved from danger. The eight hour journey began with a full tank of fuel, but when a tyre blew out on the Warrego Highway in a 110km zone more than an hour from the nearest RACQ it proved to be a testing time.

It is always comforting to experience God's goodness each day in many ways. Dakabin was a welcome sight, as were the smiling and welcoming faces of the committee when they greeted us. At various intervals, book reviews were presented like devotional talks, and opened my eyes to others and their perspectives.

Perhaps the highlight of the 'doing' for me was the Cardboard Box challenge after High Tea. The reading of the instructions, picking out the odd bits and string, the explosion of energy, and the flurry of activity

culminated in a fashion parade which was side splittingly funny. This episode revealed many talented beautiful people. The auction raised funds for the Dorcas Foundation, and we were reminded not to be complacent about the many good things in our lives.

What we do with bits of string... the 'take home' message from *Be Creative* 2014 was that God desires to take our fractured lives, 'like filthy rags', transform, renew and change us into people who reflect his love to others and glorify him.*

What a privilege to share our time, talents and desire to create beautiful and practical things.

*Origin of source unknown.



L-R: Liz Lethbridge, Alison Clarke, Bev Dingwell (who designed the quilt), Marie Moore and Barb Clark