

the PRESBYTERIAN pulse

Living for the day women's conference



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Editorial

BY KAREN FORMAN

The Big Picture

As I write this editorial, I am lying in hospital waiting to go into surgery to “reconstruct” my ankle. Apparently, it will be a big operation, with four or five issues for the surgeon to deal with and the hoped-for outcome is that I will be able to walk, run, ride, skate, hike and ski without pain. I am a very active person and I hear myself saying flippantly quite often, to be sidelined is almost a fate worse than death . . . or is it?

Naturally, I have many emotions at this time of waiting . . . fear (of pain, of being immobilised in plaster for up to six weeks, of things going wrong); uncertainty (will it be a success); regret (why did I leave it too long when the first injury occurred back in the summer); impatience (it will be a long rehabilitation); doubt (can I REALLY trust my medical team?) and more.

Earlier, a friend sent me a message reminding me that God is in control and that I should “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God”- (Philippians 4:6)

Yeah, right, easy to say, but hard to put into action (says my fearful mind).

But then another friend sent me the lyrics to one of my favourite worship songs, Everlasting God, from Chris Tomlin: “Strength will rise as I wait upon the Lord. You’re the defender of the weak. You comfort those in need. You lift us up on the wings Like eagles.”

And it got me thinking about how



we are all waiting on the Lord to return. Unlike with my surgery, with a firm date given to me just two days ago, we don't KNOW when He will return. It is pretty obvious that in both situations, we will go through both good and tough times along the way. While I have been in pain and restricted in what I can do with an injured ankle, facing a painful recovery and even financial issues; we've all been through a tough few years of the pandemic, with restrictions on our movements, effects on many financial situations, effects on our physical and mental health and more.

But in both situations, we do have certainty that He is there with us, however long it takes. We have certainty that He will comfort us, lift us up and be there every step of the way. We just need to trust and have faith, as the Bible tells us, in all situations.

The pandemic is not over. COVID-19 and its variants are still making people sick and people are dying. But we aren't in lockdown anymore; we are living our new normal lives and looking forward to a better future.

My operation will be over by tonight. Things will be tough for a bit, but then I will live a new normal with a healed ankle.

I love how God speaks to us through all situations and today is a great reminder to me to look at not only what is going on for me now, but the big picture.

NEW SCHOOL HEADS

welcomed in Bathurst, Casino

PCNSW General Manager Jeof Falls and others have welcomed two new heads of PCNSW schools: Richard Ford at Scots All Saints College in Bathurst; and Faith Hull at Casino Christian School.

In so doing, Mr Falls has thanked and farewelled John Weeks, who is retiring and Graeme Jolliffe, who is moving to take up the role of principal at Nowra Christian School.

The principals of the Church's five other schools welcomed Richard and Faith to the Presbyterian family.

"It is going to be wonderful having you both join us and we look forward to working in partnership across our schools and state," Dr Ian Lambert, the principal of The Scots College said.

Announcing the new appointments, Mr Falls extended his thanks to both departing principals, John and Graeme.

"My sincere thanks and heartfelt appreciation for their service to the Presbyterian Church in NSW over the past several years, and for leaving strong Christ-centred legacies for Richard and Faith respectively," he said.

Scots All Saints College Council chair, Hamish Thompson, said John's strength of leadership and commitment to Christian values had guided the College since its foundation and had been critical to its success.

"On behalf of the College, we would like to thank him for his outstanding leadership, commitment to academic excellence and his ability to inspire students to excel, care and thrive," he said.



Richard Ford, new head at Scots All Saints College.

"We would also like to thank Mrs Denise Weeks for her commitment in working with the past students' association, in the creation of the College museums and the establishment of the College Community prayer meetings and also for her support of John throughout his time with us."

Richard started at Bathurst this term. "Richard was formerly Headmaster of Launceston Church Grammar School, and worked at St Andrew's Cathedral School, Arden Anglican School and Newington College before moving to Launceston."

Faith has been appointed at Casino effective from January 1 2023. "Prior to moving to joining Casino Christian School in 2019 as Head of Primary, Faith had several executive positions at Warwick Christian College. Earlier this year, Faith was instrumental in leading Casino Christian School as acting principal soon after she was appointed during the worst floods ever recorded in northern NSW, and ongoing COVID outbreaks during the year." Mr Falls said.

"Both Richard and Faith are strongly committed Christians and have a passion for educating children with Christ at the centre of all that happens at their respective schools", Mr Falls said.



Faith Hull, new head at Casino Christian School.

Death of our Queen

BY REV DAVID MAHER



Photo by: Government of Alberta

Our nation awoke to the sad news that Her Royal Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, had died.

As Moderator, and on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in the State of NSW, I offer my heartfelt condolences to the Royal Family. May the peace of Christ and the hope of the Gospel be with them and sustain them in their grief.

Through her long reign, Queen Elizabeth has been a constant in all our lives.

Since she became Queen in 1952, she has welcomed no less than 16 Australian Prime Ministers.

Today we remember her for her faithfulness, humility, dignity and good humour, all of which have made her a rock of stability in an ever-changing world.

But we especially thank God for her life of faith.

In her 2016 Annual Christmas Broadcast, Her Majesty explained, “Billions of people now follow Christ’s teaching and find in him the guiding light for their lives. I am one of them because Christ’s example helps me see the value in doing small things with great love.”

May we all take time to give thanks to God for Queen Elizabeth’s faith, life, and loyal service under Christ.

*“My soul finds rest in God alone;
my salvation comes from him.
He alone is my rock and my salvation;
he is my fortress, I shall never be shaken.”
(Psalm 62:1)*

In the love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Moderator joins PCA concern over “watershed” Essendon resignation

BY DAVID MAHER

The Presbyterian Church of Australia (PCA) was “deeply concerned” at events surrounding the resignation of Andrew Thorburn as chief executive of the AFL’s Essendon Football Club and spoke out on the subject.

In a joint media release in October, PCNSW/ACT Moderator David Maher joined Moderator General Peter Barnes, and PC Vic Moderator Peter Phillips in making a public statement on the issue.

They said they believed the resignation marked a “watershed moment in Australian history” – the day there had been a departure from some well-established common law principles, where there was freedom of conscience and religion, to being a society where only certain views were permitted in public life.

“While Israel Folau was discriminated against for his own beliefs, we note that Mr Thorburn was forced to resign from his post merely because of the particular church he belongs to. There is apparently now a religious test for significant employment posts in Australia,” the Moderators said in the statement.

“We note that the ethical position Mr Thorburn’s church—City on a Hill—takes on the subjects of abortion and sexuality, are the same as that of the mainline Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, Jewish, and Muslim faiths.”

The Moderators queried whether the Essendon Football Club would then no longer welcome people who

had sincere religious convictions from being involved with the club, at either an administrative, coaching or playing level.

