

fellow workers

fellow workers

News from around the Presbyterian Church of Victoria

a publication of the PCV **State News Committee**

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contribute

Your contributions to *fellow workers* are welcome! *fellow workers* is now published every quarter (March, June, September & December). The deadline for contributions to the next issue is **February 15th**. Photographs should be digital and sent by email if possible.

the wonder of it all!

It is said that familiarity breeds contempt. How often we have found that to be true in our own experience. Have we lost the sense of wonder over the news of the incarnation and birth of the Son of God? Oh, what it must have been like for Joseph and Mary! What it must've been like for Zechariah and Elizabeth, for the Shepherds, Anna and Simeon and later for the wise men.

When Malachi wrote his prophecy so began the long dark night of silence. For the next 400 years God did not speak to the people apart from what was already said. That last book exposed their sin and closes the OT in bleakness. Yet even then not without a promise of a future Christmas – 'But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings' [Mal.4:2a]. And so from the 400 year long dark night of silence, the Son of God arose. God spoke again, but as Hebrews 1:1-3 reminds us, this time in the ultimate way with the final word – not by His men in indirect and partial ways, but directly and fully by His Man, His Son who had become man. He brought the full message, indeed He is that full message.

The shepherds on the night when the living Word was born saw a being of glory so awesome that they were filled with fear and dread. Then an entire heavenly host appeared! They were given a glimpse of the glory of heaven (Luke 2). But as amazing as these sights and sounds were, they were not the greatest

glories of that night. It was not the messengers that filled them with wonder which they couldn't contain, it was the message, or rather the One whom that message identified - 'For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord' [Lu.2:11].

He looked ordinary, and certainly there was nothing human speaking which would mark Him out as the most significant person this world would ever know. But that angelic word echoed in their minds: "this is Christ the Lord". He had neither the heavenly glory of the angel (not even one halo!), nor the earthly majesty attributed to those born to be king. Without the Word they would never have recognised Him as the Messiah. But in this Child was the greatest display of the glory of the Lord, for the Son is '... the brightness of [God's] and the express image of His person' [Heb.1:3]. They saw it in a veiled glory but it was nonetheless the glory of God incarnate. And they believed! They believed the Word which the angel spoke to them. Then they bore witness with the first public gospel message of the new age, the age of the Messiah, to the people of Bethlehem [Lu.2:17]. Then they worshipped God for Him in whom they believed [vs.20].

Sadly many people today as then don't seem to be captivated by the wonder of it all. It can happen even to Christians. We minimise the wonder of the birth of Jesus when we minimise the reality and horror of sin, when we fail to see the depth of our sin and its influence within us, when

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we excuse our sin, and when we think that there is something we can do to please God. What need then do we have of a Saviour? What recognition of a King do we declare then? What witness can we give then to the world that is significant and vital?

We display that we are captivated by the wonder of it all by believing the Word given about Him and as a result trusting Him as Saviour and following Him as Lord, by worshipping Him, and by witnessing to others about Him. Do you know the real wonder about it all? Is it obvious? Don't wait for Christmas – read the Gospel record of the birth of Jesus, and then go on to read of His death, resurrection and ascension as well. Words do not suffice to express the wonder of Jesus and what He has done for us.

*John Stasse
Pastor*

Grace Presbyterian Church, Ballarat

When: Tuesday 27 December 2005 -
Sunday 1 January 2006

Where: Shiloh Ranch, Grantville, Vic

Who: Summer camp is open to
anyone in year 7 and up.
The intensive stream is open to
those 18 year and over.

Theme: The Vikings

Cost: Campers \$175, add \$20
for the intensive stream.
Payments can be made online using
'Paypal' or by sending the form in
with a check made payable to 'PYV'

More details:

Alex 'Sven' Venn
Ph. 93310370
(email) events@pyv.org.au
www.pyv.org.au

SUMMER CAMP 2005-06



from the moderator

I was invited to preach at the Thanksgiving service for the Centenary of the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Benalla, on Sunday 16th October.

The first Presbyterian Service in Benalla was conducted in 1856 by Dr. Nish, the author of the Code of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria. Ten years later the first church was opened, which still stands and in 1905, a new and larger church was built to serve a growing congregation. Celebrations of the centenary of the present building began on the Saturday evening, with one of the past ministers, the Rev. Ken Martin, being a key speaker. At the Sunday morning service the church was filled with worshippers having past and present associations with the congregation. The Rev. Trevor Cox of Auburn Presbyterian Church, who spent his boyhood in Benalla, was invited to give a Reading at the service.

Looking forward is rather daunting for this somewhat ageing congregation. I encouraged them to continue their strong commitment to Christ. In particular I urged them to pass on the Gospel to their 'baby boomer' children and through them to their grandchildren.

Please pray with me that the parish may be provided with a faithful ministry to fill the vacancy.

national conference of the australian christian lobby

On the weekend of October 28th and 29th, and as a result of the visit to the General Assembly of Jim Wallace, the Executive Chairman of the Australian Christian Lobby, I attended the National Conference in Canberra. The aim of the conference was twofold: to be challenged on the issues involved in building a nation of character and secondly, that the Australian Labour Party he given an opportunity to signal its intention to pursue the Christian vote, an essential if there is to be a truly swinging, crucial constituency. To this end, various speakers, including the Right Honourable Kim Beazley, addressed the conference. The attendance of representatives from a wide cross-section of the Christian community was a great encouragement to ACL. Please continue to pray for ACL and the opportunities such an organisation provides for expressing much needed Christian solidarity on issues of national importance.

Speeches and presentations will possibly be available by way of audio and/or visual products. For further information please contact ACL ph. (02) 6259 0431 Fax (0) 6259 0462

Email: natoffice@ad.org.au

scotch college speech night

Following a pleasant dinner with the Principal, Heads of School, Chaplain and the guest speaker came the 2005 Speech Night, a memorable occasion with the large and impressive Memorial Hall packed to capacity. Each of the more than 200 Year 12 graduates was presented with a Bible and there were also appropriate prizes. The congregation of staff, students and parents, the scarlet blazers of the boys and the proceedings, including a sincere and well presented statement by the School Captain, left a lasting impression. We have a school of which we can be very proud. I ask that you pray for the great opportunity this school presents to bring the gospel of Christ, together with quality education into the lives of these future leaders.

