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

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

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

by Rev Daniel Saunders

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The church ran kids club in partnership with students from Evangelical Students and the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students (AFES) group at the University of Queensland.

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

Kids found evidence

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

On Day 13 of the tour visit Masada, the last stronghold of Jewish resistance to the Romans, and the Dead Sea
Dear Readers
Happy New Year!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Happy reading!

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

The time spent each morning in God’s Word prompted discussions that continued to flow throughout the whole day. One of the greatest things about this year’s camp was the smaller size. This allowed for deeper connections with and between all of the schoolies. By the end of the week, no one wanted to leave.

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

“Jumpstart Schoolies is far better than going to ‘normal’ schoolies!”

“Definitely worth coming to! Best week of my life.”

“Wear sunscreen...”

“Wonderful week full of fun and friendships.”

“Go to Jumpstart. It’s the best week you’ll have...”

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

‘Jumpstart Schoolies is far better than going to ‘normal’ schoolies!’
Reflections from a Year of Church Planting at South Bank

by Nathan Campbell

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

A year in and I’m encouraged by what God has been doing in and through the people who are part of our church family. We’ve got a great core group that has been in South Bank from the beginning, but we’ve also got a steady influx as people move to South Bank from Creek Road Carina. The morning service sees up to 50 people, including children, from various educational institutions, meeting for church (with kids church) and a barbeque lunch. Our morning congregation includes up to 15 kids. Refeeling like we’ve got the Bible Reading in both English and Farsi.

Our Cross Cultural Connect Pastor, Ryan Dehnert, takes our Iranian brothers and sisters through the talk earlier in the week to help them understand Brisbane. This community is smaller, with up to 20 young adults. There is one practical way you can help Creek Road South Bank reach more people—if you know people moving to Brisbane this year to study or work—Christian or not—we would love to help them settle in to Brisbane. Please send them to our new website welcometobrisbane.info.

We would love you to pray for us, visit us and send your non-Christian friends and family in the area to us. Our love for our refugee brothers and sisters, and their joining us to praise the Lord, is not ‘culturally engaged’ but our use of these methods needs to be shaped by the Gospel. Often this means valuing these mediums, just like Jesus changed the meaning of the Cross for His Jewish and Roman audiences. The way we teach and live out the Gospel should be shaped by the people around us—not just the culture shapers (who need the Gospel), but also the unloved and the unloved, those at the margins of our society. Historically, it’s that sort of love which has been at the heart of the church’s ability to transform culture.

This history has helped me think about living out the Gospel in South Bank. To this end, we’ve been seeking to love refugees and the homeless. Our love for our refugee brothers and sisters, and their joining us to praise Jesus, is a picture of the people of God in the New Creation. I’ve been building a working relationship with Micah Projects, an organisation committed to loving and caring for the homeless in Brisbane. Making sure the Good News about Jesus of Micah Projects come on the world’s service loving gospel preaching wind. Having the love for the people of Brisbane, including those at the margins, is 24/7 with me. We’ve built into our DNA right from the word go is part of our contribution to the cultural landscape of our city.

4. It is harder to get people to join a church on the basis of need than it is on the basis of satisfying their own wants. ‘Church shopping’ is such an insidious, consumer driven phrase.

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

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

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

5. God is good. His Word was not wasted on us.

Thinking that the success or failure of a church is down to, or in our core group, or to any of us, is a story told by the messiah in the Bible and story is ok. So on a Sunday where a few of our families are away on holidays, or when our night service drops below 7 people then five of them are in the band—it’s easy for me to feel responsible, and to feel like it’s all a waste of time and energy. But God is in control and He is good. It’s an incredible privilege for all of us to be children of God, to have been brought into a relationship with Him through Jesus’ humiliating sacrifice on the Cross, and through His resurrection. It’s an incredible privilege to play whatever part we’re called to play in the body of Christ—the church.

It’s easy to get caught up in numbers—but the number that really matters, I think, is that in our first year, 100 new opportunities for people of Brisbane to hear the Gospel preached in church, and the Gospel has continued to shape our city’s cultural heartbeat. Not in the obvious way—there are hard to reach, and important places to have good churches, but no harder or more important than the suburbs, the regions, and the outback.

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

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

We’re both heading towards church life. This out how our location in the inner-city reshapes our church community, and what we need to do differently to our mother church in Carina, which is just taken away.

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

3. The thing our ‘culture’ needs is not performed by an is not ‘culturally engaged’ churches, but churches proclaiming and embodying the Good News about Jesus and risen Lord Jesus.

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

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

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

Perhaps you have heard the phrase ‘grass-roots’ used with reference to books, television programs, songs, or various other forms of media providing us with a glimpse of the unfamiliar world. For those of us who have grown up watching children’s television, and have seen the ABC program Playchool, making friends and family in the area to us.