“Essendon Football Club says it supports “wholeheartedly the work of the AFL in continuing to stamp out any discrimination based on race, sex, ‘religion’, gender, sexual identity or orientation, or physical or mental disability”, while at the same time forcing Mr Thorburn to resign because of his religion. This looks rather like speaking out of both sides of one’s mouth,” they said.

“We are in a dangerous place as a nation when a premier can seek to impose his own personal ideologies on everyone else. Such behaviour is itself “appalling, hateful, bigoted, unkind and exclusive”.

The Moderators said the Presbyterian Church of Australia would continue to uphold the Bible’s teaching, that marriage should only ever be between a man and a woman, and that the lives of unborn babies must always be protected. This is for both the flourishing of families and all of human life. There is nothing loving about killing unborn children and promoting an anti-life view of marriage.

“We pray for our political leaders and remind them that they, like us all, will one day have to give account before Almighty God. We also urge our people to pray, stand firm for the faith, and not give into the opposition from those who reject our Lord Jesus Christ and His Word. Finally, we ask those whom God has placed in authority over us in this world, for the freedom to live out our faith, without intolerant bullying.”

SAFETY SPOT

Asbestos Management

If your church was built or renovated after ~1920 and before December 2003 or if asbestos has been identified at the site, you must keep an Asbestos Register that outlines:

- When the asbestos was found
- Where it is located
- What type of asbestos it is
- What condition it is in


The register must be reviewed at least every 5 years or when the building changes and you must make the register available to anyone likely to be exposed to asbestos and pass it on through the CoM.

If asbestos has been identified at your church, you must prepare and maintain an Asbestos Management Plan and make it readily available to workers, safety officers and contractors.

For asbestos guidelines, forms and a template and an example of an Asbestos Management Plan see: <https://pcnsw.org.au/work-health-and-safety/>

Hazel Nisbet
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 @emmanuelcollege_sydney

LEARN TRUTH

Emmanuel College Intensive: Engaging the World

2023

About Us

Emmanuel College Sydney is a new Liberal Arts College in the Reformed Protestant Tradition based at Burwood Presbyterian Church in Sydney, Australia.

Scan me for
more info and
to register!



Some of our Speakers

Luke Barnes
Author, Lecturer in
astronomy and
cosmology.



Jemimah Wilson
Lecturer (BA (Hons),
PhD Candidate)



Peter Barnes
Dean of Emmanuel
College Sydney




David Robertson
Evangelist, Author,
Speaker, Social
Commentator




When: 16–20th January 2023
**Where: Burwood Presbyterian
Church, 46 –48 Belmore St,
Burwood NSW 2134**
Cost: \$10 per day

 +61 434788087

 registrar@emmanuelc
ollegesydney.com.au

 Burwood Presbyterian
Church, 46 –48 Belmore St,
Burwood NSW 2134

 @emmanuelcollege_sydney

LEARN TRUTH

Topics covered:

Monday

1. The Bible – how it came to be
2. The Bible – its authority
3. Creation and Evolution
4. Creation and Evolution
5. The Resurrection of Christ

Tuesday

6. Approaches to Education
7. History
8. Historical Theology
9. Literature
10. Philosophy
11. Logic

Wednesday

12. The History of Science
13. The History of Science
14. Modernism and Post Modernism
15. Cultural Marxism

Scan me for more info and to register!



Thursday

16. The Abolition of Man
17. Critical Theories
18. Feminism
19. Gender Studies
20. Presenting the Gospel for Today

Friday

21. Presenting the Gospel for Today
22. The World of the Media
23. Social Media
24. 'The Air We Breathe' and Lost Orphans – freedom, beauty, morality, diversity, social justice
25. Reclaiming Lost Ground: Between Nostalgia and Reality

Due to some circumstances, there may be some minor changes.



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Burwood Presbyterian Church, 46 -48 Belmore St, Burwood NSW 2134



Building relationships: Serving with Sydney refugee team

Sydney Refugee Team shares the hope, love, and truth of Jesus with people seeking asylum and refuge.

Linda Whitehouse (nee Goldthorpe) has been part of this ministry since 2012.

Sydney Refugee Team is now part of WEC Australia (Worldwide Evangelisation for Christ) having joined in 2020 due to the closure of International Teams Australia.

WEC is a longstanding, international, interdenominational Christian mission organisation.

Shane and Linda married at their local church, Blacktown East Presbyterian Church in February 2012.

Shane works full time as a civil engineer and is an elder at church as well as volunteering with Sydney Refugee Team. Ministry for Sydney Refugee Team continues to involve building genuine relationships and offering physical, emotional, and spiritual support to people seeking asylum and refuge.

The team has now increased to nine members: Karl and Caroline, Memo and Bec, Juan and Vicki, Lisa, Alison, and Linda.

It has a large number of volunteers and seeks to link each of the families with a companion volunteer. Now, it is also developing church hubs.

This involves a church assisting a group of trained volunteers from their church to provide support including delivering fortnightly groceries for a family or families.

Currently, the team is providing about 60 families with food fortnightly. Thank you to the churches which have donated rice and oil to supplement the food from Foodbank NSW.

The team tries to visit with people and have a cup of tea or coffee with them rather than just delivering food.

It often has the opportunity to pray for people it is visiting.

Linda met Z and A, an Afghan couple, when she delivered food to them. A started attending playgroup and they have now connected with some people at the local church. Please pray for them as they have started attending a Hope Explored course.

Sydney Refugee Team assists people from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds.

Currently, this includes people from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Sri Lanka, South Sudan and Eritrea.

R from Iran was recently baptised by Karl, our team leader. It is great to hear how his faith has grown through contact with Christians including Karl and Caroline over several years.

COVID-19 has presented several challenges to Sydney Refugee Team, so we have not been able to run a weekend away for the refugees since 2019 but hope to do so next year. Our Christmas party which included a Christmas message was a highlight. About 150 people attended.

The organisation is thankful for the donation of Christmas gifts and hampers through Jericho Road.

D from Eritrea is also an encouragement. She prays and shares the Gospel with people as often as she can including with some visiting Iranians who she was introduced to at a Christmas party.

During the past few years, Sydney Refugee Team together with two other mission organisations, SIM and Pioneers, has developed a ministry called Freedom to Flourish.

It is grateful to Knox Presbyterian Church at Granville for the use of its facilities. The programs include the restoring garden programs, some craft activities and counselling.

These programs are designed to assist with trauma healing and mental and spiritual health. Caroline Hochstetter from Sydney Refugee Team and Angela Ngaim from SIM, both trained counsellors oversee these programs.

