



# FELLOW WORKERS



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*Women & Christ*



# FELLOW WORKERS

Summer 2017/18 • Presbyterian Church of Victoria

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### Fellow Workers

Quarterly Magazine of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria.

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## EDITORIAL

The Westminster Shorter Catechism begins with this question: "What is the chief end of man? Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever." I hardly need to say that this is also the true purpose of women. You will notice much of this edition shines a spotlight on what some of the women in our churches are doing for the glory of God, so ladies, this one's for you. I hope it's as encouraging to you as it has been for me putting it together. I'm personally inspired by the women (and the men), both today and throughout history, who have answered this calling and who seek to faithfully follow and bring glory to God in their personal life, in their homes, in the church and in the wider world. They worry less about what the world says being feminine (or masculine) is, and think more about how to show the world who God is.

## A WORD OF APPRECIATION

The Lord in his providence prompted Chiara Bilyj to volunteer as editor of Fellow Workers in October, 2009. Since her appointment to that task, Fellow Workers has been published regularly each quarter and moved from a two colour to a full colour magazine and from twelve to sixteen pages. From the outset Chiara was both an editor and a designer and carried out both roles with enthusiasm, while also being a wife and mother.

As the previous convener of the State News Committee for most of Chiara's tenure, I would like to place on record my appreciation of her dedication, her enthusiasm, her humility, her professionalism (and her ability to work with the committee!) to produce, as was always her desire, a magazine which would help the Presbyterian Church of Victoria 'to spur one another on towards love and good deeds.'

As the time has come for you to relinquish the role of editor, we simply say, 'Thank you very much, Chiara. May the Lord continue to greatly bless you and your family.'

*Rev Neil Harvey is the former Convener of the State News Committee.*

## NEWS

## TRUSTING GOD IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

IT'S BEEN A PRIVILEGE AND joy to serve with Women's Ministries this year. Let me paint you a picture of what we've been up to...

Imagine a middle-aged woman in a Victorian country church. She has been serving the church for many years, and yet these days her church is small and she fears for its future. She has many friends in town but few are Christians, and it seems like her efforts to share her faith aren't going anywhere. She sees the issues her children and grandchildren are facing, and wonders what the future will hold for them. She heard that Women's Ministries was holding an On the Road day in her area and although unsure what the day would hold, she decided to go along. She was glad that she didn't have to travel all the way to Melbourne, or cook lunch and organise things as she has many times before.

Upon arriving, she was greeted by a cheery, bright and welcoming hall full of women; younger women and older women chatting, single women, mums and retired women. The coffee was on and there was an air of anticipation about the place. The focus this year was what it means to Trust God in an Uncertain World. The Bible talks reminded her that while Nebuchadnezzar foolishly trusted in his own ability, Daniel trusted in God for everything and as a result was used for God's glory. Daniel realised that everything he had came from God and that the future too was

in God's hands. For our woman the future holds some fear, but she has been reminded that God sits enthroned in heaven, and she can trust Him unconditionally.

Most Sundays at her church the singing is quiet and disappears into the ceiling of the older building, but on that day, she was encouraged by the enthusiastic group singing and by the musicians. She listened to the story of a persecuted woman many miles away, which helped put her own worries in perspective and challenged her to thank God more for His mercies. She sat down with the other women to write a letter of encouragement to a Christian sister she will never meet, in a country she will never visit, and she thought about how much it will mean for that woman to receive a personal letter of encouragement from a sister in Australia. She too knows what it is like to feel alone, wondering if God thinks of her or cares about her situation. Over lunch she chatted with several women she'd never met, sharing some of the struggles in her life and was prayed with and encouraged in her faith. The singing, talking and praising God together have reminded her that she's part of a larger community of God's people, that she matters to God and to others, and of God's place in the journeys of life that unite us all.

In the afternoon, she wondered which workshop to choose. Truth be told she'd have liked to listen to them all. To consider grief and what it means to respond in a godly and healthy way to the pain; ways to nurture her spiritual life and be strong in her faith; or how to love the gay and transgender community while still holding on to God's truth. Finally, the day ended and although she was hesitant to come, she became reluctant to leave. But she feels invigorated in her

faith and she has a deeper sense of who God is. She has seen new opportunities to serve God in her church and community and gained a worldwide perspective of God's Kingdom. When she left, she asked us when we'll be back, because she wants to invite some friends along next time!