Our Cross Cultural Connect Pastor, Ryan Dehnert, takes our Iranian brothers and sisters through the talk earlier in the week to help them understand Brisbane. This community is smaller, with up to 20 young adults. There is one practical way you can help Creek Road South Bank reach more people—if you know people moving to Brisbane this year to study or work—Christian or not—we would love to help them settle in to Brisbane. Please send them to our new website welcometobrisbane.info.

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

by Naomi Reed

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

57-58 AD

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

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

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

At the end of this section, Paul states that he told them what he had been told by the Lord. He says that this is the bona fide version of the church:

“Whether then it was I or they (the other apostles), so we preach and so you believed,” 1 Corinthians 15:31.

In other words, Paul is saying “The other apostles and I teach the same thing. Don’t be deceived by what I say, go talk to apostle Peter or talk to James. You’ll get the same answer.”

As you can see, Paul received the formal teaching in 35 AD. This was within five years of Jesus’ death. However, there is a further dimension here. What Paul received was an already formalised creed from before 35 AD. The rhyming structure of the creed is the give-away here. The creed was written to be easy to repeat and memorise in ancient Greek. So, we are to look back to even before 35 AD. This pretty much knocks the whole myth concept on the head. Paul tells us what he was told and when he was told. If we live at the time we would have been able to check with the people who were told by the apostles.

The mythologists have done we can know their contacts are inconsequential, or when we’re just building a bunch of historians (not mythologists) have done we can know what Christians thought about Jesus in the first century. Creek Road this term, and online via watchlistenfollow.org and engaging with the story of Jesus, by visiting others to immerse themselves in the story of Jesus, by visiting the places where they’ll take part in the Kids Church, and be available to tell their story to anyone who asks, but they’ll also be tweeting, taking photos, and telling the story of Jesus through social media for the entire year.

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

Bringing Mark’s Gospel to life on Social Media

by Nathan Campbell

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

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

The word ‘Gospel’ is a media term, describing how an important message is communicated. Creek Road Media has designed an approach to telling Mark’s story using these distinctive, and trying to find modern communication methods similar to the Gospel format.


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

You can join the fun, and invite others to immerse themselves in the story of Jesus, by visiting watchlistenfollow.org and engaging with the characters in the online environment. They’ll be interacting with people in real time, in character, all hoping to invite people to do what the original characters in Mark’s story did—help us to see Jesus as he really is, the Son of God and King of the kingdom of God.
**WENDY HENRY TALKS WITH CAROLYN RUSSELL ABOUT HER STORY—HER LIFE, WORK AND MINISTRY (PART 1)**

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

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

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

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

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

CR: Quite busy, though very fulfilling. The focus now of all my work is around mental health and counselling. So, after leaving my home and garden, husband and dog in the morning, I work as a general practitioner (GP)/counsellor at Foundations Counselling Centre in Brisbane. This follows 18 years in my own medical practice, and prior to that a few years working for other people or in hospitals. My medical work continues to inform my current practice, which is predominantly mental health related. I do a lot of assessment for psychiatric illness, as well as seeing people with mood issues (depression and anxiety) and marital or relational issues. As well, I teach young GPs in their formative years. I am a professional carer in organisations and organisations in developing countries, teaching mental health. I return to my haven at home—where my husband manages the home care and does his own work from there—and really enjoy our time together.

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

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

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

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

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

CR: There have been many, and for that I am grateful to God. My father was a prayer partner and a model in Christian life. I would go with him to services as a young child, lying on the pew and listening as he read the Word or prayed when he was on duty to do this. I am still moved, and can hear his voice in my mind, speaking the wonderful words of the Anglican prayer book: We do not presume to come to this thy table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy table ... He continued to point people to Jesus this way throughout his whole life, in a self-giving and sacrificial way—even as a man in his 80s, doing odd jobs around the town for the ‘older folk’.

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

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

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

To be honoured and glorified.

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

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

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

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

‘My job must be to point others to God’s promise of being present, with people, by his spirit, through whatever comes in this world.’
For C (and Other Women of Brisbane)

by Nathan Campbell

I

ate last year a young woman, C, was looking for a church in South Bank and asked if our church is "conservative or progressive". Here is an edited excerpt of a blog post I wrote following our interaction:

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

This frees us to be genuinely progressive, and radical, on all sorts of social issues, as we choose approach that open up the opportunity for people to be truly transformed for the better than the counter-cultural direction of Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit.

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

C had been part of churches in the past—even working for a large church in Sydney—but left because she had past—even working for a large church in Sydney—but left because she had

... 

the current minister within a reasonable time. Enquiries to the members of Gateway Session, 68 Charlton Street, ASCOT QLD 4007, email crb@aapt.net.au.