If you are interested in being involved in the ministry of Sydney Refugee Team through giving, praying, volunteering or becoming a team member, visit

www.sydneyrefugeeteam.org.au or contact Linda on 0449 008 623 or by email to linda.whitehouse@wec.com.au



Sydney Refugee Team Christmas party group 2021

Supports Two National Ministries

Australian Presbyterian World Mission NSW has made a deliberate choice of two national ministries to learn about and support, both in challenging countries.

This is an introduction to Open Book Ministries Mobile Book Van and Book Shop Ministry, Bible Correspondence Course and Hospital Chaplaincy in secure locations in South Asia.

These ministries are overseen by Ian and Dorcas APWM Associates, who worked with these ministries in person for many years but are now based in Sydney. National staff manage these ministries, but prayer and financial support is needed for the staff and for the printing and purchase of literature.

The Open Book Ministry is a fully registered organisation with the government of Pakistan, has audited accounts, and is able to operate fairly freely under the law and has been in operation for 25 years.

Its purpose is to place the Bible and Christian literature, DVDs etc into the hands of Muslims as well as Christian-background people in the South Asian country where it operates.

This ministry is in one of the top ten countries where Christians are persecuted. Over the years the number of workers has varied due to their circumstances, but also the amount of opposition to the ministries.

The manager of the ministries tries hard to relate to Muslims, and more especially in the last few years to other neighbouring tribal groups. He is an associate pastor for a church in his compound.



Open book ministry

At present, half the workers are serving in three small Christian bookshops up-country. These six local Christian workers are long-term residents of the area in which they serve, helping with the knowledge of the local languages and culture. One of the bookshops is in the grounds of a hospital in a large city. Another is in a crowded slum area in another large city, and the third is in a provincial city.

The aim is to relate to the locals and share the gospel through friendships and conversations, as well as support the small minority Christian population with literature.

The other half of the workers, again six are serving in the largest city in the country and in the south on the coast.

Three teams of two workers each have a small book van stocked with Christian literature and DVDs. Each day, the three book vans are driven to different areas where the staff are somewhat welcome. They park the vans and stand around the van with their stock outside on display. Once a week, on a Saturday, they meet for a Bible study, prayer and to have a meal together.

As well Open Book ministries is the main supporter for two Bible correspondence ministries. Several men are working in two major cities. They advertise Bible courses in newspapers, and then correspond with those who respond. Most of those exploring the Bible are Muslims. This ministry is very underfunded.

By God's grace, funds can still be transferred into the country for these ministries to continue. Please pray that God's blessing will be on that channel for the sake of the lost there and for his glory.

APWMNSW hopes that through the support of Presbyterian Churches and individuals in NSW prayer groups will be established to support this work and financial support given to fund the purchase of literature and the printing of the Bible Correspondence Course. The workers and chaplains also need sponsorship for their salaries.

All inquiries for this project can be directed to the nswconvener@apwm.org.au or the nswsecretary@apwm.org.au



Living for the day theme of women's conference

'Living for the Day' in a world that lives for self is both confronting and encouraging. When countless tasks, distractions and responsibilities compete for our time, this mindset is one that points us to Christ's completed work on the cross and the joy of meeting him face-to-face one day.

The reminder to look towards the shore as we await the coming of our King was a theme that permeated the sessions and conversations at the PTC Women's Conference last week. On Saturday October 15, women from across the state of Victoria gathered together at the Presbyterian Theological College to sit under the teaching of guest speaker, Carmelina Read.

Carmelina led the women through the book of 2 Thessalonians, encouraging them to ask themselves how they can best live today in light of the certain and final return of Jesus.

Jess Thomas, a PCV Candidate's wife, reflects on the sessions:

"The Women's Conference encouraged me to live out biblical womanhood in my current day-to-day context and convicted me to live my days with eyes fixed on eternity instead of momentary pleasures."

The College was grateful to see over ninety women gather from thirty-three different Victorian

churches. Many women came to the conference as a group and some women travelled hours to be able to attend.

The conference is the fourth Women's Conference that the Presbyterian Theological College has organised, with the first conference held in 2017. The number of female students at the College was increasing, as was the desire of students and women to be trained for service in the Kingdom of God. Since 2017, the registrations have been increasing as women invite friends and other church members along to the event.

Carmelina has been involved in each of the PTC Women's Conferences. She is currently the Dean of Women at Christ College in Sydney (PCNSW)* where she co-ordinates the Ministry Training for Women programme, as well as co-lectures several subjects.

For the past 24 years, she and her husband have ministered together at Chatswood Presbyterian Church where Jeff is the senior minister and Carmelina started the kids and women's ministry and continues to train leaders in these ministries.

The Presbyterian Theological College is grateful for Carmelina's involvement and investment in the training up of women in Victoria. Her support is a reminder of the partnership we share in the Gospel





and the fellowship we are privileged to enjoy with brothers and sisters across Australia and beyond.

We give thanks to God for each woman who set aside the time to attend the conference and learn about how they can best serve and glorify Him.

Following the conference, one of the conference attendees Sarah Amoah, shares about how the day impacted her:

“The Women’s Conference was such a blessing. It was a great reminder of how important keeping Jesus’ return in the forefront of our minds is. I am also deeply thankful for the reminder of how important praying (thanking God for other believers, praying for their perseverance, etc.) and bible reading is. The talks Carmi gave were both theo-

logical and deeply practical. I came away inspired and refreshed. It was a great way to spend a Saturday and I look forward to the next PTC Women’s Conference.”

After being encouraged by God’s Word, nourished with good food and invigorated with good conversation, the ladies who attended left challenged to ‘keep their eyes on Jesus’ as they dispersed to their unique callings and ministries.

*MTW is a flagship unit of Christ College. It has been specifically designed to train women to minister Jesus in all sorts of contexts. It is available on Zoom and face to face. It runs over two years (four semesters), five lectures per semester from 10.30am-1pm. You can read more information here <https://christcollege.edu.au/mtw/> and contact Carmelina on cread@christcollege.edu.au





Help secure the future of QLD Theological College

Your gift, through God's grace, will make an enduring impact as together we seek to meet a crucial gospel need in a challenging world.

Queensland Theological College is seeking prayer and financial support to help expand, after experiencing substantial growth in recent years.

The QTC, which has been training people for gospel ministry since 1876, has equipped future pastors to serve in Presbyterian, Anglican, Baptist, Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC) and other independent churches; and sent church planters, student ministry workers and cross-cultural missionaries across Queensland, Australia, and the world.

It has more than 140 students studying at any point in time and receives an increasing number of requests from local churches seeking pastors, along with other organisations looking for new, gospel-hearted, well-equipped men and women to join their ministries.

College principal, Gary Millar, said the college's prayer was that, in the years to come, it would be able to send out a growing number of graduates to continue to present the message of the Lord Jesus Christ to a challenging world.

However, the future ministry of QTC is under threat.