This woman is not a fiction. She is one of the women in your church. Women's Ministries is not just about running big events, it's about encouraging everyday women wherever they are, even in the furthest parts of our state. It's about being fed by solid Bible teaching and giving Presbyterian women opportunity to use their gifts. It's about connecting older and younger women in the city and country... in short, it's about supporting the whole body of Christ. We often get asked why we do what we do when we could just join one of the bigger women's conferences that run in Melbourne every year. But as I sit in my big comfortable church in Melbourne I realise that it matters to God what is happening to our sisters in smaller, remoter churches, and so it should matter to all of us. It would be great to see all of us thinking about how we can encourage the women in our church – wherever they are – to invest in the work of Women's Ministries, and to connect with those who live in our peripheral vision. Sometimes we forget that it's just as important to consider what we can give, as well as what we can receive. It would be great to see our city churches taking a bus load of women to On the Road Mildura or Benalla in 2019, because we are one body, the church.

*Mairi Girgis is a member of Donvale Presbyterian Church and the Convener of WMV*

**WMV State Conference  
24 March 2018**



Flourish Conference

## PWMU IN THE CITY

THE INTENTION OF PWMU State Council in hosting regular meetings is to give people the chance to hear a missionary speaker, and the PWMU in the City meeting held in June was no exception. It was a privilege to welcome a new missionary, Ross Maxwell, and a good opportunity to get to know him and his proposed sphere of service.

We began with the hymn “I the Lord of Sea and Sky”, a Bible reading from 2 Corinthians 6:1-13 and prayer. Both the hymn and Bible reading were chosen by Ross and were of special significance to him.

After devotions, Ross spoke of his background, his call to mission work and the process he has been undertaking over nearly 10 years since his call to prepare for mission work. Ross trained as a helicopter pilot and worked in secular jobs to hone his skills, before undertaking a mission trip to Indonesia with a Christian organisation called Helimission. They use helicopters in areas with difficult terrain to assist with disaster relief, transportation of missionaries and non-government organisation personnel, evacuation and so on, with the intention of spreading the gospel while doing so.

After the trip to Indonesia, Ross joined the Helimission base in Ethiopia for three months as an intern, ferrying medical personnel to remote villages. Once the medical work was done, preaching commenced, and Ross saw many instances of the powerful effect of God’s Word. It was intended that Ross return to Ethiopia last year but political turmoil caused Helimission to

close down that base. Now Ross is set to join the base in Madagascar, but needs to have enough financial support to do so. It was good to meet Ross and hear his story and the time flew by while he spoke. We are now better equipped to pray effectively for his needs, and we hope the wider church will do so also.

*Esther Vayne is the President of the PWMU*

## FLOURISH IN MISSION CONFERENCE

WHAT WAS GOD’S PLAN for the world? Why mission? Ruth Briggs from Pioneers gave a wonderful introduction, from Genesis to Revelation, at the Flourish in Missions conference at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Clayton, in September. Man was made to reflect God’s glory, so ever since the fall it has been God’s plan in his heart, to bring sinful man back to himself. God is worthy of the worship of all the nations of the earth. All the blessings we have received in Christ, we are to make sure all the nations receive and know about. It is our job to tell the nations who God is.

About 70 ladies from different churches in Clayton, the Flinders Presbytery and other Presbyterian churches attended the conference. Over a sumptuous lunch many a conversation was shared, meeting new people, catching up with friends and discussing thoughts from the mornings talk.

After lunch we heard from three ladies from three very different mission fields. Carolyn Wentworth shared her story about her life and the calling to support her husband in his call to country

parish ministry. Sarah Milner shared her story about her service for the Lord with her husband and family with MAF in Mareeba, North Queensland. Kate Pocklington shared her experiences serving in a large slum in India and now serving with Pioneers helping people prepare for long term cross cultural mission.

It was a wonderful day of encouragement, strengthening and challenge. We thank God for his presence and grace for all those who contributed. Thank you to the men who served in the kitchen – it was such a blessing to all the ladies who attended.

*Kerry Jensen is the President of Flourish Women’s Ministry*

## MINISTRY MOVES

### Presbytery of Ballarat

Rev Steve North, Minister of Ebenezer Church Ballarat was called to St Andrews Presbyterian Church, St Ives-Pymble Sydney. Shirley Turpin, formally an elder of Castlemain-Carisbrook, passed away 19 October 2017.