PYV – changes, challenges, opportunities

2005 has seen a year full of changes, challenges and opportunities for PYV with new training days, a new camp called Outlook aimed at 21-35 year olds, and a change of council members with Chris Leed taking a break and Rene Jabout filling his place. We've employed a part-time worker to create and compile a new procedures manual and job descriptions to help convenors and leaders learn and understand their positions and we've introduced a formalised leader accreditation program which will help us to ensure the quality of our leadership team. But the most exciting project for the year has been planning and applying for a full-time youth worker, which was approved in principal at the General Assembly of Victoria! Now PYV is looking forward to going through the process to find the right person for the job.

recent events

This year's **Bushdance**, the largest one held in recent years, was a great success with over 170 people, young and old, coming to Bundoora Community Hall to spend the night dancing and playing games, not to mention indulging in the glorious array of food catered by members of the Heathmont Presbyterian Church. Steve Denness gave a Gospel message and handed out free copies of "For Christ's Sake" (the gospel of Mark). What an encouragement to see so many young people having great fellowship together!!

Junior Camp: God has really blessed



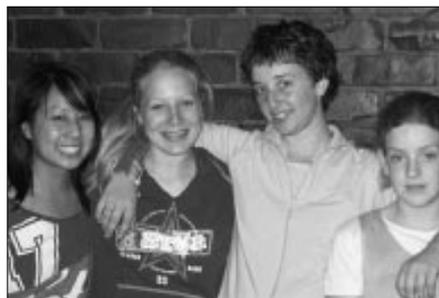
Bushdance - caption?

PYV this year, the most obvious way being financially. The CENC accessed funds from the Allan bequest so that campers fees could be subsidised, reducing costs to parents from roughly \$200 to just \$35 per camper!! Needless to say, Junior Camp sold out quickly and, unfortunately, we had to turn some campers away. We are so thankful we could ease the financial burden for parents and look forward to Junior Camps growing in numbers in the future. Here's a report from Sarah-Kate Leslie about camp...

"Cowboys and Indians - A theme only two male convenors could come up with! Phil and Steve were awesome convenors, setting a Godly and respectable example. Camp isn't camp without the leaders, and they make it worth being there. Interesting games and activities were planned, which included water bombs and presenting recipes of raw eggs, sardines, jelly, sprinkles, raw peeled tomatoes and other gross things, but hey – we're teenagers! We love to get dirty, especially if there's a reward at the end, the "treasure". I was lucky enough to be on the winning team! GO JESSE JAMES GANG! Thanks to Andrew Matthews, the talks were awesome - with study sessions such as - "Come to Jesus", "Count the Costs", "Run the Race" and "Do the Math" - all about who Jesus is and how we are to say "no" to the world and follow Jesus. It was really focused on our relationship with God. Talks were followed by in-depth discussions in our small groups. Thanks leaders.

Other highlights included:-

Making friends and getting to know other kids my age and younger, the bonfire and camp singing (it's not a camp without that!), capture the flag (awesome!), staying up late and talking, telling lame jokes and laughing our heads off, Scumbags and Warlords (there are a few champion players!), all the activities! (too many to mention, but a lot of hard work and time went into making them work! Thanks, Mark Jellis!), chatting in our cabins and asking our leaders challenging questions that make them think. The food was AWESOME! And a special thanks to



Junior - caption?



Fuelled - caption?

the Stokes! Great hosts! TA! I look forward to summer camp so we can all catch up again!"

Second Fuelled Training Day: On 15 October, PYV personnel ran the second of CENC's Fuelled training days. People from all over regional Victoria were invited to attend the event, this time, in a country location. About 30 people came to Bendigo Presbyterian Church to learn more about leadership techniques and PCV's Breaking the Silence document. As per CENC's education brief, the day was aimed at anyone in a position of leadership or ministry. While numbers were smaller than the first day, everyone found the turnout encouraging and people commented that it was great that such events were being run for regional Victoria.

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Position Vacant State Youth Worker

for the Presbyterian Church of Victoria

The Christian Education and Nurture Committee is seeking a full-time Youth Worker to nurture and train the leadership and manage the activities of Presbyterian Youth in Victoria, by:

1. Encouraging the development of youth work in local congregations;
2. Maintaining the quantity while improving the quality of youth ministry at the state level;
3. Drawing on a wider pool of leaders to take on the load of PYV responsibilities;
4. Providing greater stability in the development of the next generation of leadership.

The successful applicant will be a committed Christian who is either a member, or is willing to become a member of the Presbyterian Church. Well developed skills in delegation, communication and personnel management are essential.

Email youthworker@pyv.org.au, visit www.pyv.org.au or call Dave Assender on (03) 5249 5508 for further application details.

upcoming events

Carols: PYV is assisting Williamstown Presbyterian Church to host Carols by Sonlight this year! Carols is on the 10th of December and it's a family night, so bring the whole crew! It would be great to see the people of Williamstown encouraged by PYV families flooding the event, so put the date in your calendar and we'll see you there!

AFES Mission Night: Please note that this night has been postponed until further notice.

Summer Camp 2005-2006: The countdown is on for the Viking Summer Camp!! (see the ad for details). PYV is changing and, for the first time ever, 10-20 people will take part in a new initiative, the Intensive Stream. This training scheme is run in partnership with Presbyterian Theological College, with

lectures to be run on Summer Camp. Each unit can be credited as part of PTC's "Certificate in Bible and Ministry" or Australian College of Theology's "Associate in Theology ("ThA"). It is aimed at campers/leaders 17-30 years old who want to challenge themselves with deeper learning in theology and practical subjects. The rest of the campers can look forward to great talks by Bruce Christian from Sydney on the work of the Trinity in our salvation. As always, there will be lots of great activities at Shiloh Ranch. The theme is Vikings, so start thinking about what you can wear on New Year's Eve! Be sure you don't miss out on the best camp of the year!!

prayer points

- Please pray that the PYV Council is wise in its decision with regard to the Youth Worker.
- Pray for safety at our events and especially for Summer Camp.
- Pray that campers will come to believe in Jesus Christ as their Saviour.
- Pray that our leaders will continue to grow in maturity and Godliness.

praise points

- Praise God for the financial blessings we have received this year.
- Thank God for the opportunity we have for a more effective ministry with the employment of the Youth Worker.
- Thanks for the safety of everyone this year and for the encouragement of increasing numbers.