"All ministries of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland, including PresCare and QTC are part of one legal entity (established as a 'Letters Patent Entity'). Bad financial decisions made by PresCare over years and legal claims made against PresCare for massive amounts of claimed damages, resulted in PCQ being placed under Court-appointed receivership in 2021," he said. "This has left the entire organisation exposed. The legal matters are still before the Supreme Court of Queensland, but the Receivers have put the QTC building (which was bought by the denomination for QTC in 2017) up for sale, to be sold by the end of the year.

"After careful consideration and prayer, we are convinced that the best way to secure the future of QTC's ministry and to continue to serve the church of Jesus Christ is to seek to raise the funds to purchase the building in Spring Hill.

"We are very aware that buying real estate in the heart of Brisbane is a significant commitment of precious kingdom resources. However, we have not come to the

CONTINUES ON P.13

► **CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12**

decision to seek to raise the funds needed to purchase 369 Boundary St lightly.”

Mr Millar named key reasons for the decision.

1. Our city centre location has a substantial impact on our enrolments. It enables students from throughout Southeast Queensland and Northern NSW to travel to college easily. Any move to the suburbs would inevitably lead to some students (for example from the Gold Coast or the Sunshine Coast) discontinuing their studies. It would also have a severe impact on the growing number of students studying on Monday evenings after a day’s work in the CBD.
2. A theological college requires a variety of essential spaces in order to function properly. Our current building meets all our needs, including an auditorium (for College Chapel and a range of public events), properly equipped teaching rooms, a library and study spaces, as well as room for the college community to interact socially. When we moved to Spring Hill in 2017, we conducted an exhaustive search for buildings which met our needs. These were few and far between with many requiring prohibitive expenditures to meet government standards for an educational institution.
3. Having operated in the building for five years, it is obvious to staff, students, and visitors that our

building provides an excellent setting for theological education in the context of a vibrant community.

4. Since buying the building, a significant amount of capital (more than \$1.2 million) has been invested into tailoring the building for the ministry of a theological college. Were we to move to a new location, the benefit of this would be lost and, in all likelihood, a similar amount of money would have to be spent on a new property.

“It is possible, of course, that we fail in our attempt to buy the building (either because we do not manage to raise sufficient capital, or we lose out in an open bidding process). However, even should this happen, we would still need to find a home for QTC which has many of the features of our current building,” Mr Millar said.

“We would love Presbyterians to join us in praying that God would work in this challenging situation for his glory and the advance of the gospel in Queensland and Northern NSW.

“Please also consider partnering with us financially if you are able to do so, as together “standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, we strive side by side for the faith of the gospel” (Philippians 1:27).”

For more information on our situation, for the latest updates, or to make a donation, please visit www.qtc.edu.au/securing-the-future, or contact us at development@qtc.edu.au.

Healthy, busy Griffith church seeking a leader

Sunday school, youth group and a mid-week creche group are the regular ministries of the Griffith Presbyterian Church, which is now looking for a leader.

The church, located in the Riverina town of Griffith, welcomes 40-50 regular attendees on a Sunday morning covering a broad but thinly spread age ranging from 0 to the 80s.

Spokesman Sam Koster says the church has a wonderful Session that is leading it during a minister absent and a great COM navigating the practical parts of church life.

The church is seeking:

- a missional minded person;
- a leader who is inclusive and collaborative in leadership; and
- a disciple making disciples.

Griffith is a town of 26,000 people, with almost double the population including surrounding areas.

It is well known for its agriculture, producing stone fruits, citrus, dry crops, rice, and of course wine.

“We are a multicultural town that is big on community and an ‘everyone knows everyone’ kinda town” Sam says.

Want to know more? Contact Griffith Presbyterian Church!





“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.” **2 TIMOTHY 2:2**

James and Christie share their METRO experiences

BY DAVID BELL

There are currently 17 METRO apprentices serving in various Presbyterian churches in NSW. James Jeffery is a recent past apprentice, and he shares his thoughts about the value of an apprenticeship. Christie Ward is a current apprentice at Albury Presbyterian Churches who shares of her experience as she approaches the end of her first year.



James Jeffery

My two years as a METRO apprentice were invaluable for my maturity as a believer, and also formational for my growth as someone aspiring to serve the Lord in pastoral ministry.

Thanks to the financial and prayerful support I received from METRO, I was able to meet fundraising goals, had regular encouragement through prayer and fellowship, and had the joy of knowing I was backed and supported by brothers and sisters in the PCNSW. Most of all, METRO prepared me for the blessings and challenges involved in full-time ministry work by helping me appreciate the value of partnership in the life and mission of God's church (Philippians 1:3-5).

Christie Ward

It is wonderful that God grows His Kingdom for His glory and that He invites us even as jars of clay to be involved in His Kingdom's work.

I am just over six months into my MTS apprenticeship at Albury Presbyterian Churches and have found it to be a fantastic opportunity to deepen my understanding of God's Word, to receive targeted training and to grow by serving in a variety of different ministries.

I work with METRO trainers Mike and Kara Wong who share their life and ministry in its many different forms.

One joy is to read the Bible one to one or in small groups with women from our church. It has been a great privilege to encourage, teach and train people as they read God's word after this has been modelled to me through Mike and Kara.



Kara and Christie

We recently organised an online hub for Single Minded conference so that church members could join together to hear from Sam Allberry about 'being in a body' for the Lord.

I had the opportunity to step up to MC this event and facilitate reflection and prayer. I have also been learning about how to train leaders to give effective talks at our Kids Club.

It has been a joy to see the leaders go deeper into the Word and learn about how to teach kids by showing them Jesus.

The support of the METRO community and sponsorship I have received has been invaluable in connecting me with the METRO community and for financial support particularly in a regional area. Regular METRO seminars and prayer meetings online as well as the support of the committee and the opportunity to visit Christ College earlier in the year have been highlights for me.

This partnership has borne fruit over the years as I have seen apprentices before me growing and serving in the church network in Albury and then going on to further gospel work or to college.

I'm very thankful to God for the sponsorship and support of the committee as they partner with apprentices and their trainers in multiplying gospel workers.

A METRO sponsored apprenticeship is a wonderful way to get gospel ministry experience. METRO supports with some financial assistance, regular prayer meetings via zoom, webinars, and a 2-day immersive experience in college life at Christ college. Please consider undertaking an apprenticeship yourself or identifying someone in your local church who may benefit from an apprenticeship.

Application Forms are on the METRO website: <http://metro.edu.au>

“We want to see youth living extreme lives for the sake of the Gospel.”

COMING TO CHRIST - CLEMENT HUI

Clement Hui’s first experience of Christianity was being invited to youth group by his high school friends at an Anglican church in Western Sydney. He loved going along to have fun and make friends. Clement reflected that he identified as a Christian during this time, but had not truly acknowledged how sinful and in need of a Saviour he was, especially after some poor choices throughout high school.