### Presbytery of South-West Victoria (formally the Presbytery of Kilnoorat)

Rev Peter Phillips will be retiring from the Camperdown-Noorat-Terang charge, January 2018.

### Presbytery of North-West Victoria

Rev Bill Lutton (retired, Qld) will conduct an interim ministry at Eaglehawk PC from November to the end of January 2018

### Safe Church Unit Announcement

#### New Location

Heathmont House  
268 Canterbury Road  
Heathmont Victoria 3135  
safechurch@pcv.org.au  
ian.atkinson@pcv.org.au

## OPINION

## FACEBOOK, GENDER AND IDENTITY

*Darren Middleton on why we should resist the idea of gender self-identification.*

A few years ago, Facebook extended its gender options beyond male and female to include a custom section that allowed for a choice of nearly 60 genders, covering those who identified as having no gender, a combination of genders, fluid or questioning gender to transsexual and transgendered, and a plethora of other options.

The point affirmed here by Facebook is that while your sex (male or female) may be biologically determined, gender (roles, behaviour and attributes) are not. Increasingly, it is stated as fact that gender is a social construct and so a matter of individual choice. Regardless of biological sex (male or female) or how you have dressed or presented yourself to others, the solitary measure of your gender is self-perception.

Gender self-identification usually comes under the umbrella term of transgenderism, covering transsexuals, transvestites and anyone else who does not conform to a binary understanding of gender. To be transgendered is to have strong feelings of disconnection from social expressions of gender. For example, a biological male may not feel any connection with cultural expressions of masculinity, but identify with what may be described as typically female expressions. Others may identify with both – hence men with mascara, eyeliner and nail-polish while sporting a beard.

The implications of this are profound for social and legal identity. If the legal union between sex and gender is redefined to accommodate self-identification, then all existing legal protections regarding women would become meaningless. Women’s-only gyms, change rooms, schools, shelters, programs, prisons and scholarships would be open to men who currently self-identify as women. When it comes to the protection and promotion of women’s rights, self-definition is self-defeating. It also makes the debate about redefining marriage somewhat superfluous.

However, it is vital to understand the importance attached to the issue. Transgender and gender-non-conforming people want acceptance of their identity in what they see as an oppressive, socially constructed, binary acceptance of gender.

Therefore, we should not be surprised that a debate about sexual politics and identity is a very personal and therefore emotive debate. It rapidly becomes evident that logic, reason and even bi-

ology are frequently inadequate arguments when pitted against someone’s experience. Accusations of ‘hate speech’, born of a supposedly ‘trans-phobic’ disposition, will inevitably cloud or even poison any public dialogue. Rejecting the premise of identity politics and, in particular, gender self-identification is for many tantamount to rejecting them as people. Christians should expect pushback.

How then should Christians respond?

First, we begin with the biblical anthropology given to us in Genesis 1-3. ‘God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.’ It is evident from the text that all of humanity is made up of male and female (Adam is a collective noun meaning ‘man-kind’ in Gen. 1:26-27). Genesis 1, therefore, gives us a binary understanding of biological sex, with complementary anatomical differences that would allow humanity to be fruitful and multiply and subdue the earth (i.e., creating family, society and culture).

It is clear that the gospel of Jesus Christ ameliorates the effects of the Fall on gender relationships (sin, neglect, abuse of power), and sets forth a redemptive paradigm of selfless cooperation for the blessing of the other and the glory of God. The Bible is perspicuous enough; gender is tethered to biology.

Second, the gospel makes it clear that our identity as Christians is tethered to the gospel. Our identity is in Christ, not gender, race, nationality or achievement. In a sexualised and materialistic society that values freedom, identity is often tied to sexuality, gender self-perception or material success. The gospel challenges all those idols and calls men and women to find their identity in Jesus the Christ, their maker and redeemer.

Third, we live in a sinful and broken world. Our calling is not to point out the brokenness and sinfulness, but to point the broken and sinful to Jesus and his kingdom. While we must speak for truth, there is a danger that we are simply seen or heard as cursing the darkness, rather than striking a (gospel) light. Therefore, we must be ever vigilant that we don’t settle for cultural critique and rejection when we are called to engagement and proclamation. Ultimately, we are those promoting the good news of grace, hope and redemption in Jesus.

