

NEW DIRECTIONS



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

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The writer to the Hebrews exhorts us, "Remember your leaders who have spoken God's word to you. As you carefully observe the outcome of their lives, imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" - Hebrews 13:7,8

Dr Matthew Kim has been in active ministry now for 50 years since his ordination. For many of you he has been your "father in the faith". It is right that we should honour him in this way and congratulate him on his retirement.

He has made a huge contribution to the cause of the Gospel in the Presbyterian Church of Queensland. We wish Matthew and Julie well in their retirement and I very much look forward to having them back with us at Ann Street in the future.

Whenever there is a change of leadership, the tendency is to romanticize the past and idealise the heroes of the faith, to put these men on a pedestal. Something like that was happening here in Hebrews. That's why we must always remember who our real leader is. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday today and forever."

In today's church we make too much of men and too little of Christ. Matthew's life work has been to point you, not to himself but to Jesus Christ as your true leader. You will honour him as you follow Jesus. Times change, leaders come and go, but "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday today and forever".

One famous Baptist preacher, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, said about this verse - "there is the same water in the well still. If we have not drawn it, it is our fault. We have come away from the fire that is why we are cold. Let us return to Him and He will receive us as gladly and as warmly as He did when first we believed."

Let us return to Him. We turn to men and movements and books and programs, but it's Jesus we need. Just as the needle of the compass always returns to magnetic north, so our hearts need to keep returning to Him."

[VERY REV. DAVID JONES ON REV. MATTHEW KIM'S RETIREMENT]

Congratulations to Rev. Matthew Kim on 50 years of ordination and best wishes for your retirement

Tributes to Rev. Dr Matthew Kim on his retirement and 50 years of ordination and Dr Kim’s response:

BY GOD’S providence, a young man from Asia, who did not know where Australia was, landed in Melbourne in 1964. That young man was Matthew Man Young Kim.
From then, his eventful ministry of 50 years began with many trials, but also much joy.
After his many achievements for the Australian and Korean community, today with God’s grace he is leaving the frontline of his ministry.
As the first Korean Minister to come to Brisbane in 1966, he passionately preached God’s Word in the Australian church before founding the Korean Presbyterian Church in 1984.
For the work of establishing the Brisbane Korean Society, the Korean Language School and for his service in the Australian society as well, Mr Kim was awarded a Multicultural Service Award by the Australian Government.
As an Asian, he was the first person to serve as the Moderator of the Presbytery of Brisbane, and then as the Moderator of Queensland Assembly. He also greatly contributed as a Lecturer at the Queensland Theological College and Sydney Wesley Institute.
Our Church, the Brisbane Korean Presbyterian Church, is also the result of his vision for the Lord’s work.
By his appearance, Mr Kim gives the impression of a middle-aged gentleman. There is a saying, “Those who laugh with the people who are laughing will easily be forgotten, but those who cry with the people who mourn will never be forgotten”. Mr Kim will always be remembered as one who shared in people’s suffering.
My hope is that he will continue to serve as a shepherd of God’s people wherever God leads.

Elder Gilbert Oh

THANKS FOR including us in the most wonderful day on Saturday. The service was just tremendous. To be a part of many Christians together praising God, for a start, was such a blessing. To learn just what you, Matthew, have done to start, build, keep together and grow the Korean Church is just a wonderful testimony to your ministry and faithfulness to the Lord. I know I did not have any idea just how big this ministry was and what a tremendous encouragement, help and work that you have done in the Lord’s name. We know that there has been lots of down times and it was not all smooth sailing; however, praise the Lord, He is faithful.

Thank you for giving us your book. This again was wonderful to read of the life and work of your ministry. Thank you also for the two lovely cups. So special to have these. Thank you also for the lovely words to Julie, as you know you could not have done it without her support, love, prayers and work behind you each day. I was sitting through the service, thinking, well Julie has been behind all this and then to hear your words was a real tear jerker!! Julie has always been very special to me. In your time at Virginia, Julie always complemented your ministry.

Julie, it was a real witness to the Lord what you said about your life. We did not know all that about your background, your parents and your courting days with Matthew. All very special. It was also so lovely to meet all your children (adults). Also to see your sisters. We both felt very privileged to be there.

May the Lord guide you both each day in the future and may you enjoy many happy years together.

Friends Royce and Diane Cooper

MODERATOR, MEMBERS of Presbyteries of Brisbane and Mowbray, distinguished guests and dear members of our Congregation. First of all, I wish to thank you all for your presence here with us. Actually I conveyed my honest feeling to Peter Min that I would be happy to retire quietly at a morning service with the Congregation. But Peter said strongly, “That is not the right way of doing it. We might feel ashamed of ourselves.” So we are here today.

What can I say on this occasion, except that with my all heart, I thank you, dear members of our Congregation who have been faithful in support of the church, and Elders, women leaders, and Deacons who supported my ministry.

The booklet which was presented to you is a record of my life and work, but in all the aspects and the events of my ministry, God has been at work and you have been the co-workers with me.

While we reflect on the past, I want to ask you this question, “While we have been able to build this wonderful church complex, have we built up men and women for God with whom He is pleased? Have we trained and nurtured men and women of great faith?”

Let us thank God for all the blessings of the past, and now as you move forward to the great future with Rev. Peter Min as your Minister, I urge you to give him your full support as you have given me. That will be the best way to serve our Lord Jesus Christ.

Someone said, “Unless you love your church as mother, you cannot call God as Father”. Our Church will not stop at one generation, but generation after generation, our children’s children will be able to worship God in this church, and be equipped to participate in the mission, so that our church will be a blessing to all nations. Thank you.

Response from Rev. Dr Matthew Kim



The Moderator, Hon. Greg Rodgers, addresses the congregation



Dr Matthew and Julie Kim with leaders of the congregation

QTC Graduating Students



THE GRADUATION Ceremony held in March was a lovely evening to celebrate the success of our 2013 graduates. Twenty-one past students crossed the stage at Brisbane Boys’ College main hall to receive their awards from Principal Gary Millar. Some had been with us for only one year, while others had completed four years of theological education. Mitchell Eidse and Robyn Campbell shared their ‘memorable moments’ and both spoke fondly of the faculty whose love for their subject areas came across clearly in their teaching. Douglas Green, Professor of Old

Testament and Biblical Theology at Westminster Seminary, Philadelphia, addressed the graduates and their families, speaking from Psalm 149. He spoke about how the Psalm helps us to understand what God is calling us to do – that though Christ has won the definitive victory against the enemy, we are now called to join that battle. He encouraged the graduates to put on the whole armour of God as they engage in this dangerous calling. Student awards were also presented on the night, culminating in the presentation of the Sir Reginald McAllister Award which

goes to the top student studying for Presbyterian ministry in their final year of college. This year, thanks to the generosity of the Sir Reginald McAllister Trust, QTC were able to present the award to two students. Nathan Campbell and Jeremy Wales were both worthy recipients who had begun their degrees in different years but graduated at the same time. It was great to catch up with our graduates who are continuing to serve the church in a variety of capacities, some as pastors, and others as better-trained members of their congregation.



Elder Frank Lee with Dr Matthew Kim



Dr Matthew and Julie Kim with members of Brisbane and Mowbray Presbyteries

A reflection on Dr Tim Keller's teaching about contextualising the gospel

By Rev Matt Purnell, GiST Team member

IN MARCH this year I attended a conference in Sydney on behalf of the Gospel in Society Today (GiST) team.* The purpose of GiST is to equip believers in PCQ congregations to live faithfully for Jesus in a secular society, and to engage in gospel-hearted apologetics that point to the great hope we have in Jesus.

The conference was for pastors and church planters to hear Dr Timothy Keller, of Redeemer Presbyterian Manhattan, talk about the ongoing work of bringing the gospel to the people of Australia. One of the main areas he focussed on is the need for contextualisation of the gospel.

Keller defined contextualisation as “giving answers from the Bible in answer to questions people are asking, using forms of thought they can understand, with arguments they find persuasive”.

Every culture has collective dreams that people in that culture are trying to realise without reference to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus. That is, each culture has its idols – those things besides God that it is hoped will fulfil the dreams of the culture.

According to Keller, it is the goal of the gospel preacher to contextualise the gospel by learning what people are searching for, and then showing, on the one hand, how without God these desires are dead-ends, but, on the other hand, how Jesus—and only Jesus—truly satisfies what people desire.

Keller argues that contextualisation is evident in the Book of Acts as Paul moves from addressing Jews (Acts 13) to “blue collar” pagans (Acts 14) to “white collar” pagans (Acts 17). In each case Paul adapts the way he presents the gospel.

Of course the big question is how do gospel preachers discover the collective hopes of our culture?

Some ideas given were seeing what themes in popular media are resonating with our neighbours, discussing Australian culture with expatriates, and reading the works of those secular writers who are in the business of analysing culture (for example, Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age*). As some of these analytical works can be difficult to digest, Keller sees an important role for Christian academics in bringing to pastors the insights of such books.

Once these collective hopes are identified the preacher is then in a position to show how the gospel both confronts and recasts them.

One of the other speakers at the conference, Tim Shaddick of Reality Church in Los Angeles, spoke of how many people come to his church hoping to “find themselves”.

Shaddick has taught his people to ask their friends three open-ended

questions, in order to help them come to see this hope can only be fulfilled in Jesus:

- (i) What do you expect out of life?;
- (ii) Where did these expectations come from?; and
- (iii) What if they were completely wrong?

According to Shaddick, “The church must reclaim its role as holy provocateur”, which involves training people to ask the right questions, which are the hard questions. Jesus asks the hardest questions. And He is the greatest answer.

Keller shared how he met with a group of sceptical journalists to answer the question, what good is Christianity? Keller said he made a number of points, including: In Christ we get a meaning in life that suffering cannot take away; Christianity gives an identity that will not crush you; Christianity makes you most open to diversity; Buddhism through contemplation teaches detachment, but Christianity through contemplation gives you love; Christianity gives a view of sex that does not lead to loneliness; Christianity gives hope for the future through resurrection; and Christianity gives true rest. Keller says the journalists were not convinced, but they were intrigued and wanted to hear more.

In an increasingly secular society, non-Christians will need time to “incubate”, having time to digest the gospel, which needs to be presented in various ways. For example, Shaddick showed a presentation from an event he has spoken at called, “Capturing the Light: A low-tech and low-def journey through photography and theology”. Apparently some of the non-Christians who came to the event were shocked that Christians even care about photography, and the reason they came was because they were interested in what a Christian would have to say about the topic.

Keller points out that as a believer grows in the ability to contextualise the gospel, it gets easier to share. When we try to share the gospel with someone it can often feel like we are changing the topic. But as Shaddick puts it, with the skill of contextualisation, rather than changing the topic, evangelism becomes about bringing the gospel to bear on every topic.

I found the conference helpful for the work of GiST. Keller's thinking will aid us as we seek to determine the hopes of our culture and, in response, effectively contextualise the good news about Jesus.

* Officially known as the Public Questions and Communications Committee

Fairholme Teachers visit Caloundra PC

ONCE AGAIN teachers from Fairholme College visited Caloundra PC on the first Sunday in March, for what has become an annual event, to bring the congregation up-to-date about the latest visit by students of the College to Mizpah Orphanage in South India during the summer holidays.

The visits to Mizpah began in 2008, and so far 130 students from the College have visited South India. The formative ideas for the visits came from teachers Julian Turner and Richard Jessup, both of whom were able to share the latest news at our Sunday morning services.

Julian and Richard were also able to attend a BBQ lunch that was put on by the congregation in their honour, and in honour of two former students of the College who were also able to attend the second morning service.

Jean [nee Dehnert], now 97 years of age, came to the College as a boarder from her family's sheep station at Surat, near Roma, and completed her studies at Fairholme in 1932. Jenny, [nee Leavy] lived right opposite the College and graduated in 1958.

We were pleased to hear about the latest team visits to Mizpah and to have these former students with us for the BBQ lunch after the morning services.

A total of very nearly \$1000 was given to the College as a contribution towards the Mizpah ministry.



Back row: Julian Turner, Richard Jessup
Front row: Joan Grayson, Jenny Orton, Jean le Broc, Carol Morris
(Jenny and Jean are past students of Fairholme College)

NEW DIRECTIONS

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Letters to the Editor

We would encourage all who contribute to Letters to the Editor to do so in the spirit of Christian love and grace and to deal with issues involved, not personalities. The Editorial Committee reserves the right to decide which letters to publish. Please limit letters to 500 words and send to newdirections@pcq.org.au.

Keith Black [N. D. Feb-Mar] wrote of his present concerns about the Church. I take it he was primarily referring to the Presbyterian Church of Queensland/Australia. I find myself in general agreement with what he wrote. These are things we should be concerned about; we do need to examine ourselves in regard to them, and come before the Lord in humble dependence on His power and love.

But Keith's first point troubles me. This was a statement about an attitude to the Bible that Keith perceives to be prevalent in the Church. He wrote: "We no longer believe the Bible nor consider it to be the inerrant Word of God. We're willing to say and believe that 'it contains the Word of God' but we are the judges of what is and what isn't His Word."

This suggests that Keith has heard people, perhaps ministers, office bearers or others, saying or implying that the Bible contains the Word of God, in the sense that not everything in the Bible was given by special inspiration from God as His written Word. Keith needs to substantiate this claim. Anyone teaching or asserting this is teaching contrary to the Church's doctrine as stated in the subordinate standard, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and potentially could be brought before the Courts of the Church for admonition or discipline.

However, to say that the Bible "contains the word of God", is not necessarily always contrary to the Church's doctrine. The 1901 Basis of Union of the Presbyterian Church of Australia states that, "The Supreme Standard of the Church shall be the Word of God contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments". And the first question asked of Ministers and Elders at their ordination or induction is, "Do you believe the Word of God contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only rule of faith and practice?"

Some years ago the following words were added to the Presbyterian Church of Queensland Code Book, Section A, on "The Church": "This definition of the Supreme Standard [that is, as stated in the

Basis of Union] is derived from the Westminster Shorter Catechism, and is understood by this Church in the light of the doctrine taught in Chapter One of the Westminster Confession of Faith."

In other words, the same Assembly of British reformed theologians who wrote the confession of faith, which states in various ways in Chapter 1 that the books of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God written, given by inspiration of God, would not contradict themselves when they composed the Shorter Catechism. Question and Answer 2 of the catechism reads: "What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him? The word of God, which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him."

Furthermore their Larger Catechism is in perfect agreement with the Confession of Faith. Question and Answer 3 says: "What is the word of God? The holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience."

Clearly the Westminster theologians of the 17th century used the words "the word of God, which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments" in a sense agreeable to what they wrote in the Confession of Faith and in the Larger Catechism. In other words, everything contained in the Bible is the word of God; the Bible as a whole is the word of God. I once illustrated this in a children's talk by holding up a full jar of peanut butter, and demonstrating that everything contained in the jar was peanut butter, and that in the same way we can say that everything contained in the Bible is the word of God.

I think Keith needs to explain more clearly what he means by claiming that we no longer believe the Bible nor consider it to be the inerrant Word of God, and that "we are willing to say and believe that it contains the Word of God". Does he actually know of some who are directly teaching that the Bible merely contains the Word of God, in the sense that not everything in the Bible is the Word of God? Or

does he mean that some speak and live in a way that would imply or suggest that they think we can pick and choose what to believe and obey, as though not everything in the Bible is the Word of God, the only rule of faith and life?

Additional Note:

In the days before church union in the 1970s, when the Basis of Union of the proposed Uniting Church (a union of Congregational churches, the Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church) was being considered and discussed, some objected that this basis was saying that the Bible merely contains the word of God, but is not itself the Word of God. But in saying this they were not accurately quoting the basis. Paragraph 5 said: *The Uniting Church acknowledges that the Church has received the books of the Old and New Testaments as unique prophetic and apostolic testimony in which she hears the Word of God and by which her faith and obedience are nourished and regulated. When the Church preaches Jesus Christ, her message is controlled by the biblical witnesses. The Word of God on whom man's salvation depends is to be heard and known from scripture appropriated in the worshipping and witnessing life of the Church....*

In this, and the previous paragraph of the Uniting Church's Basis, Jesus Christ is called "the Word of God", but not the scriptures. The Uniting Church basis never ever affirmed that the scriptures are the written word of God, or are inerrant. Thus the concern of many was that describing the scriptures as "unique prophetic and apostolic testimony" was not enough and could allow people to accept that the scriptures were not necessarily inerrant or infallible. Those of us who could not go into church union on this basis would much have preferred the basis to affirm both that Christ is the Living Word of God and that the Scriptures are the Word of God written, inspired by God to be the infallible and inerrant testimony to Christ and the Christian's only rule for faith and life.

David Secomb, Raceview

GRASS-ROOTS REFLECTIONS

Demystifying Christian Mysticism

MANY REFORMED/Evangelical Christians often recoil at the idea that Christianity might be considered mystical. The word 'mysticism' often conjures up notions of Christians seduced by religious practices reminiscent of meditating Buddhists or entranced Hindus.