It wasn’t until his cousin invited him along to his current church, Gracepoint Presbyterian at Lidcombe that he truly heard the Gospel message for the first time. It was during this time that Clement learned something very real about the Christian experience, “On the one hand, I am more sinful than I ever dare to admit, but on the other hand, I am more loved than I can ever hope for.”

As a high-school teacher, turned MTS Apprentice at Gracepoint Presbyterian (Lidcombe), Clement is now on his journey to pursue full-time ministry.

The beginnings of youth ministry @ Gracepoint

Soon after Gracepoint was planted in 1998, it became clear that a growing number of teenagers were beginning to attend. These teenagers became the genesis of Gracepoint’s youth ministry. As it continued to grow, it was clear to the staff team that they needed to employ a Youth Pastor to consolidate the youth ministry that would help grow God’s Kingdom and benefit generations to come. Most of the funds to start this ministry came through the generosity of a Gracepoint family in 2007 who donated a large sum of money for this purpose.

God provides. Today, we see youth ministry established over all three of the Gracepoint campuses: Lidcombe, Burwood, and Granville. This took time, resources, organisation, and much prayer, but as Clement says, “We are now able to reach a wider audience and demographic across the campuses.”

The conviction of youth ministry @ Gracepoint

“We want to see youth living extreme lives for the sake of the Gospel, hence the name, ‘Extreme Youth’. We want them to grow to treasure our Lord, Jesus Christ, and allow that love of treasuring Him to outflow into the city, wherever they have been placed in, whether high school, sport, or work, or to university and the workforce as they grow up.”



Clement continues, “We really want the youth to treasure Christ above all else and allow that to shape the way that they live in the particular context they have been placed in. I think the temptation for youth ministries in general is to create a heavy focus on shaping the actions of our youth. For example, “This is how you live for Christ, so you need to do X, Y, and Z...” But I think it is far more crucial to grow affection for the Lord and for that to outflow into the desire to live for Him.”

Gracepoint Youth Leaders

What does weekly youth ministry at Gracepoint look like?

“Each week after our Sunday morning service at each of our campuses, around 11:30am, our youth gather together. Depending on the leader, there is usually an interactive activity, some sort of introduction to get the youth to slowly become acquainted with one another, but also just to have some fun. Often the activity is related to that week’s study, or the theme for the term. From there, we dive into the prepared studies from a book of the Bible, with a particular big idea for that week... For example, ‘What does it mean to live as an exile?’ ‘What does it mean to live in a way that realises that persecution is a reality?’ We often wrap up this time around 1pm as parents come to pick the youth up.”

One great thing about the setup of these Sunday morning studies for the youth is that while the youth are having their bible study, their parents are too! Clement shares that, “Often the youth will come with their parents to morning church and participate in their service. Then at the conclusion,

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PY reps – locally, on the ground, everywhere

Recently at PYNWS, we have sought out ministry workers across NSW who we are calling Presbytery Youth Reps (PY Reps). PY Reps are individuals who focus on developing an understanding of what is happening within their area at local churches, specifically in their youth ministries, to see if there are opportunities to bring people and resources together.



met together to get a sense of what's happening across the state. Whether in big churches or small churches, Danny reflects, "It was really encouraging to hear different things that people are doing to reach out to the young people in their community."

Looking at the Inner West, Danny says, "I'm trying to get a sense of what various churches are doing to see if we can bring people together. I mostly do this through

meeting with Youth Leaders over morning tea to find out where things are at."

"Recently, we have been working together with some local churches, both Presbyterian and non-Presbyterian to try and host a combined youth event." This particular event, 'Life Worth Living '22' is an initiative of Ignition that brings together youth groups, cross-denominationally to host sharply evangelistic events. To learn more about Ignition, head to their website (<https://www.ignition.org.au/>), or check out our recent article with Murray Smith from Ignition!

This is really the core of what the PY Reps do, bring people together who are local, on the ground, everywhere, doing good work for the sake of the Gospel.

List of Current PY Reps

- Canberra – Vacant
- Central Coast – Sylvester Siu (pending)
- Central Tablelands – Stephen Fong
- Central West – Peter Tamsett
- Hunter – Vacant
- Illawarra – Dal Proudfoot
- Mid North Coast – Vacant
- Northern Inland – Jarrod MacNaughton
- Northern Rivers – Vacant
- Southern Rivers – Dave Hayes
- Sydney East – Vacant
- Sydney Inner West – Danny Ford
- Sydney North – Josh Lum Mow
- Sydney South – Jim Mobbs
- Western Sydney – Hugh Prattis

Our PY Rep for Sydney's Inner West is Danny Ford (Lead Pastor, Joshua Tree Petersham Presbyterian Church). We had a chat to him about becoming a Christian, youth ministry, and being a PY Rep.

The Formative Years

It was a simple, faithful invitation to kids' club at the local Presbyterian church from a friend in Year 3 that first brought Danny to church regularly, and then to youth group as well. Danny shares, "... about 10 years after that initial invitation sitting in a fairly small bible study, I was confronted with the words of Jesus, and from that point on became a follower of Jesus."

The same friend who faithfully invited Danny to kids' club and youth group, invited him to PY Camps. As Danny reflected, "I began very reluctantly. My same friend who invited me to kids' club invited me to every PY Camp in high school. I either declined or pulled out at the very last minute. So for six years I never went to a PY Camp, but I finally gave in. What a great opportunity it was to meet a whole range of like-minded people across the state."

The Ministry of PYNWS + Being a PY Rep

Danny shares, "The teenage and young adult years are the most formative years for us as people in the world... This means that we have a great opportunity for intentional, specific ministry to this age group. Getting them to hear of and understand Jesus' invitation to follow Him is really central. Society's changing a fair bit, so there are lots of different pressures on young people. This means it's really important for us to be engaging with them. They've also got lots of energy, so they're pretty fun to be around."

At the recent General Assembly of the Presbyterian Churches in the State of NSW, the current PY Reps



Adventure Academy students' experiential learning challenges the boys physically and promotes spiritual reflection. Here, they take a break on a hike at Bald Hill, near Yass.

Scots' Real-World Experiential Education

Cradled between national parks, the Shoalhaven River delta and Culburra Beach is The Scots College's beautiful Bannockburn active learning site. Located on approximately 300 hectares in size, a lot happens at Bannockburn over the course of a year. Its educational program is deliberately and carefully designed for experiential learning.

Consider the first time you rode a horse, changed a tyre or surfed a wave. How old were you? Where were you? How did it feel to discover a new skill? You may have a fond recollection because you learnt that skill by doing something or solving a problem, that then helped you progress to a new level of understanding – that is what experiential learning is.