This article first appeared at www.st-eucythus.com on 3 November 2014. Used with permission.
A fire tempests in the Church, Knox wrote about the heated afflictions which in John Knox frequently found himself sovereignly used by God to shape and strengthen. Through these fiery trials God forged the metal of Knox’s character and formed his convictions. In July 1553, Mary I, the only surviving child born of Henry VIII and his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, ascended to the throne of England. ‘Bloody Mary’, as she would be known, abruptly ended the Protestant reforms of her brother, Edward VI. In their place, she imposed her strict Catholic beliefs on the English people. From 1553–58, her reign of terror was a time of great persecution. Many chose to flee England to Europe. This fled to Dieppe, France (January 1554). For him the choice was stark; refuse the Mass, which he believed to be an idolatry, and he would be martyred, or escape from England to safety. Though many chose to stay and face the danger, Knox was encouraged to choose the latter. In this he would mean for him a prolonged period in which he would not see his future young wife, Marjory Brown. Conscious that they were giving their lives for the Gospel, Knox’s departure troubled him greatly. With no hope of escape, he knew it was necessary for the greater cause of the Gospel, he was deeply sensitive about how his actions would be perceived by both friend and foe. He wrote:

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

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

In the Admonition, Knox pleaded with England not to succumb to the false gospel of Rome: ‘O England, England!... will thou yet obey the voice of thy God, and submit thyself to the judgment of his word? Truly, if thou wilt, shall find mercy in his sight, and the state of thy commonwealth shall be saved.’

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

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

Citizens under a Catholic monarch have been without church government, rather than violate the word of God by taking the Mass.

This deep-seated conviction would become ‘Knox’s special contribution to theological and political thought’. Other ministers, such as Thomas Cranmer and William Tyndale, had stressed that Christians should remain subject to the authorities in their countries, and if necessary offer passive resistance when called upon to obey man rather than God, and suffer the consequences. For Knox however, a return to the papacy and the Mass must be resisted at all costs.

**Travels to Switzerland** (1554)

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

Knox next journeyed to Lausanne where he met with Pierre Viret (1515–71). At last, he made his way to Zurich where he interacted with the highly regarded reformer, Heinrich Bullinger (1504–79). This tour complete, Knox made the journey back to Dieppe (May 1554), where he stayed for the next three months, serving as a pastor to the English in England and Scotland. If the news was good then he might be able to return to England. But reports from the north side of the Channel were far from encouraging.

The situation in England was deteriorating as the grip of widespread persecution was getting worse. Out of deep concern for his brethren in England, Knox wrote two letters to Geneva. The first, ‘A Letter to His Afflicted Brethren in England’, and the second, ‘A Comfortable Epistle Sent to the Afflicted Church of Christ’. The letters sought to encourage the believers in England to remain faithful under persecution. Knox wrote that the minority who had agreed to the English Prayers was essential and a majority which was content to follow the more straightforward order of worship that the Emperor Charles V being ‘no less an enemy of Christ than ever was Nero’. This prompted the authorities who had agreed to these changes with the Emperor and who did not want to be identified with such sentiments. So within just a couple of weeks of Knox’s arrival in Frankfurt, Knox was ousted from the congregation and expelled from the city on 26 March, 1555.

Meanwhile, back in England the burning of the first reformers had begun. The first Marian martyr was John Rogers, the Bible translator, who was executed at the stake. In November 1554, Knox was, somewhat reluctantly, on the move once again, this time to Frankfurt to take up the work of pastor of the English Church.

Knox left Dieppe on 9 February. Knowing Knox, he was about to walk into a firestorm of controversy. An increasingly bitter dispute soon arose over the use of the second Prayer Book. Knox compared the Holy Roman Emperor and who did not want to be identified with such sentiments. So within just a couple of weeks of Knox’s arrival in Frankfurt, Knox was ousted from the congregation and expelled from the city on 26 March, 1555.

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Introducing James Woollett...

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

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

But that didn’t last in second year. God used Student Life to change me, to change how I lived and where I was going. From the very first conference where I was trained in how I can lead a multiplying movement, training them in discipleship and to lead a multiplying movement, to equip them for Gospel service.

What I hope to see one day, is students involved in the Student Life movement—so much so that there is now a group of five core student leaders who have a heart for Kelvin Grove and are attempting to start a movement on that campus.

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

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

I’ve been said that “true and sound wisdom consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves”. This helps to describe my thoughts of Queensland Theological College (QTC). At QTC academic demands were real but the stronger driving force was growth in students’ relational knowledge of God and his goodness. Also the recognition of our own falleness and our constant need of a Saviour. There’s a genuine desire to guide students toward being wise for salvation through faith in Christ, and to equip them for Gospel service.