*Michelle Davidson
PYV State Councillor*

don't let the revolution pass you by!

A minority of Victorian Presbyterian churches have a web site but none of have integrated their site with an SMS messaging system, despite the fact that young Australians are communicating by SMS at unprecedented levels and web sites are in wide use. Most churches are allowing the two revolutions pass them by. However, the eleven churches in the Presbytery of Melbourne West are pursuing the twin goals of setting up an integrated SMS/web communication system which, God willing, should be fully operational by Easter 2006. The Presbytery is now inviting other Victorian Presbyterian churches (and any interested from the wider Australian Presbyterian denomination) to join them. To ensure churches are entirely satisfied with the system, no new sites will be added until interested churches can visit the eleven new web sites that are operational and test their SMS facilities, and after any "bugs" are ironed out.

The Presbytery's implementation committee is led by Douglas Robertson from Scots' Melbourne and Melton's Peter Owen. The Presbytery of Melbourne West has invested around \$17,000 in the system which they believe is for first any group of Australian churches. It includes

the ability to add extra churches for just \$750 plus a share of the site management fee, which will be around \$150 a year.

The project started in February 2005 when the Board of Essendon Presbyterian Church allocated some of their missionary money toward establishing a sophisticated web/SMS integration that copied commercial developments. They not only wanted an evangelistic web site that would communicate their message but also to be able to SMS members of their congregation a small Bible text each week and, eventually, twice a week. The SMS messages would then be expanded as part of a short study on the proposed site.

They concluded that such an ambitious project was too much for their congregation and had to be backed by their Presbytery. After informing the Presbytery, Essendon hired Andrew Kent of Businessgearchange to undertake a feasibility study and, later, to call for tenders.

God took a hand and the lowest tender was blessed by the surprise of a substantial anonymous Melbourne donor from outside the Essendon congregation. Essendon also injected further funds.

The Presbytery supported the partially funded \$17,000 project with substantial funds over three years at its Gisborne

meeting. The so-called "Gisborne Accord" was probably the first time that eleven Presbyterian churches had come together for the same Internet/ SMS strategy and then negotiated a way for Presbyterian churches around Australia to benefit from the initial investment. As a result of the "Gisborne Accord", nine of the churches in the Presbytery of Melbourne West will have a new web site. The two that already have web sites will replace their current site with the new one. While each church will have its own address, economies are achieved by each site being of the same design and being managed by the same professional group.

In addition, most have the same URL formula (some will have their own URL). Because of the economies of scale achieved with the commercial world via the successful tenderer, Bible SMS messages will be sent for only 9 cents - a yearly subscription of just \$6, which allows for extra SMS messages. The Presbytery of Melbourne West is financing 50 "grace" subscriptions of 10 SMS messages for each of its eleven churches to encourage them to use this for visitors to the Church.

Churches wanting details should email Robert Gottliebse at mail@robertgottliebse.com.au

new initiatives at ptc

building community

It is hard to believe in some respects that another college year has passed. Over the past year, the John Paton Fellowship (JPF-student body at PTC), has worked on developing a greater sense of community. While we all consider our studies important, we also recognise that God has placed us within a community of His people.

The JPF committee has organised student lunches on a fortnightly basis to give further opportunity of developing relationships with other students and the faculty. One comment was made, "You can't eat better anywhere else for \$2" The charge of \$2 per head goes toward supporting mission ventures, which is the basis of JPF. On grand final day, 30 students came together for a BBQ lunch. While not all stayed on to watch the final, it was a great day for meeting together and getting to know one another more.

Another venture was the reintroduction of a college 'uniform'. Rugby tops were ordered with the college logo printed on them. The faculty and a number of students purchased tops, which can be seen around the college on any given day.

We are all thankful to God that we have a college that stands firmly on His Word. Please continue to pray for the college and the students as we prepare for our future ministry. We hope and pray that the relationships we form at college will go with us into our various spheres of service so that we can continue to encourage and support each in practical ways.

Mark Smith

mission trip to WA

On the weekend of 19-22 August, Greg Goswell led a group of four students (Tony Johnson, Andrew Vines, Miles Fagan and myself) to the West. The purpose of the trip was to provide experience to the students but more so to be of an encouragement to the Church in WA.

Over the weekend, we embarked on two lots of door-to-door visitation in Fremantle and Bicton. We were supported by members of the local congregations. We enjoyed a time of fellowship on the Friday evening at the Bassendean Presbyterian Church where a mission dinner was organised by the local members. Tony spoke about his journey that led him to the PTC while Miles spoke about his experiences as a student. We were also informed about various missionaries being

supported by the church in the West.

On Saturday morning, 35 people from the various Presbyterian Churches gathered to pray about the needs in WA as well as the work at the PTC. We were encouraged by the vision that they have and much prayer is still required for more workers to be raised up to help them realise the vision. On Sunday, we all went in different directions preaching at Fremantle, Bicton, Bassendean, Leederville and Whitfords; followed by a combined luncheon at King's Park. There was a combined service on Sunday evening at Peppermint Grove, where we all participated in the service. Monday was spent looking around the Church's retirement home facilities and talking with Rev. Peter Bloomfield about his work in chaplaincy. Then after a quick tour of the Perth CBD (led by tour guide Stuart Bonnington), we set course for the airport weary from the weekend's activities but rejoicing in God's goodness.

We believe that the trip was successful in that we were able to be an encouragement. It was good to be able to gain an idea of the challenges facing the Church in the West. Thank you to the members of Fremantle and Bicton who billeted us for the weekend and to all the congregations for their warm welcome of us. It was a beneficial experience for us in terms of our preparation for ministry – door knocking, preaching in different settings and getting alongside fellow Christians. Please pray for our brothers and sisters in the West. Pray also that the efforts for outreach over the weekend will bring lasting fruit for the Kingdom.

Future mission trips are being considered by the College including the possibility of going to a country parish here in Victoria in 2006.