Popular misconceptions aside, there are also genuine reasons why Christians have an inherent suspicion of mysticism. Of these, two immediately come to mind. First, the Reformed emphasis on the Word of God, as filtered through the theological frames of scholars such as the 19th century theologian Charles Hodge (who presented the Reformed faith in a rationalistic manner) and the 20th century theologian Karl Barth (who theoretically negated the subjective elements of faith within his theological system) have, in no small part, contributed to an acculturation of an anti-mystical sentiment. Secondly, a negative reaction to the rise of Pentecostalism—with its strong emphasis on introspective spirituality and the numerous examples of false claims on Gods' Spirit by its devotees—has also succeeded in engendering a deep suspicion of things spiritual/mystical among the Reformed and Evangelical constituency.

I concede that many of the mystical elements within contemporary Christian (small 's') spirituality could be discarded. However, it is imperative that Christianity maintain its essential (big 'S') Spiritual nature. The way to address the issue is not to out-of-hand discard everything that might be construed as mystical, but to understand it correctly.

Making sense of mysticism necessitates clarity of definition. If mysticism is understood as a purely intuitive and unmediated mode of communion with the divine, it falls within the category of what Albert Schweitzer dubbed God mysticism. God mysticism implies that God can be engaged in a direct and/or immediate sense, and that the so-called gnosis (knowledge) that is conceived in the experience of this mystical engagement, trumps all other forms of authority: reason, tradition, revelation etc. Of course, a Christian with even a rudimentary understanding of the Bible knows that direct entry into the presence of God is simply not possible, given the moral status of humanity. Therefore, God mysticism is inconsistent with a genuine interpretation of Christianity. However, is there a valid form of Christian mysticism?

Paul knows nothing of a direct union with God, but speaks along the lines of a union with Christ. In his letters, Paul uses rich-in-Christ language to describe the nature of his intimate relationship with God. For Paul, union with Christ is not simply a logical belief in the historical Jesus, but he speaks of a union with the risen Christ, with whom he is realistically united: 'I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me...' (Gal 2:20 NIV).

Now we know that Paul was not literally crucified with Christ, nor does Jesus physically live in him, so what does he mean? John Calvin offers this explanation: 'He [Paul] does not live by his own life, but is animated by the secret power of Christ...believers live out of themselves, that is, they live in Christ; which can only be accomplished by holding real and actual communication with him'. For Calvin, the secret power that enables this 'actual' union is the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit enables a person to embrace Christ in faith and then empowers him/her 'in Christ' to live a new Christ-orientated life—in the Spirit.

However, does this 'in-Christ' mystical union imply that the church, the Bible, and even theological reflection are now superfluous to the Christian endeavour? Certainly not! Paul's concept of spiritual union with Christ does not presuppose an introspective, spiritualistic, or even private pilgrimage of faith. Paul understands his personal union with Christ, in terms of a larger context of union with other Christians within the Church—the body of Christ. Moreover, this communal context is also described by him as the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16). In the Church the Holy Spirit endows Christians with specific gifts to bring to bear the teaching of the Word of God (itself derived of the Holy Spirit) in an instructive way into the lives of its members. The Spirit that inspired the Scriptures, the Spirit that equips the church with gifts to apply the Scriptures, the Spirit that calls Christians, who are 'in-Christ', into the body of Christ, is the very Spirit that insures that the material testimony of the Spirit (the Word of God) is not subsumed by introspective mysticism, but regulates the 'in-Christ' experience.

This might not look too mystical, but without the secret working of the Holy Spirit it would cease to be a truly Christian phenomenon. Perhaps mysticism is an unhelpful term, and its use readily predisposes it to misunderstanding. However, no matter how it is conceived, there is no escaping the fact that Christianity is more than a rationally conceived belief system — much more.

Rowland Lowther



GOING and COMING...St John's



Bob and Deb Mc Kerrell with Margaret and Roger Crane

BOB AND Deb Mc Kerrell left Toowoomba on 10 April for their 8th visit to the inland Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. They took with them a valuable cargo of 150 books sponsored by the members of the St John's congregation. Their church family also helped with the cutting out of numerous craft items, about 750, for the children's ministry. They will be away for 8 months returning in November 2014.

Outback Missionaries with PIM, Margaret and Roger Crane, took a break from their Patrol work in North Queensland to call in on their Toowoomba home Church of St John's on Sunday 6 April. They had been unable to continue their mission work due to treatment for Roger's Non Hodgson's Lymphoma, which is now complete. They have taken leave from PIM and hope to resume Patrol Mission work later in the year, hopefully August. They give thanks to God for Roger's remission, and all the prayerful support of many people.

Nathan Boorer reflects on the past year



Nathan, Zac and Lilli Boorer

Pray, Live, Serve but what about the Disney movie?

by Naomi Reed



Naomi Reed

I HAVE a lot of good ideas. And I'm an optimist, which is not a good combination. It means that the ideas grow large rather quickly.

The latest happened in April last year when I was contacted by Emily Cobb from Scripture Union. She asked me if I could run drama workshops and evening performances in the north-west of NSW, with an aim to present the gospel to non-church families.

I was immediately interested! Then she wanted to know if I could bring a team with me, to incorporate music and story into the drama performances, and involve up to 80 children in each place?

I said yes. Then I sat at our laptop for a fortnight, and the story seeped out from beneath my fingers.

A long time ago there was a wide open valley, with rich pasture and wild flowers and animals of every kind – slithering lizards and swaying elephants and swinging monkeys and leggy giraffes and brown bears and kangaroos and even a prickly old tree porcupine. The whole of the valley was an open-plain zoo.

But the best thing about the zoo was the Zookeeper. He loved the animals. He'd chosen each of them, and every day he walked with them and talked with them, and reminded them they could play wherever they wanted in the valley, but the one place they couldn't play was on the other side of the sparkling river, in the dark forest.

'Do you think they wanted to? What would happen if they did? Would the Zookeeper still love them? Would he have a plan to bring them home?'

By the end of the fortnight, I had the idea and the script and the team.

We all began working on masks and costumes and backdrops and lyrics and songs and music.

Then I practised the script with Darren, and our sons, and anyone else who walked through the front door. They all liked it.

Soon, I wondered whether the idea would work as a picture book, and an enhanced CD, and a package for kids' clubs, and schools, and family services with puppets ... and then of course a Disney movie?

Over time, I calmed down and re-read 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12: "With this in mind (the return of Jesus), we constantly pray for you that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfil every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."

I find it so easy to get caught up in my own ideas, and to think they depend on my own cleverness and contacts and networks.

But I need to remember that God is the One who makes us worthy of His calling, and He fills our (excessively) good ideas and acts of faith with His own power - for His purposes, so that the Lord Jesus may be glorified in us and through us, according to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ... because there's an extraordinary day ahead, when Jesus will return and He will be marveled at by those who believe (v10).

And *The Zookeeper* went really well in the north-west. People cried in the right places and responded to God's love and plan for them.

IT'S BEEN just over a year since that day that the Boorer family's lives were completely turned upside down.

On the evening of 23 January last year, the Boorer family was travelling through the Sunshine Coast when their car was struck by an oncoming vehicle. That vehicle was on the wrong side of the road. Nathan, who was driving, and his pregnant wife, Tammy, took the full force of the impact. After being hit from the front, it was then also struck by a truck travelling directly behind.

Nathan and Tammy, part of Central Church Ipswich, were taken to Nambour Hospital. Alexander, their unborn baby, had died and the injuries to Nathan and Tammy were horrific. Tammy died on Friday 25 January and Nathan remained in a coma for weeks as part of a long recovery. All around the State, and around Australia, people were praying for Nathan and his family.

The whole Boorer family was baptised at Central Church in April, the year before the accident. They had come to faith after friends invited them to church.

After a miraculous recovery, Nathan now reflects on the last 12 months. ...

"Time does seem to travel at a speed much quicker than our minds can actually realise.

"Things get busy, and it's not until you look at the actual date, that you comprehend the time that has passed.

"Praise be to God for allowing Zac and Lilli to come out of the accident without any severe physical injuries.

"Looking at the picture of the car after the accident, it is only a miracle that Zac, Lilli and I survived; and even more of a miracle that my two beautiful children survived without any physical injury.

Knowing God's Love

"It is only because we know God's great love for us and Tammy's trust, faith and relationship with God that we can find some kind of peace with the knowledge that Tammy and Alexander are in God's Kingdom, and that one day we will get the chance to be together once more for the eternal life that we wait upon.

"The hardest thing to come to terms with is that it is in God's time that these things will occur, and not ours.

"With Zac and Lilli, it is hard for me to assess how they have progressed from the time of the accident to now because, as you know, I didn't see them for the first three-and-a-half weeks when I was in a coma myself, only able to hope and pray.

"All that I can witness with the kids is that, from when I first saw them to now, they are dealing with it all, in my eyes, quite well. This is largely because they were able to access help from Hilda's House early and to start working through all that was going on inside them which is something I cannot give an accurate witness to.

"As for me, time does seem to be moving on, even if we don't want it to, and so must life. It is hard to find the words to express how I feel about it all.

"For my children I must now be the man I wish I was when Tammy was here.

"The one thing that has become clear is that when we have no choice,

we do what needs to be done; but when there is choice, then it becomes more difficult to make the best choice.

"The verse that totally explains my thoughts and feelings when I was taking life for granted is Romans 7:15-19: "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do, is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do - this I keep on doing."

On a Journey

"Well, with my life now totally upside down from what it was before, I am now on a journey with SU Qld, training in youth work and it is only God Who knows where the journey will lead me.

"Now I fully recognise that we can only plan for our future. As I have learned, our lives can change completely in an instant so we can only go wherever God has planned for us to be - so I am doing that exact thing. One day at a time and whatever happens, happens.

"It is now a season of our lives that is a busy season. I am studying, the kids are at a new school, Zac is starting back at soccer, and Lilli is starting back at Girls' Brigade and is trying out hockey as her sport. So busy it is!!

"I am so thankful for the great support that I have surrounding me, helping things happen, and it is only by the strength that I am granted by God's grace that I can have confidence that, although not guaranteed, I have hope for a positive future for all three of us as a family. Because I know now that life is not guaranteed, I appreciate every day as a good day. I am blessed if I wake up and rise in the morning."



Zac, Tammy, Nathan and Lilli Boorer

[Naomi Reed is a returned missionary, author and speaker. Her five popular books and an audio book (*The Promise*) are available at good bookshops. For more information, go to www.NaomiReed.Info or join 'My Seventh Monsoon' on Facebook.]

KIDS WEEKENDER NORTH AND SOUTH

North



KIDS WEEKENDER North was an opportunity for kids and leaders from the churches on the northside of Brisbane to enjoy a weekend full of fun and excitement as we explored the book of Jonah together.

During the course of the weekend, the kids managed to do some canoeing, a scavenger hunt and have

a massive water bomb fight as well as hang out around a campfire and enjoy the usual themed dress up night and waterslide.

It was a great weekend exploring God's compassion and mercy for people, making new friends and having a fantastic time together.

It was with great joy and enthusiasm that a group of leaders from churches across Brisbane's southside came together for Kids Weekender *South*. We all had a great weekend and it's not very hard to *Under the Sea* why.

Through a few Bible talks and small group times we looked at the book of Jonah and talked about mankind's sin, God's judgement and then God's mercy. We deliberately read through Jonah chapter 4 and talked through Jonah's response to God's mercy on the Ninevites, and reflected on how awesome it is that God is merciful to us, forgiving us our sins and how God made a way, through Jesus, for us to be friends with Him again. We learnt some cool new songs (*Oh, Silly Jonah*) and all learnt the memory verse for the weekend, which was: Jonah 2:2 *He said 'In my distress I called to the Lord, and He answered me. From the depths, I called for your help, and you listened to my cry!'*

When we weren't in talks or small groups, we enjoyed playing games together, splashing around down at the dam and dressing up as our favourite sea creatures and characters. There were sneaky sharks chasing proud pirates, terrific turtles racing daring divers ...and a couple of frogs. No croak.

We had great food, great company and, did I mention the great food. Thanks Troy Wilkins!

Camps are a great avenue to teach children the Gospel.

Kids often bring their non-Christian friends along for the weekend, which means their friends will (a) hear the message of Jesus presented clearly; (b) see their friends talk about Jesus; and (c) watch a group of adult leaders modelling Christian living.

This is an important outreach activity and we are thankful for a number of local church children's workers and our body of leaders for putting time and effort into messages that present the Gospel clearly.

For the large number of Christian kids who come on camp, our aim is to challenge them further in their walk with God, to grow their Bible knowledge and to encourage them to really think through what it means to be a Christian. We want them to be able to defend their faith and understand the Bible better – seeing God's great plan to bring us to salvation through the smorgasbord of examples and stories of His great mercy and amazing grace.

We also encourage Christian kids to bring their friends, so they can grow together and support each other as they approach adolescence.

As leaders, we delight in hearing young people asking great questions about God, the Bible and challenges in living as Christians.

Kids Weekender camps are also an opportunity for leaders to practise service to others and to exercise patience and love when we are tired.

Nothing is more rewarding for our team of leaders than to hear stories from parents about how their child was challenged and grown by camp, changes in the way they behave, and even being able to remember verses from the Bible and what they mean.

Please pray for our team of leaders, that they would find real, engaging and clear ways to teach the Bible and for strength and patience to live as godly witnesses.

Also pray for the young people who come away with us on camps, that they would all come to know Christ in a real way and live lives that reflect Him.

Finally, join us in praising God for His many mercies which, like the Ninevites, save us from the judgement our sins deserve and lead to a glorious eternity with Him.

South



L-R: Heather Browne, Rev. Rob Farr, Chandra Smith and Elder Harold Saville

ON SUNDAY 13 April, while on leave from SIM work in Ecuador, Chandra Smith visited St David's North Toowoomba and St John's South Toowoomba sharing with the congregations the progress of her mission work over the last eight years.

She is based in Gonzanama, which is 10,000 feet above sea level and a 12 hour drive south from the capital city, Quito. There, and in Portete, she conducts a ministry for men and women through Bible studies, women's camps, kid's clubs and the Diet Club. With a population of 300 families, there are two Roman Catholic Chapels in Portete. The nuns oppose the work of the Christian Mission causing some families to withdraw their children. This says Chandra is a prayer point to keep in mind for the sake of the believers.

Chandra presented a photo of one of the local believers in appreciation of the continued support of both Toowoomba churches.



EDUCATION AND VALUE FOR LIFE

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Boys: PrePrep to Year 5
(07) 3262 0262 www.clayfield.qld.edu.au

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Boarding: Years 5 to 12
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Day and boarding school for girls Prep to Year 12
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Presbyterian and Methodist Schools Association www.pmsa-schools.edu.au A ministry of the United and Presbyterian Churches, providing excellence in education in a Christian and caring environment.

Visiting Japan as a tourist

We spent about ten days with the Evans mob before venturing forth to a few days in and around Tokyo. Then a fortnight from one end of the country to the other; before returning to the Evans for a week.

Anyone who wants to do the tourist thing there – buy a JR (Japan Rail) pass (you can't buy them in Japan). Excellent value to travel any train (except the 'Nozomi', the fastest Bullet Train) for the period. The rail system is amazing. Around Tokyo - multiple, multiple lines, super efficient.

Distance travel is mostly by Shinkansen trains (often called 'Bullet Trains', but they travel 200-300 kph, [not even a tremor on your coffee], spot on to the timetable, half the time through tunnels because they don't go around or over anything).

Most signs and announcements are bi-lingual Japanese and English, so travel in Japan with no knowledge of the language isn't difficult (though they do appreciate foreigners making the effort to learn a few words and to pronounce them correctly).

For my generation, visiting Hiroshima and Nagasaki is almost a pilgrimage, and we visited numerous other places and cities as far as the northern island of Hokkaido (still under snow).

Japan is full of fascinating history which includes the various castles, palaces and so on.

It's littered with Shinto shrines and Buddhist Temples (more about that later).

It's a very densely-populated country (127 million; greater Tokyo 33 million), so the cities are huge and many people live in high apartment blocks.

The overall impression is naturally dull and grey, though there are some beautiful parks.

The less densely populated countryside is mostly small rice fields. There is none of the broad-acre farming we are used to (though Hokkaido has more space).

Between travel and conversations we were hoping to get a deeper understanding of the Japanese world-view, culture and religion.

It is maybe a bit bold of me to express an opinion after only five weeks, but I'll try.

The Evans 8

They are all well. They moved house while we were there to a place closer to the centre of Chiba – (a satellite city of Tokyo, population 1 million) – where John will be church planting in time.

He's full-on with language study, as well as taking a part in the programs of the existing churches.

Asher (16) takes the train back to his old school attached to the church, as well as doing some subjects on the internet. Isabelle (12) (also doing some internet studies), Lily (10) and Ivy (7) are attending Japanese schools for language immersion. Please pray for them – it's a big stress as they're only young. (When Rose studied in Japan, she was older - at the end of High School and at University). Jairus (3) has started in a Japanese Kindy and loves it. Boaz (1) is delightful.