The Scots College is committed to 'learning by doing' and the development of the cycles of reflection that translate into learning. In the standard educational environment, learning is often separated from real-world practice, and, as a re-

sult, boys often disengage from schooling. Rigorous, authentic, experiential learning – across the curriculum – inspires new approaches to teaching and that results in increased student engagement.

Back to Bannockburn. It is a peaceful location, perfect for contemplation and the learning of real-life skills at any age or stage of education.

Year 10 Agriculture students put theory into practice, when they attended the Moss Vale Saleyards, where they identified the Bannockburn weaners, they had tagged the year before, and made predictions about their sale prices. With a booming cattle market, the cattle sold extremely well – and the students' predictions were surprisingly accurate.

Then, in June, Bannockburn hosted a New Staff Induction Day where 22 new staff experienced a student's normal day at Bannockburn. They got

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

Community life returns to the calendar at Scots

This year has seen The Scots College community enjoying opportunities, to once again gather and participate in important moments and activities. For some people, re-engaging – following periods of isolation – has involved tentative steps. Some activities are being conducted differently. But there is excitement associated with meeting with others.

In May, several Year 7 and 8 students attended the annual Christian Union camp at our Bannockburn campus. Otto Atkinson (Year 7) mentions some highlights: “It was great to be at such a beautiful place ... I loved playing Bubble Soccer, fishing, time at the beach building fortresses out of sticks, chatting with friends around a warm fire, sharing a tent with a fantastic boy named Joel, reading the Bible together and thinking about how God can make a difference in your life.”



Years 7 and 8 students attended the Christian Union (CU) camp in May, considering the ways in which, “... God can make a difference in your life.”

The Year 9 cohort at Glengarry in the Kangaroo Valley had a wonderful time of challenge and growth. Several boys joined a Bible study group that met weekly under the leadership of the Director of Glengarry, Mr Terry Myers. Terry shares the experience of one student who wrote: “When I came to Glengarry, I would have considered myself an atheist, but through Chapel and coming regularly to Bible Study, I have had a change of heart and mind.”



The Year 9 cohort attends Glengarry in two intakes each year, for a semester, each. It is an extraordinary opportunity in the boys' lives for physical, intellectual and spiritual growth.

In March, boys and parents from the Preparatory school in Bellevue Hill joined in a Family service at St Andrew's Scots Presbyterian Church in Rose Bay. Jonah Jonker (Year 6) writes: “... It was a beautiful church service ... Reverend Glen Pather spoke about how Jesus is the true vine, He gave his life for us, and is the one who connects us to God ... The College choir sang two songs, other boys read and prayed, and we had a great morning tea afterwards!”

The boys of the Early Years Centre Rose Bay had a morning tea to celebrate Mothers' Day. Director Mrs Elise Pink reported: “Mums were invited to the St



In March, boys and parents from the Preparatory school enjoyed a Family Service at St Andrew's Scots Presbyterian Church in Rose Bay.



In anticipation of Mothers' Day, the College's Early Years Centre Rose Bay mothers were invited to the St Andrews Scots Presbyterian Church for a service, where their sons performed. Afterwards, everyone enjoyed morning tea together at the Rose Bay campus.

Andrews Scots Presbyterian Church and received a wonderful welcome by The College's Community Chaplain, Reverend Conrad Nixon, before watching their sons perform 'This Little Light of Mine'... they adorned their mums with a pink rose in celebration of their love ... then continued the festivities back on the Scots Rose Bay campus, where they were treated to a delicious Mothers' Day-themed morning tea.

The boys at Brighton Preparatory School enjoyed gathering at the Georges River Sailing Club for their weekly Chapel services. Reverend Peter Morphew used media, including The Simpsons and The Lion King, and regular visits by his puppet, 'François', to explore the message of the Gospel in a fun and informative way.

Staff on all our campuses have enjoyed meeting, once again, for weekly Bible study and prayer. In May, several staff members attended the Sydney Prayer Breakfast at the International Convention Centre. Former Scots parent, Mr Peter Gibbs, was the guest speaker and delivered a wonderful address on 'the power of prayer, forgiveness and testimony'.

Parents, too, have been delighted to again attend events. Recent highlights included the official opening of the Harry Triguboff Auditorium, annual Parade of Remembrance, and Winter Sport. Members of 1sts squads, together with coaches and parents, enjoyed our inaugural Winter Sports Chapel Service and supper. The College's Community Chaplain, Reverend Conrad Nixon, challenged the boys to be growing in character through sport, and to heed God's call to 'develop and exhibit qualities that endure, long after the game is over...'

REFLECTION

The term is over ... the holidays have begun

BY ANDREW CAMPBELL

My little mother suffered a stroke and my sisters and I gathered, expecting the worst. But she recovered some faculties, and we enjoyed some precious hours together.



One of my sisters asked, 'so what is your happiest memory? All those years, and what gave you the most joy?' We expected, perhaps, meeting our father; or us, her four children, surely.

But none of those. She recalled her time at boarding school in England. With her friends, skipping down the lane of trees lining the road out of the school, 'the term was over. The holidays had begun. Soon we'd be home.'

Perhaps like me you can remember that feeling. The breathtaking euphoria at the beginning of the holidays. Long summer days with friends, swimming, aimlessly riding bikes, no worries.

We used to say, 'no more school, no more books, no more teacher's angry looks.' And I'm sure my teachers felt the same!

My mother's memory reminded me of how C.S. Lewis ends his Narnia Chronicles. And to understand eternity, after Jesus and the gospels, and after the book of Revelation, Lewis' 'The Last Battle' is my go-to description of heaven.

His stories end, strangely, with all the characters dying in a train accident. But then Aslan (not a tame lion) softly explains: 'Your father and mother and all of you are - as you used to call it - dead.' But he adds, 'The term is over: the holidays have

begun. The dream is ended: this is the morning.'

'And as He spoke, He no longer looked to them like a lion. And the things that began to happen after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them. And for us this is the end of all the stories, and we

can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before.'

Heaven, the term over, the holy-days begun. Where there is ' ... no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.' (Revelation 21:4)

Heaven. Rest. Peace. Which 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love Him' (1 Corinthians 2:9)

Heaven. *Home*. With our Lord Jesus. 'In My Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.' (John 14:2)

Take a moment to remember that term over and holiday feeling. And then thank your Lord Jesus for eternity, for heaven. Thank Him that it was won by Jesus on the cross, dying for a sinner like me, like you.



'By Timor for Timor'



L to R: Pastor Emanuel, Chris Dean (APWM with CMS), Pastor Carlos Marcal (Moderator), Chris Adams (CMS) and David Burke (APWM Associate).

Dili, Timor Leste: Saturday 20th August 2022

Sometimes photos struggle to tell the whole story. The brothers in this photo have just finished sketching out the beginnings of a local training course for the training of men and women who want to serve in our Partner Church, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Timor Leste.