Like many students, my introduction to QTC involved significant life changes: relocating, adjusting to working at my local Presbyterian church and at QTC.

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

Since my time as a student leader in 2015 God has increased the number of students involved in the Student Life movement—so much so that there is now a group of five core student leaders who have a heart for Kelvin Grove and are attempting to start a movement on that campus.

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Life at Queensland Theological College from a Student’s Perspective

by Katie Allan

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Like many students, my introduction to QTC involved significant life changes: relocating, finding a new church, leaving behind work (and income!), and establishing new friendships. Throw in adjusting to study again after a 15 year hiatus and it really was a shock to the system! But I knew I was in a good place.

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

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

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

The whole college community gathers for chapel at the start of each week. With unashamedly Bible-centred teaching, staff and students are encouraged in the Gospel together. There’s the constant reminder that the truths of the Bible are not only for us but for our local communities in Brisbane, Queensland and beyond.

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

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

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

My time at QTC has given me a bunch of really helpful tools so that I can more effectively understand God’s Word and wisely direct others (and myself!) towards Jesus. It’s just what I needed, as I now look forward to working at my local Presbyterian church and at QTC.
Over Three Decades Visiting Prisons
Inside Out Chaplaincy talks to Arthur McDonald to get an inside look at the work of a prison chaplain by Danielle Stott

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

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

“I remember a time when prisoners would drive themselves into town to attend the local church service. After church they’d drive themselves back tonight,” reminisces Arthur.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Sometimes you’re sittin’ ducck; you’re taken for a ride. Sometimes you don’t know what to say. It can be confronting. You come face to face with all kinds of suffering.”

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

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

“My job is just to be faithful. It’s God’s job to transform people. And church lives gives us a very big ‘heart’ to continue to build this special Gospel relationship.”

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

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

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

For that we thank them very sincerely.

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

Picking Yourself Up (East Timor)
by Rev Robert Benn

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

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

My admiration for them grew in leaps and bounds.

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

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

Some officials of Timor Leste’s population had either died, been displaced or had become refugees in other countries, including Australia.

But now, Timor Leste has gained her independence.

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

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

But there are protestant churches as well—mainly of the ‘reformed’ or ‘presbyterian’ kind.

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

Rev Benn speaks of his time in Timor Leste. He has visited many prisons.

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

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I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now...’ Philippians 1:3f.
As the civil war in South Sudan continues, Motor Yat remains in Ethiopia serving in refugee camps. He writes “People are coming to centres on Sunday for Bible studies, chairs and women groups are practicing. We are planning to distribute some hymnbooks to the centres. We need your prayers so that the need can be fulfilled. People have left South Sudan because of the war in greater Upper Nile. They have left everything behind.

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

MO TOR YAT: T he Doors Have Opened

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

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

Mount Magnet: Surendra & Mayan Wesley

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

National Office

We bid farewell to our Office Administrator, Rob Falls, who has left APWM to take up a ministry internship with the Evangelical Union at Sydney University. We have created a new full-time position called ‘Director’s Assistant’ and will soon be a new full-time position called ‘Administrator, Rob Falls, who has left APWM to take up a ministry internship.”

APWM Office very soon. They will be returning to Hungary in early March 2015. She will serve as personal assistant to the Budapest Pioneers team leader as well as serving the wider team.

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

Joy Venning (Canterbury, VIC, APWM National Associate, South Asia) writes “November has been a dream! With classes finishing up and exams out of the way, this month has had much more time for different opportunities. Probably the biggest (and most delightful) change I’ve noticed this month, has been in relationships with the women on campus. Despite some language barriers, cultural differences, and age differences, it’s been so great to spend more time with the women that God has placed me among. It’s been wonderful to form deeper friendships with some mothers who are my neighbours, and some of my students. There are at east 50 women on campus here, who I interact with daily, so there have been heaps of opportunities to spend time together.

• I spend most morning chatting with the girls in my Bible study outside of the group.
• Some of the senior students meet me each week to talk about their practical ministry that week.
• It’s been great to spend more time visiting some of our faculty wives and their newborn babies.
• We’ve made a few shopping trips to help some families prepare for the winter.

I’m really thankful that these relationships have been flourishing, and I learn a lot from spending time together. As friendships grow, the women are open to talking more deeply about life, and sharing their struggles and concerns. We often speak of God’s faithfulness, and his deep love for us through Christ. It amazes me again and again how the simple truths of the gospel apply so clearly in so many different situations that I’ve never had to think about before. It’s wonderful to pray for these women who are quickly becoming dear friends.”