Needless to say Rose has a



Jan and I have just spent five weeks in Japan, so here's some reflections on our travels, the Evans family and the church/Christianity in Japan.

The 'Evans 8' and the work in Japan

by John Langbridge

full programme with the family, supporting John and running the hospitality that they're so good at.

Religious and cultural matters (sorry for any generalisations)

The two main religions of Japan are Shinto and Buddhism.

Shinto shrines are everywhere, in streets, caves, on hills and rocky outcrops. It's the indigenous religion, polytheistic and animistic. Shinto gods or spirits must be appeased with offerings of the best things. In the supermarkets, you can see specially wrapped items of fruit (very best quality and expensive) which are purchased to take to a shrine. There is little by way of written doctrine to this religion.

Buddhism was brought to Japan from China in the 6th century. It has no real god, but is based on the teachings and scriptures of the Buddha (who is worshipped and revered like a god). Buddha statues, pictures and carvings are everywhere – we were about Buddha-ed-out by the end of our travels.

Most Japanese people give at least nominal adherence to both religions.

To us as Westerners, we see two religions in many ways different and we wonder how the Japanese can honour both. A Japanese person (not Christian) explained it to us in this way: "The most important value

for us is 'harmony'. We harmonise the religions by going to a Shinto shrine for happy times like births and graduations; but for sad times, like funerals, we go to the Buddhist Temple. We support both because they are a part of who we are."

Now that makes it difficult for Christianity because not only is it seen as the religion of the foreigners, but it will not harmonise. We believe in one God, one way of salvation - all else is idolatry.

It also means that for a Japanese person to take on Christianity is to become virtually 'un-Japanese'.

On our first Sunday I attended two morning services – one Japanese, the other bi-lingual (at which I baptised Boaz).

Between them some folk gathered for an English language "Bible study". I was asked to speak to them. We covered numerous topics including my testimony, evolution, God's law.

At the end I asked the leader if that was what she wanted. She said it was good, but did I realise that of the dozen or so people there, only one was a Christian.

I learned that, unlike our country in which many people call themselves 'Christian' with little understanding and no real faith, in Japan, people are clear "I am not a Christian", even though many of them attend the church. This is partly an enquiring mind, with perhaps some desire for exposure to English language.

Our churches are mostly believers with perhaps a few 'visitor/enquirers'. Their churches have many.

The Japanese church pastor came to lunch after these services, and in the conversation he asked, "Why is it that when Australians become Christians, it's a fairly quick process, but Japanese people take years?" The answer given covered the issues I have mentioned and also that Australians (even the non-religious) accept the idea of one God and that He has laws for His followers to live by; whereas Japanese people believe in many gods, and morality is a matter for the individual or group.

Another interesting church issue was that a lady missionary had been dealing with two church women who had a disagreement. As a result, one of them was about to leave the church. Why? Because that was the way to maintain harmony. When the biblical understanding of forgiveness and reconciliation was pointed out to her, her response was that it was so terribly hard, she had never been involved in anything like that.

We made note of the fact that in all our travels, the Japanese people were

standards as the rest of the group (harmony). But underneath may be another story.

Japan is virtually the world capital for pornography and child pornography. Some husbands dominate, but often neglect, their wives and families in favour of work and a mistress. Some High School girls sell themselves to earn money for clothes and cosmetics etc.

I find it hard to be too harsh in criticism when we look to the moral tone of our own nation. I suppose what makes it so surprising is that the undercurrents are in such stark contrast to the politeness and harmony of Japanese culture.

Conclusion

When John and Rose first went to Japan, I confess that I harboured at least an inkling of a resentful attitude.

What's wrong with the Japanese Christians that they can't evangelise their own people! I know the church is small in numbers and percentage of the population, but why do they need our missionaries?

I now realise that Japanese Christians find evangelism totally counter-cultural. With their adherence to their social group they tend not to socialize or even greet others outside their group.

So while becoming a Christian might be a long hard road, and they may very well be cut off from their social group, and even family, as a result, at least they can enjoy the fellowship of the church (so long as they keep in harmony). But to go beyond that and to witness to others is terribly confronting for them.

That's why John and the team will be targeting University students for their church plant. Hopefully the younger students will be more malleable and able to assess the good and bad of their culture. It's notable that church growth in Japan has mostly taken place through church planting by overseas missionaries.

I think I've given you plenty to pray about regarding 'The Evans 8', the church and the Christians in Japan. If you want more information, I'm happy to talk to you.



Baptism of Boaz in the Japanese Church

CLAYFIELD COLLEGE Bayview Terrace, Clayfield

SATURDAY 28 JUNE 2PM - 8PM

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF QUEENSLAND PRESENTS ...

CELEBRATION RALLY

ALL FREE - Climbing Wall, Jumping Castle, Animal Farm, Mini Jeeps, Lane Train, Carousel, Face Painting, BBQ

2.00pm Fantastic Family Fun Features/Ministry Displays 4.30-6pm Barbecue 6.30-8pm Rally

Rally features guest choirs, musical items, popular hymn singing, special children's segment and more. Come and bring your friends.

Rally Speaker: David Thurston

David has a gift for sharing God's Word in a relevant and meaningful way - both for Christians and non-Christians alike. He and his wife Kath have been married for 32 years and have been involved in a variety of ministries during this time. They have been blessed with three adult children - Lucy, James and Victoria. David has many friends in Queensland and is looking forward to seeing them and making some new ones. David will be speaking on *All Things to All Men? - The Church's responsibility in living and proclaiming Christ clearly and boldly.*

Barbecue numbers needed by 10 June - phone Guido on 3216 4151



Rev. John Evans with Ivy and Rev John Langbridge outside Oyumino Presbyterian Church, Chiba

Humanity and The Gospel of Jesus Christ

by Robyn Bain and Andrew Poyser on behalf of the Public Questions and Communications Committee

‘MAN NEVER achieves a clear knowledge of himself unless he has first looked upon God’s face, and then descends from contemplating Him to scrutinise himself.’ – John Calvin

This paper will argue for the Reformed Evangelical perspective that humanity’s true nature and purpose can only be understood in the light of the Gospel.

A biblical and theological survey will make the following key points:

- God created human beings to reflect His image.
- Humanity’s task of reflecting the image of God was disastrously marred by the sinful decision to reject God, bringing death and judgement.
- God’s Son, the man Jesus Christ, perfectly reflected God and showed us what humanity is meant to be. Jesus died and rose on behalf of sinful people to rescue them from the penalty of sin, conform them to His own image, and bring eternal life.

Implications of the biblical doctrine of humanity for some of the questions and situations we face in modern Australia will then be canvassed.

The Gospel and Humanity: Biblical and Theological Survey

Humanity - Made in God’s Image

The clear testimony of the Bible is that the world, in all its vast complexity, was created by our sovereign and mighty God. At the apex of the creation event, God freely spoke humanity into existence, breathing His gift of life into them, so that they would live in loving relationship with Him. Hence humanity cannot claim to be self-made or merely the product of random biological processes. Neither can humans claim to be autonomous beings. We were made to be God’s wholly dependant creatures and true freedom is found in joyful dependence on and obedience to Him.

God’s assessment of His creation was that it was “very good”. Because God was satisfied and delighted with His workmanship, we should accept and enjoy God’s created order with thanksgiving. Humanity, however, was not made to be simply another part of creation. God intimately crafts each man and woman, heart, soul, mind and body, for the special dignity of bearing His image in the world. Being made in the image of God is fundamental to a right understanding of our human identity.

In bearing the image of God, human beings were given a position of both honour and responsibility before Him. Humanity was crowned with glory and honour, and endowed with the knowledge, rational and creative powers to be royal rulers over God’s creation. The first human beings, Adam and Eve, were to rule as mirrors of God’s radiant character and glory. Their mandate was to fill the earth and subdue it, bringing all creation under control and order. In this role, humanity answered solely to the Creator. They were given the ability to rule in holiness and righteousness, with the liberty of their own will and yet within the finite boundaries of their humanity. God commanded Adam that he could enjoy eating from any tree in the Garden but he must not grasp for autonomy by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or he would surely die.

In the Garden, Adam and Eve did not lead the lives of solitary individuals but were enmeshed in loving relationships with God and each other. God did not remain aloof from them but revealed Himself with the rich intimacy of speaking. They enjoyed ongoing personal relationship with God as they worked the Garden of Eden, hearing Him, talking to Him, and learning to love and worship Him. The woman was made for the special purpose of being a helper for the man in the task of caring for the Garden. Both men and women were created in God’s image, sharing status, dignity and value as humans, and serving one another in complementary ways.

Humanity, however, has fallen far from its glorious state in the Garden of Eden. What has gone wrong?

Humanity – the Fall into Sin

Satan deceived Adam and Eve into mistrusting God’s goodness and faithfulness. Tragically, they grasped for self-rule and disobeyed God’s command by eating from the tree of good and evil. Rather than hearing and doing God’s Word, they sought to be judges over it. They failed to honour God as God and to live up to His standard of righteousness. Rather than freedom, however, they found themselves enslaved to the tyrannical and deadly rule of sin and Satan.

The clear but confronting message of the Bible is that all human beings are under the power and mastery of sin. Adam was the first to sin (the Fall) and all humanity stands in solidarity with him in his guilt and corruption. All people are born with a corrupt nature, unable to consistently resist temptation and to love and serve God in righteousness as we were made to do. We are unavoidably and inescapably enslaved to sin.

Sin resides deep within the hearts of each person and affects the entire being – the will, understanding, emotions, speech, relationships, behaviour and body. At the heart of sin is the refusal to worship God and live according to His will. We foolishly question and strive against our Creator, loving and desiring the things He has made instead of Him. The fullest expression of sin is the unwillingness to have faith in the one whom God has sent, His Son Jesus Christ, and in rejecting the Gospel concerning Him. This fundamental rebellion gives rise to an endless variety of sinful values, habits, orientations, acts, thoughts and words. Sin entangles and damages each person to the very depths of their being. Our alienation from our Creator renders us spiritually dead.

Sometimes sin fills us with self-loathing and distress. At other times we celebrate our wrongdoing. We easily deny the full extent of our sin or our need to be delivered from it. We are quick to blame others or our circumstances rather than acknowledge our own guilt before God. Sin distorts our understanding of the world and hardens our hearts towards God as we actively suppress the truth of God. We go to great and often sophisticated lengths to deny God’s authority in our lives and elevate our own.

Sin cannot be overcome by education or social and personal engineering. Human nature is not basically decent, being corrupted only by circumstances, ignorance or aberrant genes. Presented with an opportunity, each person’s natural tendency is to choose to sin. Even the best of acts are motivated by hearts that fail to love God and others to the full. The responsibility for sin lies squarely at the door of each individual person. God can never be charged with causing anyone to sin.

Because of sin, all people have become God’s enemies and sit under the condemnation of God, the righteous judge of all. We are unable to fix the damage we have caused and make ourselves right with God again. We deserve only God’s wrath and punishment. As part of His punishment, God gives people over to unfettered expression of their sin and its disastrous consequences. Ultimately, however, God’s punishment for sin is death – not only physical death but, after the final judgement, the death of eternal separation from God and its torment. Our lives, therefore, are haunted by the fear of death and its aftermath. In the face of death, we are forced to acknowledge that we are not, in fact, the rulers of self we desire to be.

The effects of sin are not only seen in the individual but inevitably overflow to the family, society and environment, causing disorder, competition, broken relationships, pain, sorrow and destruction in a myriad of complex ways and often on a massive scale. When people seek to become their own masters and determine the nature of goodness themselves, others are inevitably devalued and used for selfish ends.

Human beings did not, however,

lose their status as the image bearers of God in the Fall. The Bible states that no person should be killed or cursed as each still bears the image of God and the value it entails. The image is marred and disfigured by sin because we are unable to reflect the righteousness of God and serve Him in full obedience and honour. We do, however, continue to feebly rule creation with a measure of intelligent and creative power.

Despite humanity’s rebellion and the havoc that ensues, however, God does not withdraw from His creation but remains entirely in control. He shows common grace to all, restraining sinners from doing all the evil that is possible and enabling people to perform right deeds even if their motives and aims fall short of His righteousness. He upholds, directs and sustains every person and creature, from the least to the greatest. God graciously shows compassion on all people, enabling friendships and families to form, sustaining the environment, providing beauty and artistic insight, and establishing governments.

Behind every event in history, no matter how disastrous, God’s sovereign hand is at work accomplishing His purposes. It is in His Son Jesus Christ, however, that God’s plan of salvation for sinful people is fully and gloriously realised.

Humanity – Renewed in the Image of Christ

Although sin and death entered the world through Adam, God’s incredible mercy and the gift of eternal life have triumphantly entered through His Son, the man Jesus Christ. Rather than abandoning us to our punishment, God speaks graciously to us in Jesus, His definitive Word to humanity. Jesus is fully God, being the second person of the Trinity and the one through and for whom the creation is created and held together. All the wisdom, knowledge and fullness of God and His Spirit dwell within Him.

According to God’s plan, however, He took on the nature of man and stepped into history to dwell amongst us. The natures of both God and man are inseparably joined together in Jesus. He was born as a baby, experienced tiredness and sadness, endured temptation and suffering and ultimately was subject to death – yet He was entirely without sin in thought, word or deed. Unlike Adam, He was able to resist and rule over Satan. He is the one human being who has ever lived who has perfectly manifested the image of God in full righteousness and willing obedience to His Heavenly Father, exercising godly and compassionate dominion over creation. Jesus used His freedom to love and serve God and His neighbour in humility, selflessness and grace. In Christ we see the way humanity was made to reflect the glory of God. Moreover, in His extraordinary mercy, God’s plan is to make Him the first amongst many brothers and sisters who are renewed in the image of Christ.

For rebellious people to be conformed to the image of Christ, however, sin must be comprehensively and decisively dealt with. The glorious news of the Gospel is that God has taken this task of salvation upon Himself, offering sinners salvation and eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. Standing in our place as our perfect representative, Jesus died on the cross as the atoning sacrifice for the sin of His people, absorbing God’s wrath and allowing God’s forgiveness to overflow to us. As Jesus calls out ‘It is finished’ with his last breath, the temple veil was torn in two, signalling that Christ’s death was sufficient to reconcile us to God and that the penalty for our sin was fully paid. Moreover, Jesus was declared to be the eternal victor over sin and death in His resurrection.

God enables those He has predestined in His mercy to accept Christ’s sacrifice for them by faith and rest upon Him for their salvation. Furthermore, He declares them to be His beloved adopted children in Christ, glorious new creations in

whom He dwells in His Spirit. Since, as God’s children, we receive right standing with God through faith as a gift, we know we have nothing to boast about. Without Jesus, we would be lost, and so we are to relate to God and to our neighbours with a deep sense of humility and thankfulness.

God’s Spirit also frees His children for obedience, that is, the continual process of putting off the old self of sin and putting on the new self, which has been renewed in the image of Christ in true righteousness and holiness. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control are the ever-developing characteristics of the Spirit-led life. The Spirit does not work in us only as individuals, but as closely together as God’s church and Christ’s body. Together, we strive to be a community who is constantly nourished by the Gospel of Jesus and sharing it with fellow sinners.

Under the sovereignty of God, however, many people prefer to continue in their imprisonment to sin and self-deception, refusing to accept the Gospel of Jesus. In fact they reject Jesus and those who belong to Him with hostility, shown most horrifyingly in the crucifixion. The reality is that, in this current age, God’s rule is often hidden under much apparent ambiguity and injustice. Sinful people often prosper while God’s people often suffer in weakness. Christians themselves continue to sin against others, often grievously. Tragedy strikes people with seeming randomness. However, God continues to draw sinners to Himself through the declaration of His Gospel, as He draws history closer to His day of judgement.

On the Last Day, God’s righteousness will be made obvious to all humanity. Jesus will judge and destroy every trace of rebellion against Him and place everything under the rule of God. All the dead will be bodily resurrected. Those who have disobeyed the Gospel of Jesus will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction. All God’s children, however, will be resurrected in Christ. Our glorious, uncorrupted bodies, minds and hearts will fully reflect Christ and we will live eternally in the company of God. The new heavens and new earth, liberated from the stain of sin, will be enjoyed by God’s beloved children forever.

The Gospel and Humanity: Implications for Believers in the World

The greatest need of humanity is to hear and be transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Contemporary society is crowded with varying accounts of humanity. The Gospel, however, cuts across all these accounts, clearly revealing God’s decisive Word on the life of human beings. It is the Gospel that must comprehensively shape our understanding of ourselves and others as we speak with believers and unbelievers alike. There are three particular reasons for this:

Firstly, humanity cannot rule, shape or rescue itself – only God can do that. Everything we need to know about ourselves comes from God, not from within ourselves. In the Gospel, God addresses the whole of humanity. It tells us that God shapes and creates us, that we are entirely dependent on Him for our being, and that He has the authority to judge us at the end of history. Moreover, despite our rebellion, God shows that He is committed to humanity and His creation in the death and resurrection of His Son on our behalf. It is God who provides the way back to right relationship with Him through Jesus. Therefore, every person is called to turn from his or her own way and listen to Him.