For some years, leaders of the Timorese Presbyterian church have seen the need for local training. It's now happening. Here, Pastor Carlos Marcal, the Moderator reaffirms the need - "by Timor for Timor".

Why is this so significant? The overwhelming majority of the world's pastors have received very little training — and this includes many of the pastors in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Timor Leste. Praise God for this exciting development which until now has been only a dream.

The Rumour that Refuses to Die

For some strange reason there is a rumour that Rick and Kayleen Manton have stopped serving in ministry. It's the rumour that refuses to die! Rick and Kayleen continue to serve with the Mount Druitt Indigenous Church and the wider Indigenous church. APWM continues to pay Rick's stipend which is funded by gifts given to APWM for this purpose.

You can watch a recent interview with Rick and Kayleen at this link shrtm.nu/xT2m

Ukraine: Ministry to Children



A few months ago APWM partnered with the Helping Hands for Ukraine Foundation and sponsored one of four camps in Hungary for children from eastern Ukraine who have been traumatised by the war.

Helping Hands write "We are so blessed! You never know how you will make impact to another person. We believe that with God's leading we could make for these kids a little happier summer. We think that psychological training and mental support is very important in these cases!

We are looking forward to do as much as we can and will hopefully find the same mindset people as Australian Presbyterian World Mission and to continue organizing camps for children who are in need. We are so thankful to them for their prayers and financial support and look forward to working together and changing the world to a happier place."

This partnership was facilitated by Ibolya Pillar who is married to APWM missionary, Granville Pillar.



You can sign up for their prayer letter, 'Walkabout in the West', by emailing the National Office national@apwm.org.au



Talua says ‘Thank You’



In early 2020, the Talua Theological Training Institute’s buildings suffered extensive damage as a result of Cyclone Harold. The members of the Presbyterian Church of Australia responded magnificently to APWM’s Appeal for donations — and so Talua was able to rebuild.

Many of Talua’s students rely upon their families to help with their fees. However, the impact of COVID reduced the income of many families and so students struggled to pay fees. Earlier this year, Talua asked for assistance and APWM was able to help with fee relief.

Talua was one of the beneficiaries of this year’s PresAID Easter Appeal - providing materials for the Women’s Program and the rebuilding of the nursery where children are cared for while their mothers attend the Women’s Program.

Thank you to those who gave so generously toward this strategic ministry.

You can watch a video of the Talua Principal, his wife, and some of Talua’s students saying a heartfelt ‘Thank You’ for these gifts by going to this link: shrtm.nu/9XNg

Workpartners Update

Approximately 20 years ago, APWM commenced a programme to assist the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu with its need for the construction of new buildings at Talua and the maintenance of existing ones. The program initially had two components — Tradespartners and Youthpartners — and was later simply known as ‘Workpartners’.

The building pictured on the right, was opened in 2008 and is possibly the first building constructed in the programme. It’s the library at the Talua Theological Training Institute. Its formal name is the ‘Don Lewis Pacific Partnership Library’ named after Don Lewis, the lead builder for the project. Photos can’t convey the fact that it’s a rather large building. What makes this library so significant is that it houses the right number of theological books that Talua needs in order to qualify for external accreditation that enables Talua to award Bachelor degrees to its students. This is where partnership can make a significant difference.

At a recent meeting the APWM National Committee decided to conclude the Workpartners program in its present form. Instead, the Committee will, in consultation with the leadership at Talua, send small teams of qualified tradesmen and handymen to meet identified needs as required.



This means that even though travel restrictions have now eased, we won’t be returning to the previous pattern of sending teams of volunteers every six months or so to Talua or other locations in Vanuatu.

The Committee’s intention is to continue supporting Talua as it manages maintenance and repairs with local workers, using funds provided by generous donors and (when specialist work is required) sending small teams of qualified workers from Australia.

APWM thanks those who led teams, participated in teams, and contributed to this ministry in prayer and finance. In this ministry’s new phase there are still ongoing financial needs, so any gifts to help with paying for materials and the people who carry out the work, would be very welcome!

► **SCOTS' REAL-WORLD EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17**

their hands dirty, moved across the paddocks and did an activity that simulated nutrient movement through the soil using gravity and water. They were treated to a fantastic local fish and chips meal and were entertained by the dogs – just like any visiting student!

In Term 3, the second iteration of the Year 9 Adventure Academy occurred. Twenty boys continued their Glengarry experience (the outdoor education program in Kangaroo Valley that students board for a full semester in Year 9), as members of the Adventure Academy program. They started their adventure snow-skiing at the Snowy Mountains then moved to Bannockburn for a program involving rural skills, experiential science, geography, history, cooking and etiquette.

Students canoed from Glengarry to Bannockburn over five days and were made aware of their personal footprint, doing waste sorting on return from their expeditions. This helped them realise that with consideration and diligence they can become better stewards of the Earth. The final experiences involved working on Old Boys' properties at Yass, as part of a shearing team and calf tagging operations. Later in the year, they will sail back on a tall ship into Sydney's iconic harbour. Adventures such as these, not only set these students apart from the boy they were, helping him develop into the young man he wants to become, but strengthen the College's commitment to Re-inventing Education.

The Mulloon Institute at Braidwood and the College are developing a Regenerative Environmen-



Boys cooperate on map interpretation and compass use at Scots' Glengarry Outdoor Experiential Program, located in the Kangaroo Valley, NSW.



The Scots College's Glengarry Outdoor Experiential Program in Kangaroo Valley, NSW, was designed, specifically for Year 9 boys' experiential education.

tal Science program that will be delivered across Years 1 to 10. The program is focussed on teaching students about regenerative practices and is being delivered in the form of stories. Each story has science, geography, technology, history and Indigenous understandings woven within and all provide a vision of hope for our shared future.

Ensuring students are as future-ready as possible, Bannockburn is also forming connections with the Geography and International Science Departments at the University of Wollongong and the Dietetics Department at The University of Sydney. Both universities are eager to teach their students about regenerative agriculture and the production of nutrient dense chemically free food and fibre, whilst benefiting from learning at Bannockburn experientially.

Bannockburn teaches students how to understand themselves, connect with each other and interact with God's creation: the animals, the landscape and even adjust to changing global circumstances; where each student's visit will encourage an authentic, life-long connection to each other and the world.

► **PY COMING TO CHRIST CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15**

the parents split off in their group, and the youth into their group.”

What is the importance of bible studies in youth ministry at Gracepoint?

“Bible study needs to be the centre of all we do. Gathering around God’s Word because God’s Word forms. Not just as the anchor, but as the authority... Allow that to transform what they know in their heads and allow that to transform their hearts in terms of what they love and to transform their actions in terms of what they do as a result. But all of that needs to be grounded in God’s Word.”