Alex Kowalenko (Carlingford, NSW ECM, Portugal) writes “For the last 9 years I have been working with the Portuguese Bible Institute, training the next generation of evangelical leaders in the Portuguese church. The work has been challenging, but in the end rewarding and exciting, as we have seen many trained men and women go into Portugal and be involved in pastoral work, church planting, theological education, youth and children’s ministry, and outreach ministries. Over the last 9 years my capacity to work in Portugal has also increased, as I have become more fluent in the language, I am understanding more the Portuguese culture, and grown in conviction that this ministry is effective as it multiplies workers and leaders in Portugal, with the aim to strengthen the Portuguese evangelical church and also to reaching out to the wider Portuguese community with the good news of Jesus Christ.”

Laszlo and Eva Mihalyi (Donvale VIC, Pioneers Australia, Romania) write about a recent camp for teenagers: “At the end of this camp we gave each camper a newly translated, just released Bible, thanks to the funds received for this purpose from PAMU (Victoria). Such a great blessing, indeed. Most kids did not own a Bible or the one they had at home is an old translation and difficult to understand today. Do pray that they will start reading and searching for the truth.

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

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FOCUS ON JAPAN

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

John and Rosemary Evans and family are doing well in Japan. Due to the arrival of some new team members they had to move house earlier this year and are now living in a strategic location. John continues his study of Japanese and in late 2015 he will return to Australia for home assignment. When they do return to Japan, they and the Chiba City church planting team will be moving towards establishing a congregation. This year the family has battled some common bugs and colds that come with a young family. It’s encouraging to see the growing number of Australians who are being led to serve in Japan.

Grace City

While some of the churches in Japan are struggling, others are experiencing very encouraging numerical growth. Two years ago visited the Grace City congregation and was excited to see a congregation of approximately 70 people who had a genuine heart for reaching people with the gospel. Two years later that congregation has moved to a larger building to accommodate the growing congregation. This congregation is what we might classify as ‘International’ in nature as it has a considerable number of non-Japanese in attendance. However, many congregations are like the Osaka Presbyterian Church with few members, many of whom are women. For that reason, it is hoped that in mid 2015 Nathan and Tomoko Stewart will head to Japan to assist the Osaka congregation in outreach. In discussion with the leaders of the denomination it is clear that our partnership is valued and it is a great encouragement to our brothers and sisters.

Bangladesh: A letter to all Presbyteries and Congregations

At its meeting held on 24th October 2014 the APWM National Committee withdrew the responsibility for the management of the Bangladesh field from the APWM NSW Committee according to the authority set out in the GAA section of the Overseas Assembly (The National Code). Further the APWM National Committee decided to conclude the partner relationship with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Bangladesh as of 30th November 2014. The result of those decisions means not only that the Presbyterian Church of Australia has no Partner Church presence in Bangladesh, but also that it is currently improper for anyone to seek to represent the Presbyterian Church of Australia or APWM in Bangladesh unless explicitly authorised to do so by the APWM National Committee.

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

In Christ Jesus, Alex Shaw, Convener APWM National Committee

What’s It Like to Live in Japan?

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

Where is home?

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

What do you enjoy about living in Japan?

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

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

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

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

What encourages you about the Church in Japan?

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

What is Your Purpose in Life?

Grannie Pillar lectures at a university in Hungary and writes “In my Oral Communications Skills class, within the context of the topic: What is Your Purpose in Life? I posed the question: ‘What are the two most important days in your life?’ To my surprise, one bright student gave the answer I was looking for: ‘The day you are born, and the day you find out why you were born.’ This was the catalyst for some deep and interesting discussions on their priorities, problems and purpose in life. As with any question I ask of them, my students always ask me to give my response. I was able to share openly my testimony, and tell them when (August 14, 1977), where (in a hospital bed in Johannesburg), and what God showed me what my purpose in life was (to love God, and to love others, which is how I summed up the basic teaching of Jesus). Following on from this, I said that my mission in life, which is the practical application of my purpose, was to make a difference in the lives of my students, for the good, through my teaching, and my love for them. This was one of the few opportunities I have had this semester to speak openly to my students about my main motivation for what I do, and about the One who is behind it all. We know that Jesus has sent us here to plant the seeds of the gospel in the minds of our students, and it is our prayer that in His sovereign will and providence, these seeds might be watered, grow and, through the work of the Holy Spirit, will bear fruit for the kingdom.

PRESEBTERIAN CHURCH IN JAPAN ASSEMBLY

What is Your Purpose in Life?

What’s It Like to Live in Japan?

Grace City Presbyterian Church

What is Your Purpose in Life?

What is Your Purpose in Life?