Secondly, it is through faith in the Gospel that God frees us to be truly human, as He made us to be. Through Jesus’ death and resurrection, the power of sin is broken, sinful human beings are born again to eternal life, and we are liberated to know and serve God in truth as we were created to do.

Thirdly, God’s call to His liberated

children is to love God and others, imitating Jesus who exemplified godly love. Truly loving others means desiring what is good for them. The Gospel declares that being known and loved by God through His Son, as well as knowing and loving Him, is the essence of the good for every person. Therefore, together as God’s people, we are committed to loving others by pointing them to Jesus with our words and lives.

We live, however, in communities where the majority of people are wedded to sin and reject the Gospel. In this context, we prayerfully strive to build church communities that model God’s plan for true community, loving and serving one another through God’s Word and His Spirit. We do not cocoon ourselves from our communities, nor conform to their standards, nor do we become combative as if we can force this world to be what it will only be upon Christ’s return. Instead we humbly seek the ‘Gospel-shaped’ good for our communities at all levels of participation, hoping that some might even be saved through our proclamation of the Gospel and demonstration of Christ’s love.

The biblical doctrine of humanity is a great starting point for conversation with unbelievers. Every person is concerned about humanity – its problems, its welfare, where it is going – even if only at the level of one’s own personal welfare! But there is great confusion about the answers. New challenges to the understanding of humanity are constantly arising as society morphs and develops. At the heart of even the most complex situations, however, the same, basic biblical principles about humanity are at stake. Outlined below are some significant implications of the Gospel for the questions and assumptions about humanity we face in our current Australian context.

• What God Thinks of Us Matters Most

Sinful human beings tend to look everywhere other than God for their identity and security. They may look to their relationships, community roles, financial status, achievements, failures or sexuality. Whereas all these things are important aspects of our created life, they do not sit at the heart of our identity. In fact, they may blind us to our true identity. The Gospel declares to every person that it is God’s knowledge of us that is most important. We were made to reflect and know Him, we have turned away from Him and face God’s judgement, and we need to grasp hold of the loving sacrifice of Jesus to be reconciled to God and truly find ourselves again in Him.

• All Human Beings are Inherently Valuable

The value of each person is not determined by his or her usefulness, abilities or economic status. It is not conferred on us by other people. Although the image of God in us has been grossly distorted by sin, it nevertheless remains and declares us inherently valuable. By sending His Son to die for human beings, God shows how precious we are in His sight. Weakness and disability, far from making us less valuable, remind us that we are all God’s dependent creatures. It is, therefore, our job to accept rather than define the value God gives to all people. We should love all people regardless of age, race, gender, personality, sexual orientation, capabilities, political persuasion or criminal record. We should particularly protect the weak and powerless.

• Human Life is Precious

Life is the gift of God and it is to be treasured. When we consider that God creates and maintains life, that He has affirmed the value of human life in the incarnation of Jesus, and that He paves the way to eternal life in Jesus, we can see that the life God gives us ought to be treasured. Moreover, death is the great enemy in the Bible. Therefore, we do not take

continued on page 15



FEATURE TRACKS

**PROCLAIMING THE LORD JESUS
CHRIST BY WORD AND DEED**

GOSPEL OPPORTUNITY: MOUNT MAGNET, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

SUPPORT REQUESTED FOR OUTBACK WORK

Mount Magnet, Western Australia, is a mining town located 6 hours drive north-west of Perth. It is a regional centre with a population of around 500 people.

The Mid West Patrol is based in Mount Magnet. The current Patrol Padre, Bert Pierce, together with his wife Penny is due to retire sometime this year. They have served the people of the patrol and community with great distinction over many years and will be greatly missed. The PIM has a church building and manse in Mount Magnet.

Who will reach the people of the Patrol and community with the gospel after the Pierces leave?

The town and patrol has a significant Aboriginal population and for this reason the Australian Presbyterian World Mission has entered into a partnership with PIM to help fund the cost of the new Patrol Padre for the Mid West Patrol and Mount Magnet PIM church.

Late last year APWM & PIM interviewed Surendra and May'an Wesley in relation to the upcoming vacancy at Mount

Magnet. Surendra was born in India and May'an in New Zealand. Both have lived in Australia for extended periods and have experience in rural and outback environments. Surendra has just completed his theological studies in India.

The mission field is clear. The new potential workers have appeared. The next step is to raise the needed support for this ministry. APWM has set the goal of raising \$30 000 a year in team support for Surendra and May'an. APWM is looking for people to become prayer and financial partners in this gospel initiative to the people of outback Western Australia. Will you consider becoming a partner?

If you would like to be part of this ministry, please use the **RESPONSE FORM** on the **NEXT PAGE**.



Surendra, May'an and Gabriella Wesley



Mount Magnet PIM Church

PIM THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS AND BEYOND

Please contact Robert Benn if your congregation, presbytery or church group in NSW would like an interesting and informative PIM presentation.
02 4757 4144 • 0431 062 853

ALSOPS SENT OUT

PIM PRESENCE IN DROUGHT AFFECTED CENTRAL QUEENSLAND

The Superintendent with some members of the Central Queensland Presbytery and David and Kathy Alsop the day after their commissioning service to the work of the Central Patrol



JOIN US IN JUNE IN BELTANA STRENGTHENING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

We are asking for help to proclaim the gospel clearly in one of the remote areas of Australia.

Offered is a chance to be part of a team to "make disciples of all nations" Matt 28:18-19 and to have a taste of what it is like to work for the Presbyterian Inland Mission.

Why: to reach the residents in Beltana and the small surrounding towns, stations and travels with the message of God's love and saving grace through Jesus' death and resurrection

When: June long weekend every year, while we are the PIM team in SA

Where: Beltana (small township at the northern end of the Flinders Ranges)

How: provide dinner, entertainment (we may have a Christian bush poet, looking for other entertainers) and a short evangelistic talk on Saturday night, Church service and lunch on Sunday morning in Beltana's Smith of Dunesk Mission building. Details will be finalised when we know who is coming and what gifts they bring.

Accommodation: Beltana Station (they cater for tourism as well as being a working sheep station – with a few

cattle, camels and alpacas). Please check them out on Facebook or website. Accommodation types: motel room type (men's quarters), bunk room (shearers quarters) and facilities for campers. It also has a huge communal area and a homestyle restaurant / cafe. Award winning.

FAQ

Do I need a 4WD to get there?

No. The roads are sealed until the last approx. 10km. The dirt road is routinely used by the local school bus so is usually in very good order.

How do I get there?

Mostly participants drive. One family flew to Adelaide and drove to Beltana in a rented car. One couple used it to launch their grey nomad sojourn around parts of Australia.

What else is there to do out there?

Photography / painting/ sketching – brilliant scenes and the ancient ruins at Puttapa springs and Beltana township make great subjects.

4WDing – on the station and in the Flinders

Experience a different way of life – check out station life or the local small towns in the area. Recommend Copley bakery award winning quondong pies. Blinman for arts and crafts. Check www.beltanastation.com.au, www.arkaroola.com.au, www.igawarta.com (excellent Aboriginal cultural experience) & www.flindersranges.com

Saturday morning is used for letterbox dropping and a working bee on the Beltana Mission Church building (over 130 yrs old) and grounds.

Sunday afternoon is open to whatever the group wants to do. Last year, the people who were interested in outreach to local aboriginals were taken to some settlements and David introduced them to Christian workers doing just that, some went to Puttapa Springs/ ruins of the original homestead and some stayed and put their feet up.

There is more that we can tell you. Please contact us for further information.

David and Gae McDonald,
John Flynn Patrol, SA

NEW LOOK FOR PIM CLEAR EMPHASIS ON REMOTE MINISTRY REINFORCED

The PIM has begun its second hundred years of ministry with a newly designed logo and a revamped corporate look.

Reflected in the new logo and colour scheme are both the ministry, and the remote localities that the PIM serves in.

The new logo is shaped like a road sign. The intersecting circles and Southern Cross represent PIM's unique Christian mission. The colour

scheme was specifically chosen to represent the aridness of much of Australia's landscape.

The Superintendent of the PIM, Stuart Bonnington, said the design of the new logo was just what PIM was looking for. 'It is fantastic' he said.

The new look for the PIM will be phased in over the next three months.

The new logo was officially launched at the PIM Rally held at Donvale Presbyterian Church in Melbourne on

the 30th of January. It was approved by the Full Committee of the PIM when it met in Sydney the day before.

It was designed by Hilary Bruce a friend and supporter of the PIM.



Partnership

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALIAN PRESBYTERIAN WORLD MISSION

www.apwm.org.au • 81 Shaftesbury Road, Burwood NSW 2134 • 8073 7490 • national@apwm.org.au

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



APWM
Australian Presbyterian
World Mission

KEEP ON PLEADING WITH GOD

Many of you will know the famous words of Jesus when he told his disciples, *The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field* (Matthew 9:37-38). Jesus presents a clear contrast between the abundance of the harvest and the number of people who are willing to gather in the harvest. We catch a glimpse of the

enormity of the harvest in Revelation 7:9 where the apostle John writes *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 before the Lamb.* 'No one could count...' — that's some harvest!

But with such a plentiful harvest, why would there be so few workers? It

doesn't make much sense. However, Jesus clearly tells us the answer — we need to ask God for them.

I continue to be grateful to God for the steady stream of people offering to serve as overseas missionaries. Please don't take this for granted. Please continue to pray that God will raise up people who will devote themselves to taking the gospel out both here in Australia and overseas.

Some will do this on a full-time basis while others will do it as part of the ministry they have alongside their regular employment.

Since 1977, God has blessed the Presbyterian Church of Australia in enormous ways. Let's not take that for granted. Let's continue to plead with God that he will raise up more men and women who will take the gospel with them wherever they go.



KEVIN MURRAY

UPDATES

Please join with us in praising God that He continues to raise up new people to serve in cross-cultural mission.

Paul and Jenny (Kingaroy, Qld, ICC) were recently approved to serve in East Asia.



Robert & Katie Hovenden (Tocumwal-Finley NSW MAF, Australia) have been approved as APWM missionaries. Their ministry is strategic for the spread of the gospel in the Northern Territory.



ROBERT & KATIE HOVENDEN

Jared (Maroochydore QLD OM, West Asia) has been approved as APWM missionary. He will be involved in sharing the gospel and discipleship. Contact jared.d.b87@gmail.com



IAN & ERIN REID

Ian and Erin Reid (Randwick NSW APWM Associates, New Zealand) have been approved as APWM missionaries. They serve in university ministry with students in Palmerston North, New Zealand.



MICK ALLEY

Mick Alley (Grace Presbyterian Church, Newcastle, NSW AIM International, Kenya) has been approved as an APWM missionary. Mick will be serving among the Samburu in North Kenya doing discipleship, church planting & medical relief.



Neil & Rowan (Woonona, NSW, Pioneers, South East Asia) have recently been approved as APWM missionaries.

Joy Venning (Canterbury Vic, APWM Associate South Asia) has been approved as an APWM missionary to serve at the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Dehra Dun. Joy writes "I will have an opportunity to serve in a Bible College. This is where young men and women



JOY VENNING

come to train to prepare to be pastors and Bible teachers. They will eventually go all across India, and the whole wide world to teach the Bible in churches and communities. I'm excited to be able to love them and serve them as they prepare for ministry. It's exciting to think of the way God will use these individuals as he builds his church in India. And it's exciting to be able to be part of it!"



MARTIN EAGLE

Martin Eagle has completed his home assignment and returned to Myanmar in mid-May. He will teach at the Reformed Bible Institute, the Bible College of the Evangelical Reformed Church of Myanmar. For more information on Martin please see matt2819.com/Myanmar

SOUTH SUDAN: RHYS & RHONDDA HALL AND MOTOR YAT

The current conflict and bloodshed in South Sudan is bringing a great deal of heartache to our South Sudanese brothers and sisters. APWM has three missionaries serving in South Sudan:

Rhys and Rhondda Hall have just completed home assignment in Australia. They serve with ACROSS and have just returned to the southern centre of Yei in South Sudan. As Westerners they will be relatively safe.

Motor Yat serves in the northern centre of Malakal which has been severely affected by fighting with much damage to the town. The house which Motor was renting has been looted. Motor was recently in Australia on home assignment and is now in Ethiopia where he is ministering to South Sudanese refugees until the situation in South Sudan becomes clearer. Thank you to those who have been praying for the ministry of the gospel in South Sudan.



RHYS AND RHONDDA HALL



MOTOR YAT

NEW OFFICE

APWM has moved into its new office at 81 Shaftesbury Road, Burwood. It is now located within the buildings of Christ College, the Presbyterian Theological Centre. We are grateful for the very warm welcome we have received. Due to the slowness of one of Australia's largest telecommunications companies it has taken many months to obtain a new phone number. Our new

number is (02) 8073 7490 which may now be operational. This has meant that all of the publicity that we would normally send out early in the new year has been delayed. It will now be sent out as soon as possible.



MISSIONARIES NEEDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Partner Church missionaries in need of increased regular financial support:

Surendra and May'an Wesley

APWM is working with Presbyterian Inland Mission to send Surendra and May'an to Mount Magnet, Western Australia, to serve as PIM Padres which will include a ministry to Aboriginal people.



SURENDRA & MAY'AN WESLEY

Nathan & Tomoko Stewart (Browns Plains, QLD, APWM National) are currently raising partnership support to serve in Japan. They can be contacted on 0422 853 800 or nathan@stewartfamily.id.au

If you are able to pledge support for any of these missionaries then please use the form on this page.



NATHAN & TOMOKO STEWART

PRAYER AND FINANCE Response Form

Please send to: **APWM**

81 Shaftesbury Rd, Burwood NSW 2134

Name _____

Address _____ Postcode _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Church _____

I would like to support the following:

Missionary's Name _____

☐ Please send me the missionary's prayer letter.

☐ APWM ministry in a particular country _____

Please indicate an amount

☐ \$20 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100

☐ other \$ _____

Please indicate how regular your payment will be:

☐ one-off ☐ monthly ☐ quarterly

☐ half-yearly ☐ yearly

Four Ways to Give

1 Cheque (made out to 'Australian Presbyterian World Mission')

2 Credit card ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard
Name on card: _____

Expires: ____/____

Signature: _____

Date of first payment _____

3 Direct debit

Your account name(s): _____

Signature _____

BSB _____

Account number _____

Bank name _____

Date of first payment _____

4 Direct deposit

Account: **Australian Presbyterian World Mission** BSB: 032-260

Account number: 151207

Please write your name and the surname of the missionary you are supporting in the description box.

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

finance@apwm.org.au

02 8073 7490

www.apwm.org.au/supporting/finance

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.



REX AND JOAN BURNS

In 1977, with the formation of the Uniting Church, the Presbyterian Church of Australia had to consider what its missionary work would look like. There were many men and women who tirelessly gave of themselves in laying the foundation for the newly-formed Australian Presbyterian World Mission. One of them was Dr Rex Burns, a dentist from the Hurstville, NSW, congregation. Rex served initially as the Convener of APWM NSW for 8 years before being Convener of the APWM Federal Committee also for 8 years. Rex and his wife Joan would travel overseas to meet church leaders, encourage missionaries and

carry out vital dental work.

Rex and Joan had a keen interest in Aboriginal ministry and would often travel to Mount Druitt to visit the Rev Rick Manton to pray with him. Rex once wrote "Worship services are held each Sunday in the Tregear Anglican Church made available for their use. This has only been commenced in early 1999 and is growing as more people hear of it and recognise it as 'their own church' – a place for their families to come together. This area has the largest Aboriginal population in Australia, with many needs – but what more important than the gospel – 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that



REX AND JOAN BURNS

whosoever believes in him, shall not perish but have eternal life.' This is the message they proclaim and many are responding."

Joan died a few years ago and Rex died in late March. In more recent years Rex battled the ravages of dementia. Praise God that he is now home at last with Christ.

SUE LETCHER

Some of you will know that Sue Letcher, wife of Rev Cliff Letcher, went to be with Christ on the 25th of March. Sue had been unwell for some time. Together they served as APWM missionaries with AIM (Australian Indigenous Ministries). Cliff writes "Some of you have read about us and many of you have prayed for us regularly. We have valued deeply that bond in Christ.

During these past couple of years or so we have been very aware of the support of our brothers and sisters in Christ. It has been a very difficult journey for us, but a journey that provided us with a greater depth of love for our Lord and for each other.

Throughout all this time Sue wanted most of all to bring honour to our Lord and be a godly witness to others. We would not have been able to endure that time, or honour our Lord without His presence and your part in our journey.

Many of you have wanted to help but felt helpless. Let me tell you that you have helped by your prayers, cards, letters, emails, phone calls and even



CLIFF AND SUE LETCHER

by text messages. It has been such a help to know that we have not been alone during this time.