*continued on page 7*

## A GROTESQUE PARODY OF A CHRISTIAN SOCIETY

**The Handmaid's Tale**, a 2017 American television series adapted from Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel of the same name.

Reviewed by Shiloh Longbottom.

'Blessed be the fruit,' says Offred.  
'May the Lord open,' Ofglen replies.

A new regime has been established with a new language, but restoring old values. The dystopian Republic of Gilead hopes to reverse the demise of humankind through the forced bearing of children. The few remaining fertile women are enslaved by the powerful into ritualised sexual servitude, codified by quasi-biblical-sounding justifications.

Offred (Elizabeth Moss) is 'of Fred'. Her name is derived from the high-ranking official she serves, Commander Fred Waterford (Joseph Fiennes).

She cannot come and go as she pleases; she is housebound in the austere townhouse she shares with Serena Joy (Yvonne Strahovski), the wife of Commander Fred, who is using Handmaid Offred to bear children for him, as his wife is unable to conceive.

Offred is permitted to take daily shopping trips with Ofglen (Alexis Bledel), through the bleak streets of what was once Boston. They pass the hanged bodies of 'a priest, a doctor and a gay man'.

Camera angles remind you that Offred and the other Handmaids are under the ever-watchful Eye, and any tiny act of perceived insurrection is met with severe consequences. Handmaid Ofwarren is accused of seduction and her eye is gouged out. Eyes and watching – surveillance is a recurrent theme and it is depicted as a weapon of the powerful.

Offred is robbed of most of her basic rights and her identity is taken from her. Once she was June Osborne; now she is only Offred. June was a book editor, wife, mother and independent woman, who would not recognise her new life of dependency, meekness and slavery.

Moss's performance is excellent. She captures the heavy burden of Offred's lot, but also her quiet and inspiring indefatigability. Moss persuades you to cheer for Offred.

High production values from Hulu immerse the viewer in her world. A dark and desaturated film quality contrasts with the stylistic art design, underscoring the dismal reality that the Handmaids must now endure. Raw, hard lighting reveals the tension on the cast's faces and directs the audience's sympathies towards the marginalised.

The viewer vividly senses the magnitude of the tyranny, is repulsed by the sexual exploitation, and comes to hate the Republic of Gilead as much as the Handmaids do.

And yet Gilead's values and laws are cloaked in a pseudo-Christianity that contemporary commentators have likened to misogynistic Trumpian America, or the inevitable outworking of conservative, fundamentalist Christian society. Award-winning Canadian author Margaret Atwood wrote her novel *The Handmaid's Tale* (on which the TV show is based) as her response to 1980s America when the conservative Ronald Reagan was President.

Gilead is the sort of repressive society that progressives probably believe conservative Christians are secretly hankering for. But to many Christians, *The Handmaid's Tale* reads like a parody written from afar, mocking off-base caricatures of the real thing. It seems almost farcical that Christians need to remind viewers that the regime's warped values presented in this work of fiction are a far cry from biblical Christian ethics.

Is there a valid rebuke behind the straw man? It is helpful to be reminded that individuals, given the opportunity, can all too easily abuse power as the Commander Fred Waterford does. Christians, however, have a responsibility to act justly and love mercy, so this is a valid general admonition. But as a specific rebuke of conservative Christianity, it is without justification.

*\*Viewer discretion is advised.*

*Shiloh Longbottom is a graphic designer who attends Crossroads Presbyterian Church in Hobart.*

## EVE WITH BOOTS ON

**Eve in Exile and the Restoration of Femininity**  
By Rebekah Merkle

(Moscow, Idaho: Canon Press, 2016). Paperback: 208 pages.  
ISBN: 978-1944503529

Reviewed by Suzannah Rowntree

How do you define a woman's role? Too often, Christians in conservative reformed churches have defined femininity negatively and in terms of male roles: A woman can do everything a man does, except preach in the pulpit, lead in marriage, or participate in armed combat. This is faithful orthodoxy, but it falls somewhat short of a joyful, proactive orthopraxy. If pastoring, husbanding and combating are roles we must leave to others, then are women functionally just men operating under a handicap?

And if not, what does it mean to be a Christian woman?