Mark Smith

bike riding in africa

Wow. I think that about describes today. Totally blown away. We covered the 90 km in good time, thanks to a good road and nice tail wind. Can't complain. At Usamweh we were mobbed (literally!) by hundreds of people who were very curious, to the point of watching Daryl fill his water bottle!! We could hardly move!! We sold a few Bibles but didn't stay hugely long. Then Ushirombo. Thousands of people at the gathering. Amazing. Awesome.'

The above is an extract from the diary I kept on a recent short term mission trip to Tanzania. It was a Bike for Bibles event, different from normal Bike for Bibles events. Bike for Bibles is a fund raising branch of the Bible Society, and rides are generally held in Australia with funds raised being sent overseas. This time we not only sent the Tanzanian Bible Society the money, but the bike ride itself was in Tanzania. A totally awesome experience. To be able to see the work of the Bible Society first hand, and to participate in its work, even in a small way, just blew me and the rest of the team away. Imagine the joy we experienced as we sold 400 Bibles in one hour at Ushirombo following the gathering mentioned above!!!

The short term mission trip fitted in very well with the studies I am doing at the College. I am doing a Graduate Diploma, with an emphasis on missions. This trip, therefore, gave me a perfect opportunity to get my feet wet, to practise what I'm being taught, to see some of the issues involved in mission work, and to try out all those mission theories and methods I've been learning about!!! A perfect complement to the course I'm doing!!

Chris Griffieon

The Presbyterian Theological College, Melbourne

is seeking a

Receptionist / Secretary

Advanced computer skills necessary with knowledge of the Presbyterian Church desirable but not essential. Applicants will be expected to show an active commitment to the College's Christian and Evangelical ethos.

For position description and application form please either email (office@presbyteriancollege.org) or phone (03 9898 9384) to the Presbyterian Theological College, 684 Elgar Road, Box Hill North, 3129.

Applications close on 16th December, 2005

I would like to thank the Moderator General and Mission Partners (APWM) for the opportunity to represent the Presbyterian Church of Australia at this year's assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu. In all I spent nearly two months in Vanuatu, which was a busy and productive time. During that time I was able to fulfil the following tasks.

1. Teach a four-week unit (2 hours each day) on Early Pauline Epistles (Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians) to the Diploma 2 class. Some of the Diploma 4 class also attended even though they had already completed this unit. This also involved setting and marking assignments and exams. The students appeared to appreciate the subject and it was good to back in a classroom at Talua.
2. I facilitated the production a self-assessment review for the implementation of the BD programme. This was a very time-consuming task as all areas of the college's life were assessed. We followed the guidelines set down by the South Pacific Association of Theological Schools (SPATS), the body through which Talua will seek accreditation. I was keen for the curriculum of the new BD to be focused more on Biblical and Theological studies than on areas of contextualisation.

The implementation of the BD will require a lot of effort. The three main challenges (from my perspective) are finances, human resources and students.

The financial situation at Talua at present is not good, and the need to increase infrastructure (e.g. library accessions, new classrooms etc) for the BD will present many challenges. Human resources will also need to be developed. Those who teach in a BD programme should possess a Masters Degree. Furthermore, with the BD being introduced at Talua, there will probably be a phasing out of Certificate level training. There is a desire in the PCV to commence regionalised Certificate level Bible colleges. One has already commenced on Tanna for the Southern Islands. There are discussions for another on Malekula to serve Malekula, Santo and Ambrym. Therefore there is need to restructure the PCV's approach to theological education as these colleges cannot

simply duplicate what happens at Talua. Student intake to the BD programme is another challenge. The BD will be opened to Diploma graduates (many of whom are current pastors), and to university graduates as primary theological training. The need to encourage young, able university graduates to consider a BD at Talua is essential for the academic standard of the degree. This will not be easy as there is no history of university graduates entering theological education in Vanuatu.

3. It was a very helpful time for encouraging staff and other friends in Vanuatu. Talua is going through a time of transition with the introduction of Anglicans to the college, the introduction of the BD and with changes to staff. It was helpful to talk through some of these issues with local staff.
4. I was given two opportunities to lead Sunday services: one was a Sunday morning service and the other a guided Bible study on one Sunday evening.
5. It was a privilege to be in Vanuatu at the time of the Silver Jubilee of Independence. The challenges that face the nation now are significant as the economic and political base in the country create challenges. In my opinion, the situation is more difficult for niVanuatu than was the case a decade ago.
6. I was present at Talua during the annual memorial lectures delivered this year by Rev. Dr. Paul Kooistra from the Presbyterian Church of America. Dr Kooistra was accompanied by Rev. Chris Garrett who has responsibility for the Asia-Pacific region. I believe we should seek to strengthen the partnership with the Presbyterian Church of America in our work in Vanuatu and the Pacific.
7. I was able to spend five days at the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu assembly. During this time I was able to bring greetings from the Presbyterian Church of Australia. I was also able to speak to the work done concerning the development of the BD. Significant changes happened at this year's assembly. Ps. Kalsakau Urtalo is the new PCV clerk. Ps. Fiamu Rakau was appointed as the new principal of Talua. This completes Ps. Masia Nato's tenure at Talua at the end of this year. I spoke with Ps. Fiamu after his appoint-

ment, and he is keen for the Presbyterian Church of Australia to continue its involvement at Talua. Ps. George Aki is the new PCV moderator (and is doing a good job). A highlight of this year's assembly was the reports from the Mission workers who are taking the Gospel into areas that to now have been untouched with the Gospel. Churches are being established, education and health care encouraged. There is also an awareness of the need for urban mission. There is a renewed commitment to evangelism with evangelism crusades across the country. There is a renewed vision to the fact that with each generation, there is a renewed need to be involved in the important work of evangelism.

8. I spent a significant amount of time with Glen Connor, seeking to encouraging him and Rachael in their work at Talua. They are doing a good job, seeking to understand the culture and the language, both of which are complex and challenging. They have a good rapport with the students and are to be encouraged in the important work in which they are doing.

As I write this report I am sitting on a plane between Vanuatu and Australia. The last two months has been a very valuable time for catching up with many friends and graduates of Talua. I have had countless conversations with pastors and other church workers and I believe that this has been an encouragement for them. There is a strong appreciation in Vanuatu for the commitment of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

Thank you again for this opportunity to be involved in the work of the Gospel in Vanuatu.

Ian Smith

around the presbyteries & churches



God's choice of professional and trades people and that we would be able to meet the financial obligations of coming in on budget? Lastly, please pray that construction may begin in the first half of 2006.