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the great historical event that demonstrates this power of God so that we can know that we too will become like our risen Lord. In the face of the death of a dear loved one life makes no sense without this sure and certain eternal hope.

Grief, as many of you will have experienced personally, is all encompassing and takes time to process. In my mind I understand the precious truths of the gospel, in

particular the resurrection, but in my heart the loss of Sue overwhelms me. If that sense of loss is so great in this life, imagine what it will be like for many of those we love who are outside of Christ, and indeed the many we do not even know, who will face that eternal grief of separation from God and from loved ones unless they hear and respond to the good news of Jesus.

Again I want to thank you for prayerfully standing with us over the years, and with me now as I make the difficult journey of facing life without Sue. May we all prayerfully stand together for those who are facing eternity without our Saviour and Lord.

'Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.' 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

TEACHING IN VANUATU?

Brian and Judy Cullen are APWM Associate Missionaries teaching at a Presbyterian Church High School in Vanuatu. They will finish serving at the end of 2014.

There is a need for a Christian maths/science teacher and other teachers at Tata Secondary School on the island

of Santo near the Talua Ministry Training Centre. Is God calling you to serve in such a ministry for a minimum of two years. APWM Associate missionaries are usually self-funded or seek support from friends and others. If you would like to know more then please contact Kevin Murray.



BRIAN & JUDY CULLEN

PARTNER AGENCY MISSIONARIES IN NEED OF INCREASED REGULAR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Paul & Jenny Rayner (Central Church Ipswich, QLD, Pioneers, South East Asia) have been accepted to teach at a school in South East Asia. They are now seeking to develop partnership support and can be contacted at therayners@internode.on.net or 0413 451 140

If you would like to support these missionaries then please contact their agency. If you need help with this then please contact our office.



RAYNER FAMILY

AUSTRALIAN PRESBYTERIAN WORLD MISSION www.apwm.org.au

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WENDY HENRY TALKS WITH LYN NICOL, ONE OF THE SPEAKERS AT THE RECENT SYMPOSIUM ON WOMEN'S MINISTRIES, ABOUT A NEW INITIATIVE BY CABOOLTURE CHURCHES IN REACHING OUT TO TEENAGE GIRLS

Wendy: Welcome Lyn! At the symposium many people were surprised and some were rather excited to hear your story about what has been happening in Caboolture. So tell us first what the organisation is called and who is involved in this work.

Lyn: We have called ourselves Teen Link Caboolture and we are enthusiastically supported and underwritten by the local Ministers' Network. We have used the word 'Teen', as it allows the possibility of a ministry to boys if the human resources (ie the men!) become available. 'Link' suggests many levels of connection: with God, themselves, peers, family, community. We run a number of weekend camps for teenage girls from local high schools. Camp leaders are women who come from a number of churches in the Caboolture/Morayfield area, with a strong representation from the Presbyterian Church.

W: What are your goals?

L: Our aim is to show the love of God to teenage girls who are struggling with what life is bringing their way. This is best achieved in the context of strong relationships as we share life over a weekend. Our objectives can be summed up in our mission statement: "The mission of Teen Link Caboolture is to empower, equip and train teens to bring them hope and healing, that they may enjoy healthy relationships and live balanced, productive lives. Teen Link Caboolture seeks to relate to teens with compassion and understanding under God's grace and with the guidance of the Bible."

W: Why did you feel the need for a ministry of this nature?

L: I was first challenged to start this ministry as a result of the women's meeting of the State Assembly in 2011. Letitia Shelton from City Women in Toowoomba spoke of the significant challenges facing young girls today – things such as body image, early sexualisation, self-harm, cyber-bullying, pressure for early sexual activity, binge drinking and the brokenness of many families. As Christians we should be in the forefront of making a difference in their lives, not just allowing ourselves to think that it's too hard, and thus effectively abandoning a generation to the world.

W: So how did you identify the girls that would benefit most from a program like this?

L: There is a very strong relationship between the churches and the high school chaplains in Caboolture and this is a key link for identifying the girls. Each chaplain, in consultation with the school support staff, invites a number of girls whom they feel would benefit from a weekend of care and encouragement. Some of the girls are considered to be at risk, some are at a vulnerable point in their lives, some are struggling with adjusting to high school, some are being bullied, some are bullies, and most are from families who need some extra support with raising a teenager.

W: How did you get started?

L: There was a lot of prayer! However we saw God go ahead of us, preparing the way and preparing the leaders. John and I spent a couple

of hours with Letitia in Toowoomba, talking through some details of their program and we held a breakfast for church leaders in Caboolture, at which Letitia spoke and challenged people to become involved. From this came a list of interested people and we began meeting and planning how to go about running a camp. Three of us attended a Girls Getaway camp in Toowoomba to see first-hand how their weekend ran and then we put our L-plates on and held our first camp in April 2012.

W: And what are you doing currently?

L: We are continuing to run a Girls Getaway camp for Year 8 girls and last year added a camp for Year 9 girls, called Intimate Me. There is also a camp being planned for senior high schoolers, although its name has not yet been decided. As a follow-up to camps, we have held a couple of other activities such as a Mother-Daughter dinner, a Gingerbread House evening and a visit to local opportunity shops. In March this year we hosted a breakfast for the combined churches of Caboolture to showcase ministries to the community and to explore ways of supporting each other.

W: It seems that there are different camps for different ages, and with a different focus for each. How does that work?

L: At the moment we are targeting Year 8 girls for the Girls Getaway Camp. In 2015, when Year 7 becomes part of high school, this camp will be offered to Year 7 and 8 girls. The focus of this camp is to encourage the girls to identify their strengths and weakness, to follow their dreams, to build supportive relationships and to develop resilience in the face of life's challenges. In the Year 9 and 10 Intimate Me Camp, we specifically address the topic of healthy sexuality. We look at boy-girl relationships, what is real intimacy and the dangers of sexual experimentation at a young age. The year 11 and 12 camp for seniors, which is currently under construction, will explore growing independence and transitioning to young adulthood. We plan to cover topics such as budgeting, applying for a job, managing tertiary study, healthy relationships, balance in life, work and play, community involvement. We are keen to see campers coming back to several camps as they progress through high school. In this way relationships can be deepened. There have already been a number of return campers from Grade 8 into Grade 9 and this has been very encouraging.

W: What actually happens at these camps and where are they held?

L: The camps are held at the Australian Christian College, Moreton Campus, which is a growing p-12 private school, situated next to the Presbyterian Church. They offer their facilities to us for the weekend at no cost, which is a significant contribution, allowing us to charge only \$20 per camper and leader. We always have lots of fun on camps, with games and activities such as learning how to apply make-up well, choosing a hair style to suit your face shape, shopping for clothes to suit your body shape, craft activities of jewellery-making, and an art workshop. Not all of these happen at the one camp of course! There are also more serious teaching sessions specific to the camp, but still with lots of interaction and plenty of laughter. We also have a great team of cooks who provide delicious and nutritious food prepared in the school Home Economics room.

W: Who else comes along besides the girls themselves?

L: We usually have about 12 resident camp leaders and a number of guests who come in for specific segments. For example, on the Girls Getaway Camp, three young Christian men come for a session on what they look for in a girlfriend – this is usually quite an eye-opener for the girls to hear young men advise them not to bother with a boyfriend until the boys have matured a lot! On that same camp, a group of 'grandfather'-aged men attend for a session at Sunday lunch. They have each prayed for several girls by first name in the days preceding camp and they come to encourage the girls with a blessing from God. This has proven to be quite moving for the girls. For the Intimate Me camp, we have a medical panel of female doctors and



Lyn Nicol

midwives. They are able to give very helpful information on how the body works and can explain the dangers of sexually transmissible illnesses. An engaged couple has come to share the reasons for their decisions to wait until married to have sex. Also, there are experts on make-up, a hairdresser, clothes stylist and art therapist who share their skills at different points during camps.

W: How and when do you find an opportunity to talk about Jesus?

L: In the camp advertising we make it clear that it is a Christian camp and that the campers will be learning about God. We speak of Him throughout the camp as naturally as possible and there is a very specific Gospel presentation of about 20 minutes on the Sunday morning of each camp. The girls are offered a Bible with some information about how to read it.

W: What fruits have you seen from your labours over the past couple of years?

L: We need to expect that there will always be a lot of sowing of seed in these situations. However, there have been some encouraging responses. After our first Girls Getaway Camp in 2012, one of the girls attended a Scripture Union camp the following school holiday and she made a commitment to Christ on that camp. At the recent Intimate Me Camp, more than half of the twelve campers indicated on their feedback form that they now intended to wait until they were married to have sex. We continue to pray that God will bring the fruit that He intends from this work.

W: And where do you believe God is leading this project in the future?

L: There are a couple of things that we see on the horizon at the moment.

- One is the expansion and development of the three different camps and an increase in the impact on the lives of the girls.
- Another is the establishment of an incorporated body which will allow ministries such as Teen Link Caboolture to operate with legal and insurance cover. This is currently being set up by the Ministers' Network and will be a huge bonus to the community ministries of the area.
- I am very keen for there to be a monthly youth group for non-Christian girls which will echo the vibe of the camps and allow ongoing regular contact with the girls. At the moment we need the woman-power and a venue!
- There is a huge need for a similar ministry to teenage boys in the area. We have explored this a little and there has been interest from the men, but we need someone or a small group of men who would be willing to drive the project.

W: Thanks so much for encouraging us by sharing your story, and also for stretching the boundaries of our thinking about just what ministry to women might include! We pray that God will bless the work in Caboolture and that you will be encouraged by seeing many young lives turned around by the love of the Gospel.



Decorating muffins at camp

WOMEN @ PRAYER ...

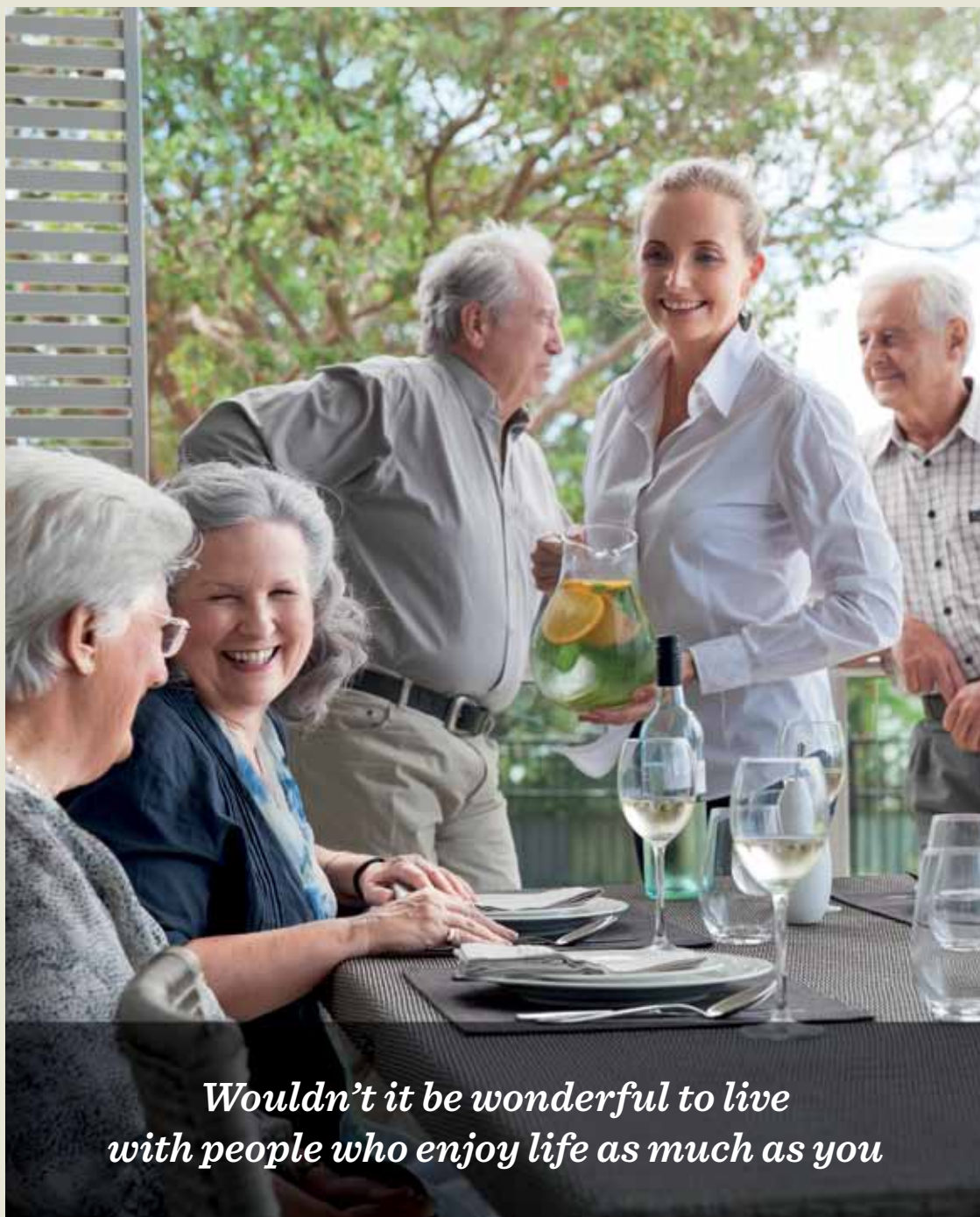
Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained. But happy is he who keeps the law.
Proverbs 29:18 (NASB)

- Praise God for the recent symposium where leaders in women's ministry met to share their vision for ministry to women in the Presbyterian Church of Queensland. Give thanks for the overall unity of people from diverse groups and backgrounds and for Love is patient, love is kind it always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. 1 Corinthians 13: 1, 7, 8.
- Praise God for the work of groups like "Teen Link" in Caboolture, as well as "City Women" in Toowoomba, in reaching out with the love of the Gospel to teenagers.
- Pray that others will take up the challenge of forming relationships and working with teen girls and boys in the struggles of life and in sharing Jesus' love with them.
- Give thanks for chaplains, working in schools with young people, and pray for many opportunities to be as Christ to them.
- Pray that churches might find ways to join together through networks to strengthen their opportunities to connect with young people and make a difference to where their lives are headed.
- Give thanks for the godly input of men (both young and old) into the lives of the girls attending Girls Getaway camps and that the girls will continue to be blessed by this positive input into their lives.
- Pray that we all might take on the responsibility to speak about Jesus naturally in our conversations and to be equipped to present the Gospel, in a simple form, to anyone who is ready to hear it.



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www.wmpcq.com, or email pcqwomen@gmail.com.

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Kingsford Terrace & Display Suite
260 Cliveden Avenue
Corinda Queensland 4075



PresCare and St Aidan's celebrate 85 years in the community



PresCare Board Chairman Wayne Knapp, St Aidan's Vice Principal Kim Kiepe and PresCare Executive Manager Business Development and Innovation, Mike Bosel

THE ENCHANTING sounds of the St Aidan's Anglican Girls' School harpist and string quartets entertained guests at PresCare's Friends of Kingsford Terrace event on Wednesday 30 April.

PresCare is celebrating 85 years of service to the community in 2014 and wanted a special program to celebrate this milestone. As a member of the Kingsford Terrace community, St Aidan's Anglican Girls' School was invited to create the musical program.

"We were thrilled to have the St Aidan's Anglican Girls' School harpist to play solo at our Kingsford Terrace event and for the performance of two string quartets", said Mike Bosel, PresCare's Executive Manager of Business Development and Innovation.

"But the evening was made more special by the fact that both PresCare and St Aidan's Anglican Girls' School are celebrating 85 years of service in 2014."

St Aidan's Anglican Girls' School Head of Creative Arts and Design Studies James Cuskelly said the girls enjoyed performing for Kingsford Terrace guests, and also appreciated the delicious catering provided by The Contented Chef!

Kingsford Terrace is PresCare's premium retirement living project being developed at Corinda on the former Hopetoun site. To book an appointment to tour the Kingsford Terrace display suite at Corinda call Matt and Safiya on 1300 287 672.



St Aidan's harpist, Momoko Nogita

The Beginning of History

THE PARTITIONING of India and Pakistan in 1947 was not the beginning of history, but it was a turning point for two nations.

The birth of Jesus of Nazareth was not the beginning of history, but it was a turning point for mankind.

The publication of the Navajo New Testament in 1956 was not the beginning of the Navajo church. That began 67 years earlier, but it was a turning point in their church history. The Navajo people bought out the first printing – and hundreds, then thousands of Navajos turned to Christ. The 60-year-old struggling church of 3,000 believers became 6,000, then 12,000, then 24,000, then 48,000 – all within ten years.

The Bible translation work of William Carey in India was not the beginning of Christianity in that country. That began 1,700 years earlier, but it was a turning point. After Carey's death the *London Review* wrote: 'Men talk of making history, but of all history makers none equal those who give men in their mother tongue the Word of God'. (*London Review* on Serampore, 1859)

History did not begin on 10 April 2014 for three ethnic groups in South Asia, but history made a significant U-turn.