What is Your Purpose in Life?
A Strategic Ministry in Sub-Saharan Africa

by Ian McIver

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

Westminster Theological College in Uganda

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

Facilities and Students

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

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

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

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

Academic Programs and Lecturing Staff

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

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

Visiting lecturers leave busy lives and are therefore generally only able to give a week or two of their time each year. As a result the seminary program is based on intensive courses of 24 lectures in a week, rather than the traditional pattern of lectures spread over a semester. It’s not ideal, but given the eagerness to learn on the part of the students, it works well.

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

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

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

Student Life and Challenges

Altogether there are about 120 students in the College and Seminary and they come from a number of different nations and denominational affiliations in sub-Saharan Africa. All are being immersed in a clear commitment to the reformed faith and are developing the skills needed to bring the Gospel and love of Jesus Christ to the rising generations in Africa.

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

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

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

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

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

New Library under construction

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

Projects for Readers to Support

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

Harvesting the Sun: Solar paneling on each of the dormitory roofs could be installed to provide hot water for showers. A

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

Helping to Fund the New Library: Altogether some $40,000 USD is needed to cover the cost of the building. At the moment the foundations and walls are in place but about $40,000 more will be needed to complete the building. Any contributions towards the goal of a new Library would be very welcome.

Providing Library Books:

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

Sponsoring Students:

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

Further Contact:

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

Further information can be obtained by contacting:

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

‘Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.’
Matthew 28:19a
Building Homes, Changing Lives

by Leigh Renaud

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I vividly remember watching as a family cried and then gave themselves to Christ. The team at KSCSI has shown their love for their fellow man, helping them when no one else would. At the same time they showed who God is (through word and deed). They did this not because they feel obligated to but because they want to.

Finally if anyone gave money to the appeal and is reading this I would like to thank you for what you did for them. We have changed their lives; given them an opportunity to meet God as well as understand what Jesus has done for them.

Beyond fear in becoming friends with Muslims

by Sharlyn Tidswell

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“I pray that we devote a passion to Muslims, said international speaker and missionary, Rev Dr John Azumah.

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

Equipping Australian Christians to engage with Muslims at CMS Summer School

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

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

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

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

“It’s like a courtship. Your first approach is not ‘Look at how awful your family and home is’—you don’t go attacking Islam, the Qur’an or Mohammed—but you build the relationship,” said Dr Azumah. Thus, we need to have elaborate training. All we need is another opportunity to hear it.'
Hollywood has struck back. This time director Ridley Scott has brought his God to our movie screens in the Bible-based Exodus in his attempt to spruce up the supposed tired, old story of the Exodus and adapt it to film. Of course, film is a new medium. Hollywood has long been known to rewrite history in its attempts to make it more entertaining. How, as Christians, should we assess a film like this? Some would say that we should leave criticism aside, and what matters is that this film makes people want to accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. It may be a crude caricature of the Bible, but as long as it leads people to salvation, then it must be good, right? This is hardly surprising. On the one hand, it seems to appeal to religious viewers, but it also contains material which could be damaging to non-Christian viewers appealing to secular, anti-religious audience members.

Overall, the film follows the rough outline of the first 15 chapters of the book of Exodus, but there are many details which differ. Some differences are more obvious: for example, Moses waving around an Egyptian sword instead of a staff, or the ordering of the plagues. Other differences are more significant: for example there is a poignant scene where Moses leaves his wife and sons behind to return to Egypt, but this has been explained away by the scriptwriter. This is another example of the way in which Christian films do not want to be the one to speak to the audience about faith alone. Now, as he wrote, 'The Bible is the most controversial book in the world, but picking up a newspaper and seeing the news of the day, and Kings, explained his religious views, 'I do despair. That's a heavy word, but picking up a newspaper and seeing what the world is doing is a similar kind of thing.'

It is important that we understand within this film's creative freedom from what we are missing, from what we are losing, from what we are giving up. The Bible is the story of God's people, the story of the church of God, the story of the church of Jesus Christ, but this film is not about that. It is about the story of one man, one man's life, and that's it.

Exodus: Gods and Kings
by Simon Stebbins

For the new few months, Knox moved from London to Edinburgh, giving instruction in the Scriptures to these small gatherings and administering the Lord's supper.

The church of God is always in need of reform-minded believers that taking the Mass must be forbidden. This bold reform -minded believers that taking the Mass must be forbidden. This bold reform

God was preparing John Knox for Through these various providences he moved about the country giving Scripture reading and prayer. This encouragement that small groups of men like John Knox to step forward God is to advance, it will require bold

Since his presence in Scotland was becoming increasingly hazardous, he decided to return to Europe, but this time he was not reconciled to mother-in-law. He sent Marjory and Mrs Bowes ahead by ship to Dieppe, where they were to meet him on his arrival.