John Stasse

90 years of PWMU work celebrated at elwood

Elwood PWMU celebrated its 90th Anniversary on the 1st of September 2005. The service was well attended by members of other PWMU from the Melbourne East Presbytery and visitors from neighbouring churches. Ms. Mavis Price was invited to share with the group on the work of the Lord in PNG. Many were encouraged and reminded of the ongoing work in preaching the Gospel to those who have yet to hear of it. The service concluded with an elaborate afternoon tea. All in all, it was indeed a great time of mutual encouragement and refreshing fellowship among fellow believers.

May the Lord continue to impress upon the hearts of all believers that the work of preaching the Gospel requires commitment from both the missionaries and the

the shape of things to come – ballarat west

Building a Church is predominately about building people up in the faith and discipling them to be true and faithful followers of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ. This has been the emphasis of the ministry of the Ballarat West Presbyterian Church since inception and, by the grace of God, He has given the increase over the years. This has meant that the Church has had to consider alternative accommodation beyond the rental property it currently occupies and so the Church has had to consider the construction of its own building in order to resource its current and future activities.

Through the generosity of the Home Mission Committee, our congregation has been given initial encouragement to embark on building a multi-purpose building on the church's own land in Sebastopol. The building plans in Stage One encompass a foyer, main hall, kitchen, toilets, and some smaller meeting rooms. At a later time, in the second stage, an adjoining chapel has been planned for.

The process of embarking on a building program is a journey. It seems to us that we have not travelled too far as yet, perhaps just out of the starting blocks. Like all buildings, the foundations have to be right, so much time has been spent in the planning. Concurrently, we have aimed at not interfering with the church's core goal of worship, ministry, teaching and outreach. It is our continued prayer that, as we get further into the process, the construction phase will not interfere with our main purpose for our existence, which is

to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

In recent times our project was granted a planning permit by the local Ballarat City Council. We have now commissioned the preparation of the necessary drawings and building specifications preparatory to applying for a building permit. The next stage will be tendering for the construction phase. It will be at this time that we will know the final cost; to date we have only been able to work on estimates.

Our congregation eagerly anticipates the accomplishment of each stage of this journey that we have embarked on. It is our prayer that we will do God's will in every stage of the journey and that His name will be glorified in all our continued endeavours. Would you support us in prayer that, as a congregation, we will have the mind of God and that we will continue to keep our eyes fixed on Him. Would you also pray that we will find

Continued page 8



Presbyterian Theological Centre – Sydney Position of Lecturer in New Testament

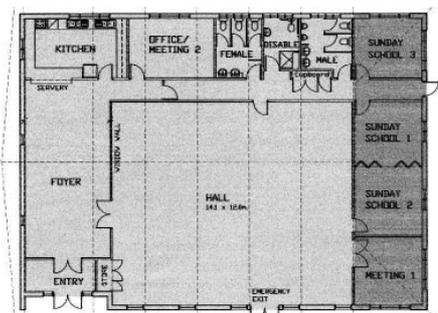
The present term of the lecturer in Greek and New Testament Exegesis at the **Presbyterian Theological Centre** concludes on 31st December 2006. Accordingly the Theological Education Committee invites applications for appointment to this position. The position is full-time, normally for terms of six years, effective from 1st January 2007. The present incumbent is eligible for reappointment.

Applicants must hold a research Master's degree or higher in New Testament, and preferably have pastoral and teaching experience. Applicants should provide full curricula vitae and the names of three persons from whom a written report evaluating their suitability for this position (academically, educationally and pastorally) may be sought.

Applicants must subscribe to the doctrinal standards of the Presbyterian Church. The successful applicant may be required to teach some classes in areas other than New Testament.

Further details are available from the Administrator, PTC, on (02) 9744 1977 or on website www.ptcsydney.org Applications (by 31st January 2006) to:

The Principal, The Rev Dr John Davies
Presbyterian Theological Centre
77 Shaftesbury Road, Burwood NSW 2134



New building, new name: Ballarat West has renamed itself Grace Presbyterian Church.



Caulfield camp?

local churches. Elwood is a joint parish with Caulfield Presbyterian church.

Caulfield Elwood also held their 9th annual family camp this year with the Burwood Community Presbyterian Church inviting us to join with them on their camp. The theme for the weekend was spiritual growth; the need to advance in our relationship with Christ as our Lord and Master. The campers were also reminded of who they were in Christ and of the need to be a light in this world of darkness.

Sam Lim

new things out of mildura

Members of the Sunraysia Presbyterian Church have been packing Christmas Boxes for families in the outback as part of this church's ongoing ministry to those living in remote and isolated parts of South Western NSW. This is done in partnership with the Presbyterian Inland Mission and it is the second year we have held this activity. The toys and books have been generously donated to the Presbyterian Inland

Mission by various organisations and individuals. As the local Padre for South West NSW, I then hand out the boxes to families living in my patrol area in the weeks leading up to Christmas. This is just one of the exciting avenues of ministry God is opening up for us in the Mildura district. Apart from participating in community events such as the ANZAC and Remembrance Day ceremonies, we also conduct local hospital visitation and run two outreach youth groups into the local community. We also run two Bible discussion groups, have begun holding fellowship lunches after the quarterly communion service and have a number of other plans on the drawing board.

An exciting new initiative is the filming of the sermon, which is then being placed onto DVD and made available to interested people in the outback as well as any remote churches. We are hoping this idea may grow and other ministers may allow their sermons to be filmed as well. We see this as another way we can assist the ministry of Christ to people living in the outback regions of Australia. Our worship services have been given a visual edge with the recent private purchase of a data projector from which sermon outlines and illustrations are displayed and the songs for evening church projected onto the wall. The introduction to this new technology has been well received with one member of the congregation being overheard to jokingly say that it not only makes the sermons more interesting but it gives us something else to look at apart from the minister.

At the start of the year it looked like it could not be done, but through the grace of God, sound financial management and sacrificial giving by the congregation we were able re-stump the church building. After 50 years of the building sitting on the original stumps their replacement was past due. Through the help of PWMU we are also in the process of replacing the front door of the church, adding a glass panel to the door that leads from the foyer to the worship area and landscaping the grounds at the front of the church. With the help of the Presbyterian Inland Mission and Signs Plus from Swan Hill we are also erecting two new church signs that will be more visible from the road. The Ladies Guild is in the middle of publishing a cookbook the sale of which will be used to assist the ongoing ministry of the parish into the community.