Three weeks earlier, 25 potential mother tongue Bible translators came together in a building still under construction to learn how to translate the Bible into their languages for the first time in history.

While the workmen hammered away upstairs, the mother tongue translators learned to bang away on second-hand Australian government laptop computers, bought at auction by a Korean Presbyterian in Sydney.

The leader of one Buddhist ethnic group (from SW Myanmar) said, 'When the Bible is in our language, our people will believe. As it is, Christianity is a foreign religion with a foreign holy book.'

The leader of a second group is not a mother tongue speaker; he belongs to a related language that has had the Bible for more than 100 years. He said, 'My elder brother said to me, 'In our language we have the Bible, we have hymn books and we have other literature. These people have nothing.' My brother runs a school for children from this ethnic group which is mostly ignored by the government. My brother said, 'You should take some theological training and come and help these people'. Last month I completed my masters degree. Now I am ready to serve these people in Bible translation.'

The leader of the third group is still a university student. He is taking time out from his studies, with family approval, to take Bible translation training. Translating the Bible into his language will not be the beginning of Christianity for them – already 50% of their ethnic group are believers, and have been for generations, but few know the content of the Gospel. They are Christians by birth, not by choice. He said, 'We have no Bible in our language, that's why we need the Bible so that all people can understand the Gospel more clearly.'

On 11 April, 25 trainee mother tongue translators went home holding a Scripture portion for the first time in history in their own languages. They believe that the greatest contribution they will ever make to the growth of Christianity among their own people is to give them the Word of God in their mother tongue. Two



Casey Chak, leader of Buddhist ethnic group



Elisha Soren, not a mother tongue speaker



Ronny Khalko, university student

participants resigned from their paid employment to join the training.

What was the Scripture portion they translated? Luke 11:14-28, where Jesus starts out by casting a demon out of a man. That started the first major discussion in the translation workshop: 'Which demon did he cast out?' The Buddhist team had eight different demons on offer; the other two teams had Hindu roots, so had different options. How do you translate 'demon'? The point of the passage was, Jesus showed His power over the demon!

However, Jesus' enemies were there – religious leaders. They didn't deny Jesus' power for one minute. They said His power came from Beelzebul, the prince of demons. Now, how do you translate Beelzebul, and Satan (a few verses later)? In the Buddhist worldview there is one hierarchy of demons, and in the Hindu scheme of things a different hierarchy. But Jesus goes on to imply that He was even greater than Beelzebul, the highest ranking member! Wow!

Then a woman piped up and shouted, 'Blessed is the womb (lit. intestines/uterus) that bore you and the mammary glands that gave you suck'. How do you translate that? Interestingly, a literal translation of womb and breasts was not a problem!

But Jesus replied, 'That may be so, but even more blessed are those who listen to the Word of God and obey it'. Wow, what an impact for the first 15 verses to be translated into these three languages!

Each mother tongue translator carried just one printed copy home with him or her – the first portion of God's Word in their own language. When they come for their second training in June 2014, they will receive 100-200 copies, published by the Bible Society, in a language, and using a script that their people can read and understand – for the first time in history.

The Presbyterian Church in Australia is playing a vital role in this ministry. An APWM missionary, who is also a senior translation consultant

(continued from page 8)

life away from ourselves or others, even if life is burdened by enormous suffering for all concerned. Neither do we idolise life and hang onto it at all costs. Rather, we worship the God who both gives life and takes it away.

• True Human Freedom is Found in the Gospel

Freedom in our society is largely understood as having the right to make choices from any number of alternatives in every aspect of life. This is seen most clearly in the arenas of sex and individual consumption. This kind of freedom, however, rapidly descends into selfish exploitation of other people and the environment. More to the point, this kind of freedom is not freedom at all but slavery to sinful desires. This kind of freedom never brings the satisfaction and control it so alluringly promises. In fact, it brings death and judgement.

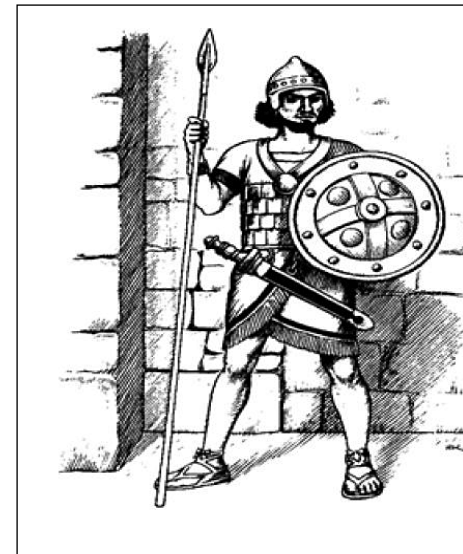
The Gospel reveals the utter foolishness of denying our dependence on our maker and pushing against our limitations as God's creatures. The purpose of freedom in the Bible is to creatively discern how to love others in our own situation. Jesus used His freedom to lay down His life for others. Jesus' death and resurrection free those who trust in Him from the slavery and penalty of sin, and set us free to delight in God and loving others.

• True Hope is Found in the Gospel

The Gospel is thoroughly realistic about the fallout of sin in the world. The outcome of sin is that every person is capable of great evil; people do great damage to one another; sickness and death plague us; and life frustrates us. Although there is often much to be gained from social movements, education, science and economic equality, none provides the ultimate answer to our problems. Insurance policies and frantic busyness will not guarantee our security from evil and suffering. Our dreams and aspirations for ourselves will not fully satisfy us. The horizon of our hope must be fixed on the Gospel. Jesus will return to lead His redeemed people to a new creation where evil and suffering are excluded, thirst is satisfied and God is enjoyed in all His glory. Since only God can fix the problem of sin, our greatest gift to our communities is to share the hope of the Gospel.

• Human Beings are Built for Relationships

Human beings were not made to be isolated self rulers but, rather,



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Chak scriptures

with SIL International, is giving academic oversight to these three projects.

English Tutoring

An essential part of mother tongue translator training is English tutoring, since most of the biblical resources they need are in English. You could play a vital role in their training if you speak English. Two Queensland Presbyterians are applying to go to teach English in June, and two more in September. What about you? The next translation workshop (after September 2014) is in March 2015.

You can be part of this history making process. How?

- Prayer: send an email to the Prayer Coordinator - bdprayercoordinator@gmail.com
- Finance: give through the Wycliffe website: www.wycliffe.org.au 60 years: Project #21: Advancing National Translators Fund
- Go: join the English tutorial staff. For more information email: proshikhon@wycliffe.org

to live in loving interdependence, reflecting the intimate relationality of God Himself. In His Church, God is building the body of Christ in which each member serves and encourages one another to grow up into Christ, and to mature in godliness, love, knowledge and faith. We serve one another in many different ways, according to the gifts and roles of responsibility God has given us. Together, too, we endure hardship and comfort one another with the comfort of the Gospel. We, therefore, make decisions that consider not only ourselves but those God has given us to care for.

Churches are not, of course, formed by people already made perfect. We are all in the process of turning from sin together. In this age, sin and Satan continue to trouble God's Church with the result that we still sin both together and against one another. Sin is a serious matter in God's household and must be wisely and lovingly dealt with as we strive to witness to God's holiness and mercy in the world.

• Both Mind and Body are Important

God crafted the human being as a perfectly integrated psychosomatic unity. The various facets of a human being – mind, soul, spirit, heart and body – are all important and interdependent. A person's 'real self' does not reside only in the spirit or mind but also in the body. Our bodies are essential to us, enabling so much of what it is to be human. They are not liabilities, to be lamented or manipulated to suit our desires. They are a good gift from God, even considering the damage caused by sin. Jesus healed people in both spirit and body. Moreover, Jesus took on human flesh, He gave His body for us, His body was resurrected, and we await the glorious resurrection of our bodies in Him. Our bodies belong to Him and we should be careful to honour Him with them.

Neither can a person's being be reduced to merely physical and chemical properties. A human embryo is not just a bunch of cells. A woman with advanced dementia is not just a disordered body and brain. The Gospel clearly addresses all people, including the most hidden and vulnerable, as whole people. Therefore we should endeavour to appreciate and care for people according to every facet of their being.

• Humanity and Nature are not Natural Enemies

Humanity is not the natural enemy of non-human creation or vice versa but they were made to flourish interdependently. The dominion of

human beings was designed to be for the good of the environment and the environment for the enjoyment and sustenance of human beings. Sin has, of course, deeply damaged this relationship. But approaches to environmental problems should not lament the existence of humans, nor should they give equal value to human and non-human creation. It is through the man Jesus Christ that the relationship between humanity and nature is restored. As God's people, we care for God's creation rather than exploit it for our own selfish purposes. And the groaning creation will finally be liberated from bondage when the bodies of God's children are redeemed in the new creation.

• Gender Difference is a Blessing

Our society increasingly sees gender difference as an oppressive social construct that is crying out to be deconstructed in the areas of marital norms, sexual preferences, childrearing and relational roles. At the same time, we still embrace a range of rather stereotyped, even degrading notions of femininity and masculinity. The Gospel, however, embraces the complementary differences between male and female, firmly planted in God's creation order, as a delightful blessing for the purpose of love and service. The joys, expression and responsibilities of gender have been badly tarnished by sin, but gender can be enjoyed in the wisdom of the Gospel. In fact, gender difference in marriage is given enormous dignity in its role of reflecting the ultimate marriage of Christ and His Church.

Conclusion

The great news for humanity is that God has sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, into our world as a man, to bring us back to Him. It is through and for Jesus that we are created and sustained. It is against Jesus that we rebel. It is in Jesus' death and resurrection that the power of sin is broken. It is in Jesus that we can find our true selves again. Our true nature and purpose as created human beings are joyously understood in the light of the Gospel.

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Translation group

FOR MANY of you, the big question this morning is 'why have we dragged you here?' Here we are with a bunch of people we've never met before, some of whom we'll never meet again. It's Saturday morning at the end of summer, the sun is shining, and there are a thousand other ways we could happily fill up our weekend. So what are we doing here?

There are essentially two reasons.

First, this is really the only opportunity we have to get together as an extended community – staff (full-time and part-time, admin), students (full-time and part-time) and families – to get together to think through how we can best support each other in 2014. And it's vital.

For those of us who are going to be around College most days, the process of building community starts here. For those of us who are going to be working behind the scenes to support someone who is studying, who have to cope with the long hours of living with someone whose head is in books – this weekend is designed to help you realize that you are not alone, and to begin to receive some of the support you may need in the months and years ahead. So this weekend is all about community.

Secondly, this is the opportunity for those of us who teach, and work in admin, and those of us who are studying, whether new students or returning old hands, and those of us who will be at home or work or school supporting those who are studying – to get our heads in the right place for the year ahead. This weekend is for preparing spiritually for the year ahead. That's why we're going to open the Bible now.

When we get to Romans 11, Paul has just finished one of the trickiest, and most breathtaking sections in the whole Bible. He has been talking about the sovereignty of God, as it has been worked out in the way in which God has dealt with Jews and Gentiles, and the way in which God will continue to work until the new creation.

At the end of his complex discussion, Paul writes this:

Rom 11:33 *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! 34 "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" 35 "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" 36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.*

Rom 12:1 *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of*



Annual QTC retreat

Principal Gary Millar spoke to new and returning students on Romans 11-12

your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

This passage, which is the hinge right at the centre of the book of Romans, confronts us with three incredibly significant challenges: this year we need to marvel, to die and to change.

I don't know if you realize it, but you and I actually need to marvel! We need to gasp and point from time to time. In fact, this entire universe is constructed so that we might look around and see how marvellous God is, and stand back in amazement!

Imagine that Australia is the Universe – do you know what would represent our Solar System? Not our continent, but the whole system of planets of which we're part? If Australia represented the Universe, our Solar System would be a grain of sand in the desert somewhere outside Alice Springs. God has gone to quite a lot of bother to impress us! And in creation, He's only getting started!

The goal of the Gospel – of everything He has done since creation – is, in the words of Ephesians 1, to make it the most natural, obvious thing in the world to praise His glory – to marvel, to rave about Him! And Paul gets that.

In the previous 11 chapters, Paul has just given us his divinely-inspired best shot at explaining what God has done for us in Jesus. He has covered everything – what's wrong with us as a race, what God has done to make it possible for us to be put right with God and be straightened out ourselves. He has covered sin and guilt and grace and forgiveness. He has reminded us that God has poured out His Spirit into our lives. He has then rolled out the most powerful discussion of God's free and gracious and irreversible choice of people like you and me, both Jews and Gentiles in chapters 9-11. And then what does he do? He sits back and goes 'wow!'

This is the effect the Gospel should have on us. When we see what God has done, when we see what God is like, when we see His sovereign grace in action, it should make us gasp. It should make us marvel – and it should make us marvel in the midst of Hebrew quizzes, and late buses, and not being able to find a park, and harsh words with our kids or husband or wife before we left, and lack of sleep, and feeling unappreciated. God speaks the Gospel into the middle of this sinful mess to lift our eyes to Him and make us marvel!

This is why we need the Gospel.

Because it is only through the Gospel that we can gasp, that we can marvel at the power and beauty and grace of our God. That's the first thing we need to do in 2014 – we need to marvel. And then we need to die.

Jesus was insistent that following Him meant a kind of death. He says repeatedly that following him means 'taking up our cross', and of course, if you were carrying a cross in the Ancient World, that means you were about to be nailed to it. He insists in John 12, that unless a seed falls to the ground and dies, it will bear no fruit. Elsewhere, Paul says that we need to 'put to death' our old way of life.

And that's his point here: following Jesus Christ involves both new life and a new death. We are supposed to be paradoxical living sacrifices – people who are more alive than anyone else, people who are enjoying real life, eternal life, life to the full which starts now and lasts forever, and yet people who are gladly choosing death – death to everything in us that is opposed to God and that is associated with self-rule. We are called to die. That's what we need to do in 2014.

Here's something from one of my favourite old books on why we need to die to self, as it used to be called: *"The choicest believers, who are assuredly*

freed from the condemning power of sin, ought yet to make it their business all their days to mortify the indwelling power of sin Do you mortify; do you make it your daily work? Be always at it while you live; cease not a day from this work; be killing sin or it will be killing you." (John Owen, *On Sin and Temptation*)

I think it's unlikely that this would have been written in Brisbane in 2014 – but we need to hear this. Because this lies at the heart of what it means to be a living sacrifice.

The worship that God requires is what? In the Old Testament, we're told it's a broken spirit and a contrite heart. In the New Testament, this same thing is expressed as living sacrifices. And worshipping God like this isn't just a matter of floating through all of life with a vaguely pious look on our faces instead of keeping it for Sundays. To respond to the Gospel, to worship God all day every day, includes dying. It includes self-examination, and repentance, and grace-driven resolve, and grace-fuelled effort. It's extremely demanding and painful and humbling – but this is what we need to do.

So this year, I want you to die – so to speak! The challenge is to die to ourselves, to our agenda, to our selfishness, to our desire to judge people by what's on the surface, and to die to our desire for success. To die to our desire to be treated like a king. To die to our self-indulgence, our self-promotion. To die to our hidden resentment. To live a Gospel-driven, grace-filled death. Because this is the road to life. This is real worship.

And finally, we need to change. Paul finishes this little section like this: *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

Sorry to state the obvious, but the Gospel is supposed to change us. God makes us marvel through the Gospel, and moves us to repent, and 'die' – but that isn't all. Through the Spirit, the Gospel also produces real and positive change in us, as it enables us to think and live in a way which is radically different to the world around us. The Gospel woos us out of idolatry to worship the one and only God. The Gospel persuades us out of unbelief to trust our God: Father, Son and Spirit, and accept what He says. The Gospel masters us, defeats us, dragging us out of rebellion. The Gospel changes us.

I do love the process that Paul sketches here. As we are exposed to and immersed in the Gospel, it sets us free from the constraints of thinking just like everyone else, and transforms us at the very core of our personality – reorienting our wills to do what God wants. And what does this look like? It's described in the much-neglected second half of the verse here – *'by testing we discern what is the will of God - what is good and acceptable and perfect'*. In the messy business of life, in the endless series of decisions that make up each of our lives, by constant trial and error, we gradually get it right more often than we get it wrong. We are not made perfect, but we do have a growing awareness of what is good, acceptable and perfect.

One of the most incredible things about our God is that He is a God who changes people – who transforms us.

But He doesn't stop – to be a Christian is to be gradually transformed until we look like the Lord Jesus when we reach the new creation. To be a Christian is to change. The two can't be separated.

So how's it going for you?

It doesn't matter how sorted out we think we are, how mature we think we are, how smart we think we are. I can say with confidence that part of what our God has for all of us in the year ahead is to make us more like Jesus. Let's not make it harder for ourselves than it needs to be!