No doubt Rebekah Merkle could have written a multi-volume work on this topic, but in *Eve in Exile and the Restoration of Femininity*, she keeps things short, sweet and Scriptural.

God created women for four purposes: to subdue the earth and fill it (Gen. 1:28); to help their own husbands fulfil the dominion mandate (Gen. 2:20); and to be a glory (1 Cor. 11:7). Along the way, Merkle devotes several chapters to common pitfalls women fall into, plus an illuminating history of feminism; but her primary aim is not simply to rebuke the errors of others.

Instead, Merkle takes the opportunity to provide a thoroughly positive and inspiring vision of what it does mean to be a strong, God-fearing woman. It's a vision that defines femininity not by what it can't do but by what it can do. And it's a vision that ultimately requires that we recover a robust Protestant view of the sanctity of everyday work.

Maybe we are not called to be pastors, but we're called to a work no less holy, as culture-makers and culture-changers: 'Our job as women is to take the abstract, the cerebral, the intellectual, and make it lovely,' Merkle says. 'Our job is to make holiness beautiful, to make it taste.'

Women don't preach theology. We apply and embody it, through homemaking, art and metaphor. 'We need to stop assuming there is a fixed limit to what can



be done in the home – I'm convinced the boundaries are much farther out than any of us realise,' Merkle exhorts. 'We're building something phenomenal.'

*Eve in Exile* paints a picture of Christian womanhood that is proactive, not passive. It is a call to action that takes delight in the sanctity of feminine work.

As Merkle points out, radical feminists have done a pretty good job at tearing down their own homes and the homes of many families in the Western world.

Imagine, what might happen if wise women began building those homes back up? What might happen if home stopped being a place to switch on the TV at the end of the day, and became a hub for ministry, hospitality, evangelism, education, art and business?

It's hard to imagine many things that might have a more profound impact upon our families, our churches, and our broader communities.

*Suzannah Rowntree is a novelist, book reviewer and blogger in rural Victoria, Australia.*

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Finally, as difficult as it is, we need to work hard at the balance of love and truth, resisting gender self-identification while being prodigal with compassion, love and gospel grace. This requires us to work hard at loving each person who is hurting, confused and feeling alienated, from culture, family and even their biological self.

Compassion ought to characterise our dealings with those who are suffering gender dysphoria (unease or distress), coupled with gospel truth and love that resists all cultural attempts to find identity in anything other than Jesus the Christ.

*Rev. Darren Middleton is minister at North Geelong Presbyterian Church and convener of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria's Church and Nation Committee. The full-length version of this article is available at [Fellow-Workers.pcv.org.au](http://Fellow-Workers.pcv.org.au).*

# ON TRACK

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PRESBYTERIAN INLAND MISSION

ISSUE 4 2017

PROCLAIMING THE LORD JESUS CHRIST  
BY WORD AND DEED

## BEAUTIFUL FEET

Janet Cripps writes:

A team of 14 volunteers answered the call to come with us on a tag-a-long trip to the most northern part of our patrol area. The team consisted of folks from Miles, Dalby and Tewantin Presbyterian Churches, looking for an adventure while practically supporting our work with PIM.

Our aim was for the team to experience the uniqueness of PIM patrol work, including visits to outback stations, smaller churches, isolated Christians and give practical support to the Yaraka community where we have been building relationships.

With a convoy of eight vehicles we travelled through Charleville, Blackall, Yaraka, Quilpie, Roma and then home. We were able to call into eight remote properties along the way and the group experienced the hardship and beauty of station living. The owners welcomed us with bush hospitality and shared openly about their lives, hardships and love of the land.



Along the way Greg explained about how the Mulga scrub was farmed and pointed out the necessity of exclusion fencing to manage feral animals. The group experienced remote bush camping, the fun of camp oven cooking and showering underneath the stars on a brisk winter's night!

The town of Yaraka has approximately 16 residents and annually holds a very successful gymkhana (a fun, family-

orientated community event with horse and motorbike competitions). The event draws families from the district as well as from Longreach, Murrumbidgee and beyond. Last year Greg and I identified that the small population was struggling to run the gymkhana smoothly with a realistic work load. So this year, after a few emails, the idea of bringing along some extra volunteers was greatly anticipated.