We hope to have finalised before Christmas a Vision Statement, Statement of Purpose, Goals and Objectives for our congregation that we can use as a template for ministry. As we undertake all of this we trust that God will continue to lead and guide us and build His church in the Mildura region. As an encouragement to this end, we recently welcomed a husband and wife into communicant membership and rejoice that God has brought us another family to worship with us.

*Rev. Michael Willmore
Minister of the Sunraysia
Presbyterian Church
Padre for the Presbyterian Inland Mission
(SW NSW)*

The Executive Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan writes...

Greetings and much love from the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan. I give thanks to God that all of us are under the shadow of the almighty God, our Lord Jesus.

We received heavy jolts in our city. We were sitting in our offices early in the morning. It is just amazing that none of the Christians has died among the thousands feared dead. One of our pastor's houses in Abot Abad, one of the worst hit cities, is demolished and the church is damaged. Other Christian homes have also suffered but no one is even injured seriously.

But we are awe struck with the most terrible human tragedy our nation has

ever suffered. There are hundreds of areas where no one has reached as yet. People are in dire need of food, medicines, water, blankets, and tents. People are even in need of burial clothes and of folks who can bury them. It's just an indescribable situation. We have sent a team of young men to participate in the relief and rescue efforts. We are also sending food, medicines and other relief items. We held the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan to respond to this tragedy. We have set up a goal of at least one million rupees to be sent to the President's relief fund, other than what we are doing. We will need a lot of help for the rehabilitation of the affected, especially reconstruction of pastor's houses and repairs of the churches. We will also provide help to the Christians for the repair and renovation of their houses.

This nation really needs to know the Lord Jesus and His love for the lost souls. God be with you.

I really thank you for your own initiative in helping me and my nation. God bless you.

Love
(Rev Dr) Maqsood Kamil
Executive Secretary
Presbyterian Church of Pakistan

Please give generously to this appeal as the Lord leads you. Please continue in prayer for our suffering brothers and sisters in Christ. Please consult with Phil Simmonds of Mission Partners (02 9520 8034, home; 02 9792 1373, office; 0418 986 474, mobile) if you feel you could contribute in any other way.

*Yours sincerely in Christ,
Bob Thomas
Moderator General*

warrnambool invaded by the general assembly!

Need to find a way to unite your congregation, spruce up your high maintenance building and catch up on many jobs left on the 'to do' list for far too long all at the same time? Do what we did at Warrnambool... invite the General Assembly to come to your place!

When it was first announced that St John's would host the PCV General Assembly 2005, the most probable reaction of many people within the Congregation was the thought that it couldn't be done – after all, there was too much to do! And they were right! There was too much to do for one person. That's why we looked at the task as a team exercise – for only by working together as a team could we ever get anywhere! So within a few months of that first announcement, things were moving.

Volunteers were sought for all sorts of jobs – transport to and from the station, hosting billets, cooking, cleaning, emptying rubbish bins, setting up trestle tables and the like. A bit closer to the date a series of working bees each Saturday for successive months accomplished much painting, polishing, patching and prettifying up the buildings and the gardens. Some even enjoyed the work so much they undertook to do their own projects during the week!

By the time October 3rd came around (and it was quick!) it was not only the St. John's Church and Halls that were standing tall and tidy, but also the St John's people who were 'on the ready' for the



St John's Warrnambool

influx of Assembly Commissioners and a really busy week. And what a week it was! "Doug's Army" laboured each day overseeing the general cleaning, replenishing of supplies and the re-arranging of tables and chairs at the request of the other army of cooks! And what a challenge they faced with meals to be prepared for almost 200 people. Would that queue ever end?! Seven meals in total were served over the 4 days of Assembly. Approximately 60 ladies made up the catering team and all are to be commended for being willing to take on whatever task was tossed their way and many walking the extra mile – or two.

Then there were those who unasked, took on the role of 'gap-filler' and seeing a job needing to be done, did it without complaint or fanfare. We all know how useful gap-filler can be!

But best of all, all the workers and the all organization and planning and arranging and scheming for the week underpinned by corporate and individual prayer – very evident as the week progressed and the Lord's presence was felt amongst the helpers as they saw their plans unfolding successfully.

From a local perspective it was a great privilege for many of our congregation and those from within the Presbytery of Kilnoorat us to attend the Moderator's Induction, the Assembly Rally and the Mission Night and these were great nights of challenge and encouragement to all. A major highlight was the presence of our Sudanese friends from Melbourne who most certainly enjoy singing! These nights proved to be a cause for much joy, encouragement and blessing for our people, individually and as a whole.

Now that Assembly has come and gone, we can look back with a certain amount of pride (the good sort) and say to ourselves, 'Hey! We did it!' We coped with the 'invasion', shared some rural city hospitality, worked together AND hopefully showed the love of the Lord Jesus Christ in all we said and did. And do you know what? We also had fun in doing it! Praise the Lord - He is good indeed!

*Mrs Wendy Hayward
& Rev Philip Burns*



Gathering for meals at the Assembly

assembly in brief

clerk of assembly announces retirement

The Rev. Ted Pearsons, the Clerk of our Assembly from the days of Union, has decided that he and his wife, Margaret, deserve a well-earned rest. Ted and Margaret are at present enjoying Ted's long service leave with Ted's retirement from the role of Clerk and from his parish at Gardenvale becoming final from 30th June 2006. The following was recorded in the Assembly minutes by way of testimonial to Ted's labours within and for this denomination.

Record its appreciation of the service of Very Rev Edward R. Pearsons to the Presbyterian Church of Victoria:

On the final occasion that the Very Rev Edward R Pearsons is Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, congratulations are accorded him for being the second longest serving clerk. He was appointed on 15 May 1974 and is due to demit on 30 June 2006.