For further preaching in Scotland, Knox sailed for the Continent, arriving in Dieppe in July 1566. Another journey of 200 miles took him between his home and pastoral duties among the English exiles in Geneva.

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

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

What's more, he was shown a need of such leaders. If the kingdom of God is to advance, it will require bold men like John Knox to step forward and blow their Master's trumpet. To be fair, as Scott has said, 'Sacred texts give no explicit depiction of God, so for centuries artists and filmmakers have had to choose their own interpretation of God. As a boy, he makes God look immature. I'm not saying a portrayal of God has to be thunder and lightning with scenes of God driving a red sports car, but this one is. What seems more important here is that Knox, nevertheless, discovered that Scripture reading and prayer. This encouragement that small groups of men like John Knox to step forward God is to advance, it will require bold

Knox, nevertheless, discovered that Scripture reading and prayer. This encouragement that small groups of men like John Knox to step forward God is to advance, it will require bold

Some differences seem unnecessary; in the movie, a white horse with blood red writing appears with a message to Pharaoh. I get that it was an attempt to produce a powerful visual effect, but wouldn't it have been more powerful to see Moses—a Hebrew representing a race of slaves—speak to the most powerful ruler in the world at the time, "Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go?" Of course, this is a personal preference, but from a Biblical point of view, Moses is portrayed as almost equal to Pharaoh.

The main theme of the first 15 chapters of Exodus is that of God's patience, and not does His loyal love to His people. Despite languishing in Egypt, He kept His promise to do good to His people after 430 years. Yes, there were lessons for Moses to learn too, but mostly it is about God's faithful love for His people, and for a reason. For Moses, this is more relevant to Christians than the description of the Passover; as a substitute for the life of each firstborn son, the blood of a lamb was sprinkled on the doorways so the Lord would pass over that house. The blood of a lamb, the firstborn son, blood of the Lord's sacrifice. Nothing more than that.

This time director Ridley Scott's own interview comments are both anti- and pro-religion. In the process, the resulting movie leaves neither camp satisfied. Although the movie might prompt some unchurched viewers to read the original story, it will unfortunately give others confusing misinformation; potentially exacerbating the Biblical ignorance of the general populace.

The main theme of the first 15 chapters of Exodus is that of God's patient, and does not forget His loyal love to His people. Despite languishing in Egypt, He kept His promise to do good to His people after 430 years. Yes, there were lessons for Moses to learn too, but mostly it is about God's faithful love for His people, and for a reason. For Moses, this is more relevant to Christians than the description of the Passover; as a substitute for the life of each firstborn son, the blood of a lamb was sprinkled on the doorways so the Lord would pass over that house. The blood of a lamb, the firstborn son, blood of the Lord's sacrifice. Nothing more than that.

"The main theme of the first 15 chapters of the book of Exodus is that God is patient, and does not forget His loyal love to His people."
Excellent 2014 OP/QCS Results and Tertiary Outcomes for Fairholme College Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

St Patrick: Reclaiming The Great Missionary

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

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

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

From Slave to Evangelist

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

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

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

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

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

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

Missionary Ahead of His Time

In fifth-century Ireland women were a commodity. Selling a daughter or arranging a politically advantageous marriage was common and advantageous to a family. Patrick upset the social order by teaching women they had a choice in Christ. As God converted these women to Christianity, some became full-time servants of Christ in the face of strong family opposition. Patrick told women they could be “virgins for Christ” by remaining chaste. This newfound control was appealing to many women, but it angered many men who believed Patrick was taking away their prized possessions.

At the time many scholars regarded Ireland as the end of the earth, or at least the edge of the inhabitable portion of earth. The collapsing Roman Empire supported many beliefs that civilized society was drawing to a close. Politicians and philosophers viewed Ireland as barbaric and untamable.

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

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

Recovering the True Patrick

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

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

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

This article first appeared on The Gospel Coalition website (www.thegospelcoalition.org) on 17 March 2014. Used with permission.
PresCare staff wore their hearts on their sleeves throughout the weeks leading into Christmas by coordinating a number of events and activities across the regions; from a dedicated Christmas party to thank Vela and Lake Sherrin’s devoted volunteers, to Christmas lunches for our community care and residential clients, to the Day Therapy Centre picking up 11 of its clients in the PresCare bus and taking them to the local Christmas light displays.

Local Christmas lights display

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

There are many lovely memories to share, but one which stands out is the Christmas luncheon at Groundwater Lodge where one of our clients living with dementia experienced the greatest joy of all. A piece of music being played on the dining room piano roused her memory long enough for her to recognise the man playing the piano was her husband. Even if it was only fleeting, it was heartening to see her remember who he was, and what he meant to her.