There are many ways to judge a theological college – by its students, by its staff, by its plans. But you know what? If we want to gauge how we're going this year, I think these are much more accurate: Is there a sense of wonder at QTC and in our wider community? Is there a whole lot of dying going on? Is there evidence that people are dealing with sin, repenting? Is there evidence that we are growing, being changed, being transformed into the likeness of Jesus? Because this is how our God works, by His Spirit, in the Gospel.

VIP-net YOUTH CAMP 2014, BILOELA

by Selma Dredge, School Chaplain



Fun & Games @ VIP-net Camp



IN THE Callide Valley we have a great campsite called Pelican Point about 10 km from town. It has full dormitory and catering facilities, and is beautifully situated on a small peninsula on the banks of the Callide Dam.

During the first weekend of the Easter holidays, our church's youth group, "VIP-net" (Very Important People – NETworking) hosted our annual camp with a record number of young people from grades 6-9 attending. God had already blessed our grounds with ample rain in the preceding weeks, and He provided perfect sunshine for the weekend, which set the tone of the entire camp.

Rob Davey (ex-school chaplain and 3rd year student at QTC) was our guest speaker. His engaging talks fuelled animated small-group discussions with VIP-net leaders about how the writers of Psalms spoke with God, and how we too can approach Him and grow our confidence in His faithful promises.

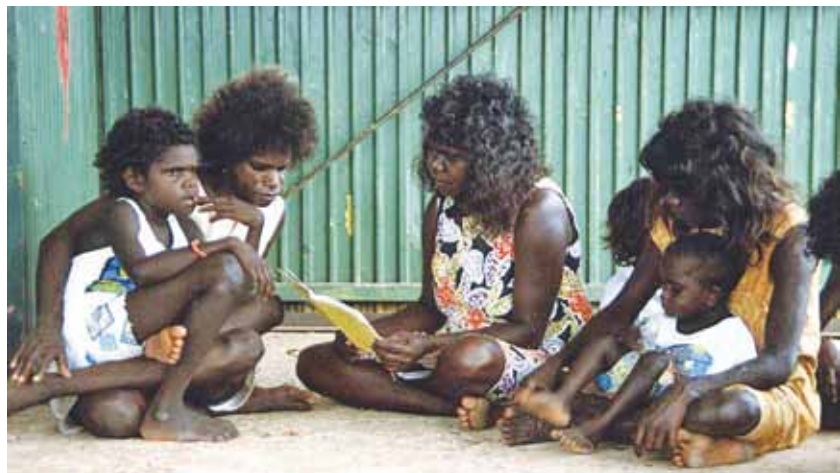
Interspersed with the learning were lots of camp activities. These ranged from chats around the bonfire to water sports, team challenges, messy games and photography, to name a few!

We were also blessed with tremendous amounts of food (some generously donated by members of the congregation and parents).

On Saturday night, teams of youth displayed a diverse range of gifts at our "VIP-Net's Got Talent" show.

It was a wonderful time of building, developing and cementing relationships among our youth, and between the young people and our leaders. Yes, a truly blessed weekend!

Bringing the Bible to life in Northern Territory



WHILE MANY versions of the Bible are available in English, thousands of Indigenous Australians still do not have the Bible in their own language.

However, for the first time ever, Kunwinjku-speaking Christians in Oenpelli, Northern Territory, can now read and share the entire New Testament in their own language.

This exciting milestone has taken nearly 30 years and the hard work and collaboration of many to achieve. Over these years, CMS missionaries, Steve and Narelle Etherington have helped train and equip a group of Aboriginal women as translators for this project, witnessing first-hand the difference God's word makes in people's lives when it is available in their heart language.

"The most exciting thing is seeing lives dramatically changed as people read the Bible and tell others about it", said Narelle.

"The impact extends across generations as people not only read the Bible themselves and seek to live it out, but also teach it to their children", she said.

Rev. Jeremy Gehrmann, General Secretary of CMS Queensland with Northern NSW, said, "This translation project is possible thanks to Steve and Narelle Etherington, the Aboriginal people with whom they have worked closely for years, and the partnership of churches in Australia praying and financially supporting them."

More than 4.8 billion people worldwide do not know Christ. By translating the Bible into the Kunwinjku language, Steve and Narelle Etherington are helping to change that by bringing God's word to life for Bible-poor Indigenous Australians living in remote parts of the country.

"It's so important that we try to help the Aboriginal church grow. They are reaching out to tell other Aboriginal people about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus loves Aboriginal people as much as he loves other people in the world", said Steve.

"Bringing the Bible to life in Kunwinjku not only involves a lot of language research and documentation of the spoken language but also teaching children and adults how to read the Bible, apply it to their lives and tell others.

"I'm encouraged that people have a desire to read the word of God, to see what He has to say", he said.

Each year churches around Queensland and Northern NSW hold special services – on Beautiful Feet Sunday – to celebrate mission and to support the work of CMS missionaries like Steve and Narelle Etherington.

"How can people hear the good news of Jesus Christ if it is not in their language?" asked Jeremy Gehrmann. "We take having our Bible readings on Sunday in our language for granted. Imagine if it was read in a different language in your church? For people to grow as Christians they need the Bible – the word of God – in their language."

This Beautiful Feet Sunday highlights the need to let people of every tribe, language and nation know about Jesus Christ in a language they can understand.

This year Beautiful Feet Sunday is being held by churches throughout northern NSW and Queensland on 1 June. It is coordinated by CMS, Church Missionary Society, which works with churches to set apart long-term Gospel workers who cross cultures to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

For further information on world mission through CMS, or to involve your church in Beautiful Feet Sunday, visit www.cms.org.au/beautifulfeet, contact qld@cms.org.au or telephone 07 3112 6530. Working towards a World that Knows Jesus.

From the desk of Jesse Caulfield, Director

Inside/Out
CHAPLAINCY

1984.

Mention that year and most people think of the fictional novel by George Orwell. It was the year when the first space shuttle "Challenger" was launched, the IRA attempted to assassinate the Prime Minister of England, petrol reached a new high of 38.7 cents per litre and the Olympic Games were held in Los Angeles.

In the same month as those games (July to be exact), another event occurred, which didn't draw international attention, but was significant to the Presbyterian Church of Queensland (PCQ) and the Prisons Missions Association of Queensland (PMAQ). In my humble opinion, it was an event that cemented the foundation of a partnership between the two bodies, which has now spanned some 30 years.

After many years of dialogue between the two organisations, PCQ granted recognition to the fledgling PMAQ during its General Assembly. The then-Director of Home Ministry, Rev. Ron Clark, wrote to PMAQ extending warmest greetings and commending the work to God's blessing, stating that "...the Assembly resolved to declare its recognition of the Prisons Missions Association and commend the ministry of that Association to the prayerful support of our people".

A response to Mr Clark's letter was quickly penned by the Secretary, of PMAQ, Mr Keith Smith, inviting two representatives from PCQ to take up positions on the PMAQ Committee of Management. From that point forward, PCQ has worked in partnership with PMAQ as the recognized Association by which chaplains are placed in prisons throughout Queensland.

Thirty years later, and we can see that, well, a lot of things have changed. Fuel is no longer 38c a

Yet the reality of our prisons is in stark contrast to the dominant thinking of many of our church-going members. The majority of the people who are in Queensland prisons are young men, aged between 18 and 30. They come from broken homes, and get their 'cultural cues' based on anyone who would accept them; so yes, they end up in gangs, or in poor social groups, where they quickly discover drugs and crime. But upon sitting with them and hearing stories, it is easy to recognize why they are there – in prison. The confronting reality is, if we were in their life-situation, would we have been any different?

The key question for us (as God's people) is: how are they going to change their lives, unless God is directly involved? How will they hear the good news of the Messiah, unless someone is sent as a messenger? Romans 10 springs to mind.

So for the past 30 years, that is what Inside/Out Chaplaincy, in partnership with the PCQ, has been doing. We place chaplains "inside" our State's prisons so that the transformation which is brought about by the Gospel of God can take place. But that isn't where the story ends.

When people who have made a commitment to Christ leave prison, we help them find a safe and welcoming community of Christian faith so that the journey of Christian discipleship can continue. That happens because of one obedient individual, Alison Dines, daughter of Frank Leckenby, who has worked for four years as our Post-release Coordinator, finding mentors in supportive churches for many of these "new creations in Christ".

So there have been many years of shared experiences – some positive, some not – but together, we have been labouring in the field, because the harvest is plentiful.



To that end, Inside/Out Chaplaincy has enjoyed the blessing of God, because His people have recognized the value of chaplains in so many different contexts; but particularly, prisons.

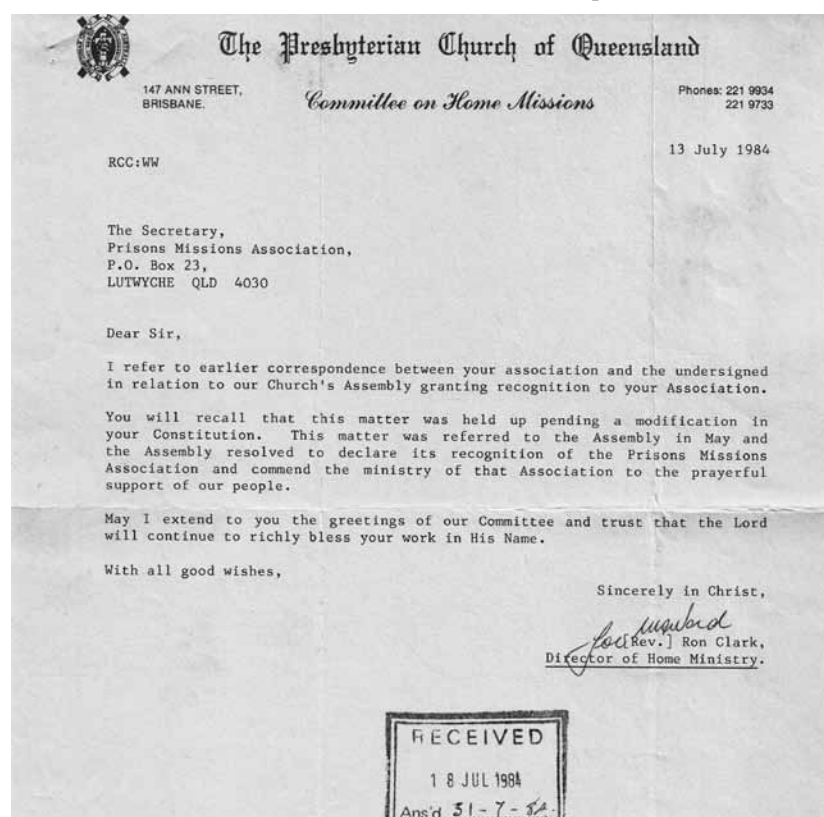
And by God's blessing, I mean people like Adam, who shared his testimony at our Celebration Rally (in Brisbane) last month, telling his story of how a chaplain visited him whilst he was in solitary confinement, and through receiving a Bible and having the Gospel explained to him, he came to discover a new life in Christ.

We rely on churches and individual members for our support: financial, physical and spiritual. Churches which partner with us find that there is a tremendous blessing in hearing what God is doing, in their own backyard. Some members also find out how rewarding serving as a volunteer chaplain is, by spending one day a week visiting our brothers and sisters in Christ, in Queensland's prisons. Many receive our bi-monthly newsletter, *The Inside Story*, whilst others give regularly, to ensure that we can continue this work.

Above all, I commend to you the ministry of prayer – the prayerful support of our people – which is as vital and necessary now, as it was when Mr Clark penned those wonderful words in 1984.



Alison Dines, Post-release Coordinator



Steve and Narelle Etherington

litre; the space shuttle program has been shelved; and the Olympics are perhaps one of the greatest spectacles of the modern era, if only for the fact that all nations can agree about sports – if nothing else. PMAQ has undergone a branding change, it is still a not-for-profit Association, but it is now called Inside/Out Chaplaincy. The number of prisons and therefore, prisoners, throughout Queensland has significantly increased too, such that there are now 16 "Correctional Centres" in Queensland housing some 6400 prisoners. Inside/Out Chaplaincy itself, provides 24 volunteer chaplains to these prisons, who faithfully proclaim the Gospel of God's grace on a weekly basis, reaching out in Christian love to some of the most despised and rejected people in our State. Last year our chaplains made a total of 1200 visits to prisons, providing some 7000 hours of pastoral care.

But why would they do this?

The fact is, when most people think of prisons and prisoners they think about bikies and addicts, razor wire fences and buildings resembling steel cages.

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Queensland businesses pull together to feed the hungry and homeless



Mike Bosel, Lee Martin, Jess Larkin, Laura Dodd and Peter Lynch at Community Friends event

AROUND 100 of Brisbane South's homeless were provided with a hot meal and a week's worth of groceries recently in a unique partnership of local organisations helping those in need and at risk of social isolation in West End.

PresCare and export-quality grain fed beef business Stockyard Beef came together to support local charity Community Friends which has been providing food, clothing and accommodation to homeless and disadvantaged people in Brisbane for the past three years.

Teams of volunteers manned the BBQ at the West End Community Park on Boundary Street, cooking and serving up hundreds of sausages and beef patties.

PresCare's Executive Manager of Business Development and Innovation Mike Bosel says that assisting other not-for-profit organisations is something PresCare is committed to doing, particularly where it helps impact the effects of social isolation and the associated issues.

Community Friends founder Mark McDonnell says that last year they gave away around 50,000 meals via their weekly sessions in West

End, and they hope to increase that number in 2014.

"Community Friends helps people who are homeless, people who would be homeless without additional support, and people who are doing it tough", Mark says. "Some people come every week, some every fortnight and some less often. We can only do this with the support of organisations like Stockyard Beef and PresCare."

Mike Bosel says events like this are not just about giving homeless people a cooked meal and some groceries to take home. "Food is something that brings people together, so this is an opportunity for them to chat, to get information from Mark and his team about services that might be available to them, and generally have that social interaction they may miss throughout the rest of the week."

"I was particularly impressed with the way such a wide range of people from different backgrounds and cultures came together for this giveaway and how smoothly Mark's team runs things."

Stockyard Beef not only gave their time, but also generously donated \$2,000 towards a fundraising effort Community Friends has underway,

raising money for a refrigerated van that will enable them to collect and transport the food donations they receive more efficiently.

Stockyard Beef CEO Lachie Hart says that he and his team were pleased to be able to help Community Friends in such a practical way.

"When the opportunity to help Community Friends came up, I felt it was a good fit for my organisation", Lachie says. "We get so tied up in day-to-day business matters, being able to get out and see what members of our community are experiencing and then help them in a small way was great."

Mark estimated around 1,150 meals were given away with all food handed out within 20 minutes.

Anyone interested in making a donation to Community Friends can contact Mark at mark@communityfriends.org.au.



If you think care services should be about more than physical care, you're not alone.

The guiding principle behind PresCare's approach to care services is caring for the whole individual – their mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing. PresCare offers holistic care to all adults in need. Services include residential and in-home care, respite and dementia services, day therapy, pastoral care and social programs, gardening, pre-prepared meals, retirement living and affordable housing for seniors. Different levels of care are designed to meet the varying needs of older Queenslanders while maintaining their independence, dignity and connection to the broader community.

For more information about our range of services, visit prescare.org.au, or talk to one of our consultants on 1800 773 722.

A Ministry of Presbyterian Church of Queensland

PresCare more connected

50 CELEBRATING YEARS



Annual PresCare Woollam Constructions Charity Golf Classic

Mackay Charity Golf Classic to help the elderly

THE ANNUAL PresCare Woollam Constructions Charity Golf Classic in Mackay was the perfect excuse for local golfers to round up their mates for a game and support 400 of Mackay's at-risk elderly at the same time!

PresCare Chief Operations Officer Lee Martin says the highly anticipated sporting event, now in its eighth year, raised more than \$20,000 to help combat social isolation among seniors in Mackay.

"Social isolation is experienced by one in five Australians and can lead to depression and early death in our aging population. Older Queenslanders who stay in their own homes, often alone, are most at risk", Lee says.

"As our population ages and seniors make up a greater proportion of our communities, we are likely to see more and more people at risk of social isolation."

Woollam Constructions Director, Mr Craig Percival, said he and his team in Mackay encouraged local businesses to get a team of four together, sponsor a hole and have a great day while supporting an important cause.

"Woollam has been partnering with PresCare for the past eight years and the event keeps growing. The local community gets behind the event with competitive teams trying their best, Ambrose style, while helping fundraise to combat social isolation."

With the help of local businesses joining in a round of golf something can be done about social isolation. PresCare has formed a research partnership with Central Queensland University and the money raised at the

Charity Golf Classic will help PresCare develop programs to reconnect lonely people in the local community.

Mr Percival said the atmosphere each year is fantastic and there is never a dull moment at the annual Charity Golf Classic.

"Golfers enjoy attempts at the hole-in-one to win huge prizes, there is plenty of food and refreshments along the way, everyone takes home a bag of gifts and this year the day ended with Mackay's favourite comedy auctioneer, Pete Haughton", he said.