Stories from Gracepoint

Clement recently chatted to a Year 11 student that joined one of their campuses earlier this year with some friends of his. This particular student attends a Catholic school which led to some interesting discussions about his familiarity with scripture and understanding of Christianity, such as...

- Why do we place such a huge importance on ‘all of this’?

- What is it about Jesus that makes Him so important for us to grow in affection for Him?
- Why do we spend time together on Sunday’s to read God’s Word?

Clement reflects, “I think that’s massive. I personally hope to see each youth in our youth ministry face the truth that we cannot take for granted what we believe. It’s not about what our parents believe, not about giving the Sunday school answers... It’s about understanding that we need to take this stuff seriously and take ownership of it... Helping youth realise that, is a big win.”

Praise God for the work that God has very clearly been doing in youth ministry at Gracepoint Presbyterian Church. As we go out to love and serve the Lord, Clement asks us to pray.

- *Pray that the leaders may continue to love the youth, but also take time to get to know them so that they may be able to better equip them to not only grow in their affection for the Lord Jesus Christ, but also to be prepared and equipped to face the challenges that the present world brings, especially challenges to their understanding of morality of identity.*

► **SPOT THE PHONEY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24**

necessary. It is in exile, like the prodigal son in the pig-pen, that Judah will learn to seek after God again.

That is what God delights in. There is a promise here - seek and you shall find. No one will seriously forsake sin, ask for forgiveness, and seek God, and still be lost.

People sometimes talk about searching for God, but most of them do not really want to find Him. They like the search, not God. But for all who want to know God, this is a promise that Christ Himself repeats (Matthew 7:7-8).

Heed the true word.

There is no comfort for those left in Jerusalem (29:15-19). They are the vile figs. Why? Because they listened to the false prophets.

The false prophets had their own television shows, and received good coverage in the media.

It was the true prophets who were laughed at for preaching too much about sin and judgment, and for being Bible-bashers.

They were the ones who were persecuted, and even put to death. But eventually it all catches up. God yanks in the rope.

Look at Ahab and Zedekiah.

We know very little about them, but they are two

false prophets who preached that Nebuchadnezzar was finished, so Nebuchadnezzar took it out on them (29:21-23).

They were adulterers and liars, with bad morals and bad theology. Babylonians would burn people; the Persians did not because they thought fire was sacred.

Another false prophet was Shemaiah who told the priest Zephaniah (not Zephaniah the prophet) that he (Zephaniah the priest) was top dog for that year (29:26). Zephaniah was told to lock the madman up. The madman is, of course, Jeremiah.

To the unregenerate, the Christian faith is madness (Mark 3:20-21; Acts 26:24). That is what Shemaiah thought of Jeremiah. What matters is what God thought of Shemaiah (29:31-32).

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6-9) but pray too for the peace of Babylon, of Sydney, this godless city.

In these pastoral letters, Jeremiah says there will be a long exile in Babylon, but after that spiritual renewal.

He says that there will be judgment on those who stay in Jerusalem, and there will be a special judgment on the false prophets.

We are to seek God with all our hearts, and we are to cling to the true word of God, not the smooth sayings of the false teachers.

Spot the phoney

JEREMIAH 28

D

uring World War II, the Lutheran theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, became involved in the plot to kill Hitler. He stated: 'I pray for the defeat of my nation, for I believe that it is the only way to pay for all the suffering which my country has caused in the world.'

For that, he came to be regarded as a traitor, but he was seeking to be a true patriot. Jeremiah too came to be regarded as a traitor who worked against the best interests of his own country (see Jeremiah 38:1-4).

That was to misunderstand his motives - he was a prophet of the true God, and it was because Judah rejected this that Jeremiah had to warn his fellow countrymen.

In Jeremiah 29 there are a series of letters, beginning with Jeremiah's letter to the exiles in Babylon, some time after the attack of 597 B.C. but before the calamity of 587 B.C.

There were in fact three exiles - in 605 B.C. Daniel and some others were taken to Babylon; in 597 B.C. Ezekiel was taken with a second lot of exiles; and in 587 B.C. there was the third and final exile which accompanied the devastation of Jerusalem.

There was one king, Zedekiah, on the throne in Jerusalem until 587 B.C. and another king, Jehoiachin, in captivity in Babylon. The false prophets had been saying: 'All is well, a year or two, and Babylon will be finished, and we will be back in Jerusalem. This exile is just a minor excursion.' 'Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag, and smile, smile, smile' - the troops will be home before Christmas. But they weren't, were they? Jeremiah writes in a very different vein. What was his message? And how are we to live in a pagan city? (1 Peter 2:11)

Live godly but normal lives.

The exile did not just happen, as an accident of history. God caused it to happen (29:4, 7). From the human side, it was Nebuchadnezzar who carried the king of Judah and the others off into exile (2 Kings 24:10-16). Although Nebuchadnezzar did not know it, he was an instrument in the hands of the God of Israel.

God had decreed that the exile would last seventy years (29:10). So, through Jeremiah's letter, God tells the exiles what to do:

(a) build houses (29:5a). If you think the exile will only last two years, you will not bother too much



about your house. You put up a tent, and you leave most of your books in their packing cases. But if you are staying for a while, you are more inclined to make it all as comfortable as possible.

(b) plant gardens and eat their fruit (29:5b).

The false prophets said: 'No, why bother? Eat at MacDonald's. By the time the crops grow, it will be time to return.'

(c) get married and have children (29:6). Again, that assumes a long stay in Babylon, and that life in Babylon will be worth living.

(d) pray for Babylon (29:7). Pray for its welfare or shalom (usually translated as 'peace'), as Christians are bidden to do (1 Timothy 2:1-2). Israel's future will be tied up with Babylon's for the next seventy years.

All the false prophets and diviners were accusing Jeremiah of capitulating to Babylon.

They said: 'Just set up a little lean-to, to keep the rain out, for we will be back in Jerusalem in two years. No point in planting a garden. As for praying for Babylon, no, God will destroy Jerusalem's enemy in two years.'

Jeremiah has to deny that attractive message (29:8-9). Matthew Poole says that false prophets are 'the greatest plague that can befall a nation'.

The false message is a smooth message (Isaiah 30:9-10).

Lay hold of God's promises.

God holds out a hope and future for His people (29:10-14). In spite of Judah's apostasy and wickedness, in spite of her believing the lies of the false prophets, God would restore her.

The exiles would be living in Babylon without Jerusalem as the city of God and without the temple where the sacrifices for sin were offered, but not without God. God Himself would be their sanctuary (Ezekiel 11:16).

This prepares us for the New Testament where Jesus describes His own body as the temple; it is where the final and perfect sacrifice for sin is offered (John 2:19-21).

God uses chastening for our spiritual good (Lamentations 3:31-33). Punishment is not delightful but it is

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 23