Mr Pearsons took office at a crucial time for the Presbyterian Church of Victoria just before the formation of the Uniting Church in 1977. In addition to his work as Clerk he was deeply involved in varied and important tasks such as leadership and encouragement of the continuing congregations, convenorship of committees, and he carried responsibility in the various legal cases. Over the years since he has acquired a profound knowledge of polity both of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria and of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia (of which he was Moderator General 1985-88). Consequently, Mr Pearsons has been an able leader within the Presbyterian Church often giving insightful, wise, practical advice to congregations, enthusiastic young ministers, clerks of presbyteries and others within the church. Mr Pearsons has given loyal service in the cause of our Lord Jesus and His church. During his clerkship he has also carried pastoral responsibility, first at Cheltenham and then at Gardenvale East from 1975.

The General Assembly records its appreciation of these years of dedicated service that Mr Pearsons has given to the Presbyterian Church of Victoria and wishes himself and his wife Margaret a long and happy retirement.

(Draft Minutes 24.2)

see for yourself

The Christian Education and Nurture Committee launched its long anticipated secondary level Sunday School material "See For Yourself" funded by the Allan Bequest. This program will cater for school years seven through to ten and has a bright, bold and zippy format that "field tests" have so far indicated is well appreciated by the young people who have used it. All ministers have received advance copies of year 1, term 1 for their evaluation. In an age range that suffers from a dearth of good material, "See For Yourself" promises to satisfy requirements of teachers wanting sound, reformed theology in a well presented package.

assembly further:

- Noted the decline of memberships in country parishes over last five years, (though some note that some of this decline has been of young people leaving their country homes to find work in the city and taking up membership in city congregations). CENC will provide more accurate data about this trend for the 2006 Assembly.
- Highly recommended the "See For Yourself" Sunday School material for use within all congregations including home mission stations;
- Encouraged all ministers, elders and members of our congregations to attend Fuelled Training days to help build their congregations' knowledge and skills base for ministry;
- In commending the PYV leadership for their "Godliness, enthusiasm, creativity and hard work in the presentation of the gospel to the young of our denomination", approved the appointment of a CENC Youth Worker to work under the direction of the CENC and with the PYV State Council for the advancement of the gospel mission amongst our young people.

breaking the silence III

Mrs. Elizabeth MacLean will address the 2006 Commission as an introduction to this enhanced version of our denomination's child protection policy. Assembly must then decide whether or not to adopt this version. Breaking the Silence (version 1) is already in place and regular training days for ministers, elders and members are provided twice annually at the CENC Fuelled training days.

school's reports

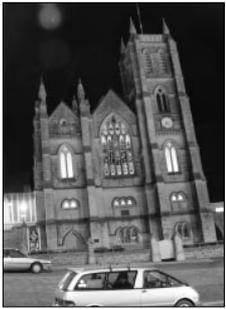
PLC report was given by the Principal, Mrs. Elizabeth Ward who has announced her retirement as from end of Term 1, 2006. The Assembly notes Mrs. Ward's fervent faith and desire to restore Christian principles to the life and work of the College and her success in raising PLC's reputation as a school of academic excellence.

King's College (Warnambool). Principal, Neil Benfell, spoke of the school's numerical growth and of its infrastructure expansion with the receipt of funds from the Assembly to help build a new auditorium. King's College played host to many members of Assembly on the Wednesday of the Assembly week, giving informative tours of the school complex.

Social Services Committee continues to upgrade the facilities at Kirk Brae, announcing the approval of a further \$800,000 expenditure to meet Federal Government standards requirements. The report also noted the difficulty the Committee is having attracting appropriately skilled men and women to its ranks. The retirement of Mr. J. K. Johnston has further exacerbated this problem. In a climate where, increasingly, the care of the aged is being taken over by secular interest, there is growing difference of opinion within the denomination as to the merits (or demerits) of the PCV continuing to remain in the aged care sector.

mission partners

Australian Presbyterian World Mission – Vic (APWM), or, as the Federal Convenor (Rev. Bill Lutton) reminds us it is now styled, Mission Partners - given the support role the PCA performs in sending out and supporting our missionaries under the auspices of many of the world's major mission organisations. The Convenor of the Victorian chapter of Mission Partners, Rev. Philip Burns, introduced Bill and Jenny Lutton, Mavis Price, Robert and Leonie Betts and colourfully dressed members of the Sudanese choir to the Assembly. In giving his report, Philip mentioned in particular the work in Malawi now extensively supported in kind and financially by the PCV, with the needs of the Resource Centre, pastors' seminars and Mr. Colin M'bawa as focus of particular need. The Assembly has also authorized a relief appeal for the Presbyterian Church of Sudan and encouraged APWM



Clockwise from top left: Kings College choir, Sudanese Women's choir at the Assembly rally, business debate, St Johns by night.

to continue to explore ways in which the Southern Islands Presbytery Bible College in Vanuatu may be supported.

The Strategy Committee was formed to find ways to streamline our denomination's administration, explore ways to more efficiently access and utilize its financial and real estate resources and, with these resources, facilitate new endeavours for the promotion of the Gospel. Convenor, Rev Dr. Neil Chambers, gave a detailed report and findings of recent surveys to presbyteries on certain proposed initiatives to do with combining of presbyteries, intentional interim moderatorships and full time training officer worker to work in conjunction with the PTC. The Assembly approved these among many:

- Stronger presbyteries to enter into supportive relationships with smaller struggling presbyteries;
- Trusts Corp to investigate financing of presbytery clerks;
- The drawing up of regulations to allow formation of a Church Planting and Evangelism Committee, a Property Development Trust, and a Maintenance of Healthy Parishes Committee to for investigation by the Trustees of funding by the Assembly, the Home Missions Committee and Maintenance of the Ministry Committees;
- The appointment of a Training Officer;
- The Strategy Committee (with Board of Investment and Finance) to investigate future use of funds now available for social services and bring a recommendation to Assembly 2006 of their possible future use.

The Strategy Committee has been given a twelve month extension of time to complete its work.

home mission committee

Ventures of significance have been on the agenda for the HMC for some time and have reached a point of coming to fruition at the is Assembly, including the approval of guidelines for the Apprenticeship Scheme whereby young men who have some inclination towards entering formal ministry are funded to become "apprentices" to the ministry within a participating congregation to gain some experience in the pastorate in order to make a better informed decision whether to proceed with formal training or not. The HMC continues to direct its efforts towards isolating Melbourne's major growth areas for church planting purposes, to encourage the growth and support of ministers and student ministers and their families through the ministry of the annual Ministers' Family Camp, and to encourage churches to attend those seminars designed to equip and enhance ministry skills and to help members avail themselves of evangelistic opportunities. Of significance is the Assembly's encouragement for ministers and elders across the State to attend the "Embers to Flame" conference being held in 2006.