PresCare Chief Operations Officer Lee Martin said the day would not be possible without the committed support of Woollam Constructions, the dedicated volunteers and the local Mackay community.

"PresCare believes when you are connected to your family, friends and the community you have a more fulfilling life. Getting out for a round of golf can provide a high level of support and friendship, key factors in reducing social isolation."

"We're all aging, that's a fact. By playing a round in our Charity Golf Classic everyone enjoyed a laugh, a social game of golf and many of them won some great prizes. They're also improving their health, their mates' wellbeing and that of an older person in our community", Lee says.

It's not too late to get involved in the other events this year, with the Rockhampton event held on 3 August and Brisbane on 1 September.

To book your place in the PresCare Woollam Constructions Charity Golf Classic, call PresCare on 1800-773-722 or email jawoods@prescare.org.au.

How my mother became a social hermit

PRESCARE CHAPLAIN Graeme McKay talks personally about the impact of social isolation on his family.

One of the great regrets I have is that my mother became something of a social hermit after my father passed away.

It was not a conscious decision on her part that she chose to sit at home all day and become a TV junkie, even driven to watching the shopping channels for hours on end! It was almost an imperceptible lethargy which set in.

I had even arranged for friends to call and to offer transport, but apart from a few occasions she found excuses not to go out. Before this time, she was actively engaged with a church community and would be out so frequently that you would have to make an appointment to phone her.

There are many reasons why people become disengaged and isolated from communities, which can include retirement, loss of independence in no longer being able to drive, moving into a new area or community, illness or failing health, and the death or loss of a relationship.

We often think of social isolation as something that happens when someone becomes housebound or can no longer independently get out of their house. Yet the truth is that social isolation can happen even when someone is fit and able and still has many relatively enjoyable years

ahead of them. Even people living in a community setting, such as a care home or retirement village, can suffer from the effects of this.

Researchers estimate 20% of older Australians are socially isolated, which results in insomnia, depression, a greater likelihood of developing dementia and elevated blood pressure, among other health problems.

This has a reverberating effect on society, placing extra strain on carers, additional demands on health services, a reduced sense of community and a greater need for acute interventions by local governments, housing providers and other welfare services.

On 1 June PresCare launched its inaugural annual Chaplains' Appeal to help raise \$25,000 to fund initiatives to combat social isolation and depression in the elderly.

PresCare's Director of Chaplaincy John Gilmour says the role Chaplains play in mitigating the impacts of social isolation is often underestimated.

"People don't realize that just having someone who is willing to sit there for half an hour and have a chat, about spirituality or about gardening or football, goes a huge way towards helping a socially isolated elderly person feel cared about," John says.

You can help by giving to the Chaplains' Appeal by calling 1800 773 722.

What's on ...



What's on in 2014

briefly

July



Prof. Daniel Block : July 28 : Ezekiel

Prof. Daniel Block, of Wheaton College, Illinois, will be teaching on Ezekiel at a day-conference open to students and ministry workers. Prof. Block is best known as the author of the 2-volume NICOT on Ezekiel, but has also written commentaries on Judges, Ruth and Deuteronomy.

August



Kathleen Nielson : August 16 : QTC Women's Conference

Kathleen Nielson serves as director of women's initiatives for The Gospel Coalition. Author of the Living Word Bible studies, she often speaks at women's conferences and loves working with women in studying the Bible.



Prof. John Lennox : August 22 : Cosmic Chemistry

Presented by City Bible Forum. Prof. John Lennox of Oxford University will explore the relationship between science and God. He is the author of numerous books exploring science and Christianity. His ready wit and sharp mind has lead to his involvement in many public debates with leading atheist thinkers.



Dr Michael Horton : August 23 : Talking Theology

Dr Michael Horton has taught apologetics and theology at Westminster Seminary California since 1998. He has written many books, including *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way*.



Matt Chandler : August 25 : Proclaim Jesus

Presented by Acts 29. Matt Chandler is the lead pastor for teaching at The Village Church in Dallas, Texas. He is involved in church planting around Dallas and across the world through The Village Church and other partnerships such as Acts 29.

October



Dr Peter O'Brien : Oct 9-10 : Hebrews

Dr Peter O'Brien is recognised as a leading New Testament scholar and has previously been the Vice Principal of Moore College, Sydney. He'll be visiting QTC over two days to teach on the book of Hebrews.



Colin Buchanan : Oct 18 : Children's Ministry Conference

Colin has years of experience making God's word understandable and memorable for kids. He is, without a doubt, Australia's best-loved Christian children's artist. Colin has a proven track record for helping kids engage with ideas in the Bible, so this is sure to be a valuable conference to attend.

Web: www.qtc.edu.au Email: events@qtc.edu.au

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Being a parent is a wonderful joy but it's not always easy. There are some new challenges
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life more than ever before. Children have immediate access to information
which brings many benefits but also some dangers. At times we as
parents can feel powerless. During this seminar, Melinda will assist us to
the ways media is having an impact and share some practical parenting
advice on how we can nurture our kids.

REGISTER ONLINE NOW mtrseminar.org.au

When Thursday, 12 June 2014, 7:00-8:30pm
Where Community Hall, Eatons Hill State School, Apex Grove
Cost Single: \$10 / Couple: \$15
This seminar is not suitable for children under 15 years of age.

Melinda Tankard Reist is a Canberra author, speaker and media commentator.
She is a frequent guest on a range of television and radio programs including the ABC's Q&A and
Channel 7's Sunrise and The Morning Show. Melinda is an advocate for women and girls. She is well
known for her lobbying activity in the areas of sexualisation of children and violence against women.
Most recently, Melinda has contributed to Steve Birkup's book *Raising Girls*.

For more information call Gai on 0402 114 141.
This is an event hosted by Eatons Hill Presbytery Church, in partnership with Eatons Hill State School.

BE CREATIVE CAMP

The 2014 BE CREATIVE LADIES CAMP will be held from 31 OCTOBER to 2 NOVEMBER at Watson Park Convention Centre at Dakabin. This is a wonderful opportunity for a girls' getaway, a mother-daughter weekend, or a chance for sisters or friends to spend time together relaxing with crafts, perhaps learning new skills and hearing from God's Word. A variety of workshops are in the pipeline including a quilt top, appliqué table centre, easy table runner, bag, Christmas wall hanging, gift items, jewellery, novelty tea cosies, felting, watercolour, acrylics and pastels, or bring your own project. Please consider joining us! Brochures will be available soon from Jane McClintock jane@mu.com.au

ASSEMBLY ACTIVITIES

28 June 2014, Celebration Rally, Clayfield College, 2pm-8pm; 29 June 2014, Induction of Moderator, Coorparoo Presbyterian Church, 7.00 pm; 30 June-3 July 2014, Assembly Business Meetings, Clayfield College; 1 July 2014, WMPCQ@Assembly, Clayfield College Swimming Pavilion, 10.15 am; Mission Barbecue and Rally, Clayfield College, 5.45 pm, bookings for Barbecue at Assembly Office; PWA of A (Qld Unit) activities, see below.

PWA OF A (Qld Unit) ASSEMBLY ACTIVITIES

Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia (Qld Unit) Conference and Annual General Meeting, Monday 30 June 2014, at 10 am, Ann Street Presbyterian Church, lunch provided; PWA Executive Presentation to Assembly, Tuesday 1 July at 10.45 am, Clayfield College; PWA Outing on Wednesday, 2 July, 10.15 am, meet at Brisbane City Hall and tour through the Hall and Museum; 12.30 pm, Lunch at Shingle Inn (at City Hall). Bookings essential, Grace Hyland (07) 3398 4754.

CHAPLAINS

The Moderator Elect, Rev. Phil Case, has had a change in chaplains. His chaplains will be Robert Thompson (Elder, Coorparoo) and Rev. Ross Wilson (Minister, Southside). To make bookings for the Moderator, please email pcqmoderator2014@gmail.com

TELEPHONE DIRECTORIES

Any charges wishing to make changes to their entry in the White Pages should contact Church Office on 3251 4100 or email churchoffice@pcq.org.au

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Getting stretched!



by Robert Benn, Member of the WRF Board of Directors

I WAS walking the streets of the old city of Makassar in Indonesia searching with a friend for a pleasant place for an evening meal. There were plenty of options. Fascinated, we stopped at the wide window of the restaurant "Mie Tarik" (Stretch Noodles) ... just to watch. Not my normal interest for an evening meal, but this was different.

The chef took a rather bland looking lump of dough, pounded and pummelled it until it was pliable and elastic. Then with great flourish he pulled and stretched it up and down and side to side until the fine strings of spaghetti were laid out on the table. It wasn't long before we were being served with the freshest of Indonesian style Stretch Noodles, with all the meat, vegetables and condiments that made it delicious!

From the bland to the sublime. And stretched somewhat in the process.

How sad when our church stays rather bland and parochial, when it could, via a process of vigorous stretching become wonderful – visionary, passionate, innovative, deeply concerned, prayerful, missional ... sublime.

How can we thus be stretched? Just see what the Saviour took His disciples into: strident opposition; spiritual birthing happening before their eyes; the audacious questioning from arrogant leadership; the plight of the maimed, the sick, the poor and disenfranchised; the agony of death; the calling of some to abandon all to follow Him; evidence of immediate moral reformation; deep and feeling compassion; the passionate call "come" to the burdened and weary; the miraculous evidence of Messiah in their midst etc.

They could hear, see, look at, touch, taste, handle and smell the reality of Christ and Christlikeness.

And oh, did they feel stretched? A stretching that transformed them into followers who would die for their conviction.

How is it for us to be stretched? Do the same! And to do the same, we need to go to the hovels, debate with the opposition, visit the dispossessed, see the plight of the poor and the rich, agonise with those who have been gravely disappointed with the church, sacrifice our goods for the benefit of others, vigorously pointing others to Calvary's cross, and as Australians learning a much greater engagement with the much wider world.

I remember our first Moderator General after 1977 saying of a young man who was, to quote one of his colleagues, 'belligerently reformed', "The real problem with Richard is that he has never been on a planet!" (figurative language for "He's never been stretched!").

Readers, in 2004, the General Assembly of your federal church decided to become a member of the World Reformed Fellowship.

So why do this? Is it part of the stretching process of our denomination?

Here's a brief history lesson.

Prior to 1977 our church was a member of the World Council of Churches. Very soon, in our post-

77 church, we moved away from the WCC and became a member of a much better World Alliance of Reformed Churches. But ... soon we were not happy, and we became members of the Reformed Ecumenical Council, and as we had done before we paid our dues, and then became increasingly disillusioned!

In 2004 following a meeting of the REC in Jogjakarta Indonesia, our General Assembly called it a day and we ceased to be a member of the REC.

Déjà vu!

What goes wrong with these International Christian Councils, such that we quit?

During the middle of the 20th century "ecumenism" was a buzz word. Get big. Big is strong. The WCC was born in 1948. It described itself as "a worldwide fellowship of global, regional and sub-regional, national and local churches seeking unity, a common witness and Christian service."

The problem was that that kind of "hope" little by little turns into a commitment to the lowest common denominator, and therefore a very shaky foundation for doing much worthwhile. And then, as a fairly natural knock-on effect, we have "inter-faith dialogue" and the uniqueness of our "Saviour of the World" is seriously undermined.

That is a perennial problem with interdenominational ecumenical organisations. Hence the disillusionment as mentioned above.

So why another one? Why in 2004 did our church decide to become a denominational member of the World Reformed Fellowship?

Here are some reasons as spelt out on the website, and with which your PCA General Assembly agreed:

"The mission of the World Reformed Fellowship is to promote understanding, co-operation and sharing of resources among our membership of evangelical and reformed Christians in the advancement of the Gospel.

"The vision of the WRF is simple, 'That the strengths of some might become the strengths of all in the service of Jesus Christ' (see Paul's prayer in Ephesians 4: 11 - 13).

"While specific regional or national expressions of the universal church do, in many ways, embody characteristics of the Body of Christ, there are other characteristics of that Body which transcend those expressions. It is those other characteristics that the WRF seeks to set forth in its commitments and in its activities.

"The World Reformed Fellowship seeks to provide:

- A network for communication and sharing of ministry resources among such Christians.
- A forum for dialogue among such Christians on current issues.
- The opportunity for such Christians from one region of the world to share their unique spiritual and theological perspectives with such Christians from other regions of the world, all within the framework of the evangelical Reformed faith.



Bob Thomas, Robert Benn, Mairi and Allan Harman at WRF in Edinburgh

- Regular occasions, some for such Christians in specific regions of the world and some for such Christians world-wide, to come together for worship and dialogue and resource-sharing."

Of course there is much more to the WRF, all of which can be found on the website wrfnet.org

Since 2004 Drs Allan and Mairi Harman, Dr Bob Thomas and Dr John Wilson (all from Victoria) and I have been significantly involved at many levels with the WRF. The more we are involved, the more we are confident to return to our PCA General Assembly with encouragement to continue our beneficial association with the WRF.

But how does this affect us at the local level?

As members of the Presbyterian Church we want to be as broad as possible in our application of the Gospel of God's wondrous grace.

Our Lord Jesus, when he was handed the scroll at Nazareth on that day which kick-started his public ministry, was citing Isaiah when he taught, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

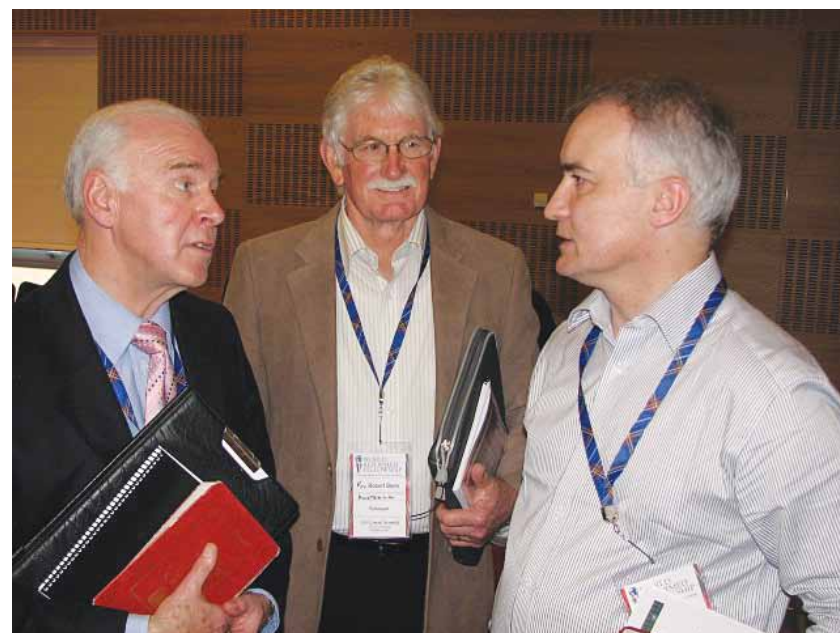
And then, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing".

That certainly both stretched and stirred the locals! "Fulfilled today?" they asked. "Not possible!" That was the opinion of the majority. But what he said was the whole point

of Jesus' ministry - a Gospel that touched everything to do with world and human existence. Everything. "For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross." (Colossians 1:20)

them, and address the question of how "the strengths of the few become the strengths of many in the Cause of Jesus Christ", which is the central pillar of the desired outcome of WRF.

And so, at the next March 2015 Assembly of the WRF in Brazil, those who contribute to the presentations, debate and discussions will be from Bangladesh, Turkey, USA, Iran, Brazil,



Robert Benn with WRF members in Edinburgh Scotland

Ministering good news. Good news of freedom from the grip of Satan. Good news of peace. Good news that touched the poor, the prisoners, the blind, the oppressed. All Spirit-inspired.

Now as we look around the world church, we all face the challenges of which Jesus speaks. We call some of these challenges by different names maybe, but they're essentially the same challenges – mission, human trafficking, abuse of children, slavery, organ transplant scandals, killing of the unborn, evangelism, justice, the plight of refugees etc.

The Gospel must touch all areas. Nothing missing out.

WRF attempts to address these issues from a global world perspective. Syrian Christians face obstacles far greater than we could conceive of. We get their perspective - Christians in Iran, Myanmar, South Africa, Somalia, USA, PNG and Australia. We get the perspective from all of

Mexico, South Africa, UK, Indonesia, Germany, Ireland, Australia, Uganda, Hong Kong etc.

We will be attempting to disseminate global considerations of the matters which in tiny ways affect us all, so that we might be more mature in thinking the issues through from a global perspective, thus resulting in the application of the Gospel at the local level being more effective ... and through the process, to stretch you in your thinking and application of the breath-taking breadth of the Gospel.

Your General Assembly of the PCA has made a decision to be an active participant in the World Reformed Fellowship. Our commitment is to make this more valuable throughout our Church.

BUT, please consider joining the membership as individuals and church institutions/departments by following the prompts on the website (wrfnet.org), and be stretched!



WRF Board members in Potchefstroom South Africa 2013