Christmas card making at the Day Therapy Centre

Kawana Waters Community Care Christmas

Santa (Rev Graeme McKay)

Vela Christmas 2014

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

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

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

“This means that residents are all eligible for the benefits of this service before their apartment is even built,” Mr Bosel says. “The addition of Kingsford Concierge to the lifestyle at Kingsford Terrace is another way PresCare is setting our development apart from other retirement villages in Queensland.”

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

“We believe the addition of a concierge service offers an added layer of excellence to any development,” Ms Blair says. “In world cities like New York, Paris and London, a concierge is an expected service in premium apartment complexes, so for PresCare to add this service to the offering at Kingsford Terrace shows exactly what standard of living residents can expect.”

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

PresCare believes in providing more than just physical care

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

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

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

Guild Donates $1000 to PresCare’s Alexandra Gardens

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

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

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

The St Andrew’s Women’s Guild provides a very important sewing and mending service for Alexandra Gardens and always supports various functions, particularly the annual springtime garden party where they provide a wonderful array of cakes to sell to help raise money for the work PresCare does for residents and clients in the local Rockhampton area.
The church office had been based at Amelia Street, Fortitude Valley since 1989. In January 2015 the Presbyterian Church of Queensland closed its office doors at Amelia Street and relocated to Lang Parade in Milton.

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

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

Here are some comments from staff about the new office:

“Very spacious and comfortable.”

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

Contact details for the office are as follows:

Street: Level 4, 19 Lang Parade, Milton Qld 4064
Postal: PO Box 1351, Milton LPO Qld 4064
Phone: (07) 3716 2800
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by Michelle Martin

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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

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

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

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

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

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

A competitive salary package is offered.

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

CAMP BUNYA MOUNTAINS

REQUIRE A CARETAKER/MANAGER

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

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

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

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

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

Secretary (Vicki Whittle) on 0427590 519 or email tiganne@bigpond.com
Chairman (Mr Keith Bartley) on 0429 622 225
Director PCE (Rev Peter Barson) on (07) 3716 2851

This is an EXCITING OPPORTUNITY to be involved in revitalising the Camping Ministry at Camp Bunya Mountains!
Presbyterians Help ‘Stable on the Strand’

by Noel Wootton

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

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

Now completing its thirteenth year, it is designed as a ‘seed’ to encourage folk of all ages through the wider community to consider the story of salvation as offered by the Saviour Jesus Christ. So many have heard only the commercial side of Christmas but need to hear the real story, and to respond in their lives.

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

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

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

The nativity scene in Bethlehem

Nailing at the carpenter’s shop

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

There have been numerous reports of people who have been blessed by the message of ‘Stable’. Information is on the Website www.stableonthestrand.com.

Carols beside the nativity scene

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

Carols at Caloundra Presbyterian Church in December 2014

by Robyn Sansbury

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

I n 1818 the words of this lovely carol were put to music and sung for the first time in the little village of Oberndorf, a village near Salzburg in Austria, at the Christmas Eve service in the church of St Nicholas.

The story of its beginnings and those of other popular carols formed the focus of the Christmas sides service at Caloundra Presbyterian Church on Sunday evening, 14 December 2014.

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

Young and old enjoyed the stories and the evening was aptly rounded off by Mr Jim Vine presenting a short but sharp Christmas Gospel message.

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

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

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

Young and old certainly had their thoughts directed to that first Christmas when the baby Jesus was born and laid in a manger.

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

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

Connecting Creatively

“What to do with bits of string…”

by Barbara Clark

Be Creative 2014 at Dakabin was a wonderful weekend filled with ‘doing’ and ‘string’!" Doing filled up much of the weekend – women and girls doing the craft they love, sharing their passion for beauty and usefulness, thinking through their choices, creating precious and marvellous things. The Felt makers did in fact, transform ‘bits of string’ into beautiful and useful handbags of glorious colour combinations.

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

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

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

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

Be Creative was an opportunity to experience the delight of fellowship with like minded women. Each meal made by other creative hands presented an opportunity to be quiet and relax, or to chat and make new friends. There were five women from Roma church who attended, whom God preserved from danger. The eight hour journey began with a full tank of fuel, but when a tyre blew out on the Warrego Highway in a 10km zone more than an hour from the nearest RAAQ it proved to be a testing time.

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

Perhaps the highlight of the ‘doing’ for me was the Cardboard Box challenge after High Tea. The reading of the instructions, picking out the odd bits and string, the explosion of energy, and the flurry of activity culminated in a fashion parade which was side splittingly funny.

This episode revealed many talented beautiful people. The auction raised funds for the Dorcas Foundation, and we were reminded not to be complacent about the many good things in our lives.

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

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

*Origin of source unknown.