Of some disappointment was the Committee's stalled attempt to have Assembly approve the appointment of a Church Evangelist. A clash with the vision

for a Evangelism and Church Planting Officer outlined by the Strategy Committee resulted in the Assembly directing the HMC to liaise further with the Strategy Committee and bring a joint proposal to the next Assembly.

Theological Education Committee outlined its proposal for the building of six student residences on the front block adjacent to the PTC office complex and architect's drawings on show at the Assembly gave commissioners some idea of the extent of this project. Approval was given for the project to proceed and for an appeal to be set up to help finance the construction.

thompson bequests

After much deliberation, the Assembly awarded 25% to cross cultural ministries, less an amount of \$50,000 to the PWMU for bursaries to PTC for overseas students; 25% to be used to help fund a PCV Evangelism Officer and presbytery approved evangelism through congregations; 25% to the Bundoora congregation to help fund purchase of a property; 25% to the PTC to help build the six student accommodation apartments.

Trusts Corporation/Board of Investment and Finance is to take over administration of the Capital Fund in order to comply with Taxation Department and ASIC requirements. The Capital Fund will, however, continue to approve loans applications.

health and community chaplaincy committee

Rev Peter Owen has retired from the Conventorship as of this Assembly. The Committee, on behalf of the PCV, has had a significant part in the setting up and running of the Integrated Chaplaincy Training course with Reformed Theological College (Geelong), Ridley College and Kingsley College, a viable Christian world view, theologically based alternative to increasingly secular courses presently offered. The first of the Pastors Renewal Retreat groups is now entering its third (of three) phase and are showing significant and very positive results. The group will split into two taking on ten more ministers after the present stage. The Rev. Keith Bell has been appointed Chaplain to the Royal Children's Hospital, replacing the Rev Theo Fishwick.

state news committee – fellow workers

Assembly has approved the SNC's request that presbyteries and Assembly committees provide liaisons for newsworthy items to be reported for publication in Fellow Workers and that presbyteries actively seek parish news for publication.

some other business of significance ...

An overture from the Presbytery of Maroondah on behalf of the Belgrave Heights Presbyterian Church sought to secure some land at the Belgrave Heights site for the extended future use of the congregation. At the time of Assembly, BHPC was renting its manse from the Trusts Corporation and had no guaranteed use of land for church purposes. During a suspension of the debate on the

overture, in what can be described as a fine exhibition of Christian purpose and unity, negotiations took place between interested parties that delivered an outcome that can only be described as "win, win" for the Kingdom of God. The decisions taken were that the land with the manse and a former dormitory be given to the congregation, that the last remaining piece of vacant land be rented to the congregation by the Trusts Corporation (on behalf of the Assembly) at a mutually acceptable rate and that the sum of \$60,000 be given to the congregation for the relocation and re-establishment of the present worship centre, now occupying land owned by the Belgrave Heights Christian School.

assembly '05 mission night

The Wednesday night Mission Tea held during Assembly week has become one of the highlights of our Assembly gatherings and this year's Assembly at Warrnambool was no exception. It had been billed as a big night, but nobody realized just how big – or indeed how long!

Following a most sumptuous feast of roast and cold meats, vegetables, salads and delicious desserts courtesy of the Warrnambool ladies, St John's Church was fairly well packed with Assembly commissioners and 'locals' from Warrnambool and surrounding districts. Our theme for the night was 'Into Africa', a play on words (or meant to be!) on the movie, 'Out of Africa' of some years ago.

Devotions were brought to us by Rev. Bill Lutton, National Director of Mission Partners APWM and as usual, Bill was spot on in reminding us of our responsibilities as partners in the work of the gospel. Departing from an African theme just for a moment or two (not that

anybody minded), greetings were brought by APWM Partner Society (Wycliffe/SIL) missionary Mavis Price on home assignment from Papua New Guinea. If these were the entrée, then main course was not far behind – and what a main course it was!

First, via a series of photographs projected on to the screen, Rev. Robert and Leonie Betts took us to Southern Sudan for a dedication of the Avokaya New Testament and the joy associated with the fruit of many years of a labour of love. Then Rev. Bob Thomas and Rev. Allan Lendon took us all the way to Malawi to see the fruit of the work of the gospel first brought to this land by David Livingstone so many years ago and built upon through successive generations, as they reported on their recent visit to that land. It was fitting that the work in Malawi took much of our attention given that the Assembly that afternoon had noted with thanks the completion and the signing of a Partner Church Agreement with the Central Church of Africa Presbyterian, Blantyre Synod. Following on from this, our third speaker Rev. Don Elliott from the Eltham congregation, focused our attention on the proposed Mission Trip to Malawi in July 2006 by himself and members of his congregation. An informative and helpful DVD helped us all get the feel of the necessary preparations to be made. As if all this was not enough information and a feast for all of our eyes, a feast for our ears was interspersed between the speakers throughout the night via the Sudanese Choir from Cheltenham Presbyterian Church under the care and leadership of Pastor Choul Yat. It was quite a sight to see the beaming faces of the Sudanese men and women occupying the St John's Choir stalls, all dressed so colourfully singing praise to our God at the top of their voices. And, given that many locals had come specifically for the purpose of hearing the Sudanese Choir, they did not go home disappointed.

All in all the night served to remind us that there is a vast mission field around us in Africa, but also in many places. The enthusiasm with which this night was received on top of some of the more recent Mission Tea nights held in Melbourne Assemblies, is a sure sign that the growing interest in the work of missions is spreading like fire. In this regard, this is one time we may hope and pray that this will continue in bushfire like proportions!!

SEE FOR YOURSELF

See For Yourself is a dynamic series of Scripture lessons designed to give junior and middle high school students a growing understanding of the main teachings of the Bible, written from a Reformed and Evangelical perspective.

Focused on topics from the Westminster Confession, the aim is to build a solid knowledge of the Christian faith so that young teenagers might meet Christ for themselves and build their Christian worldview.

Each term comes complete with a teacher's manual and A4 colour booklet for each student.

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