On Friday before the event, our group was set to work. We cooked, served, put up portable yards, welded and were generally useful. Approximately 300 competitors were expected and all of these would need meals for the whole weekend! This was the start of what was to be a very busy weekend of diverse jobs and challenges and our team rose to every challenge with enthusiasm, energy and effectiveness. The effect, unbeknown to any of us, on the community of Yaraka and the gymkhana was amazing.

Time and time again we heard: "This was the best gymkhana I've ever been to, I could be with my kids when they competed." "So often I went to do a job,



Serving through Word and Deed.

just to find it was already completed." "I couldn't have run the kitchen without you guys." "This weekend, God came to Yaraka!"

We all felt God was with us the whole weekend, we wanted to bless the locals that work so hard to make the gymkhana a successful family time. And that's exactly what happened! Many conversations were had as we served or watched the events. The flow-on effect for PIM in this area will be extremely worthwhile as already we were given many warm invitations to visit people who had

previously only courteously welcomed us.

Although the opportunity to have a church service in Yaraka did not arise we were able to have a lovely time of singing and devotion with a couple of Christian ladies who live in the district. It was an encouraging time for all; these ladies rarely have any fellowship with other Christians.

Leaving Yaraka on Monday July 3 we were invited to spend the evening on Jedburgh Station, camping on the



beautiful Barcoo River. This stop was unplanned and was a direct result of the relationships we had forged with the owners by helping at the gymkhana.

From there, we drove to Trinidad Station to help Margaret, an 83 year old lady, bring her beautiful garden under control. The team again worked incredibly hard, weeding, planting, trimming branches, even doing some housework. By the end of two days the house and gardens were transformed. Again we all had the opportunity to talk



PRESBYTERIAN  
INLAND  
MISSION

MAKING DISCIPLES  
ACROSS AUSTRALIA

## EVANGELISM AND DISCIPLING OPPORTUNITIES

A range of exciting ministry opportunities exist across the continent for people who have a heart for the lost and the skills necessary for effective evangelism and discipling initiatives in remote places.

Successful appointees can expect to be involved in a wide range of activities, including preaching and teaching in small

towns, one-to-one evangelism and discipleship ministry on remote properties, pastoral care of isolated people and active involvement in local community events.

PIM Teams have a long history of rolling up their sleeves and entering into the day-to-day lives of those amongst whom they serve. Accordingly, these roles are hands on and require people who not only

have suitable theological knowledge and pastoral skills, but also have a genuine willingness to get involved in people's lives in practical ways, in order to serve and to bear witness to the love of Jesus.

For more information please contact the PIM CEO, Andrew Letcher by

email: [ceo@pim.org.au](mailto:ceo@pim.org.au)



Tagging along

with the wider family, saw glimpses into their lives and were taken on a tour of the property, including an ancient well that is still used today.

In Roma, the team took the Sunday service at the Presbyterian church, Greg shared our photos and gave a message based on Romans 10:15. The beautiful dusty boots of the team were lined up in

the front of the church!  
The effect of the tag-a-long trip went far beyond our expectation. The group blessed the people we met with their conversations and effective helps. Each expressed how they felt God was with them in everything we did, it opened their eyes to value the work done by PIM in the bush and the isolation both

physically and spiritually that the people experience living there.  
For us, this experience will have far reaching effects; it strengthens relationships and opens doors in a wide area of our patrol. We pray that from this, the Lord will give us many more opportunities to share His Good News with our dear outback friends.

NEWS AND UPDATES

Doug and Marcia Walker, from Miles Presbyterian Church in Qld, have been journeying towards part-time PIM service for some time. The Lord has graciously made way for them to now commence. They will soon begin to develop a ministry patrol in the St George area of Queensland. Your prayers for this new work are greatly appreciated.

\* \* \*

In June, a special Commission of the General Assembly of Australia directed the PIM Committee to bring the employment of Rob Duncanson to an end. The Commission also instructed PIM to help facilitate the transition of the Darwin Presbyterian Church out of PIM and under the oversight of the Presbytery of North Queensland. At the time of writing, the Presbytery and the participants in Darwin are working together on future plans. Your prayers are greatly appreciated.

\* \* \*



New PIM Ministry Team Doug and Marcia Walker.

For much of 2017, PIM has been experimenting with ways to harness the power of technology to connect small groups of people together for worship and teaching. Early experiments have seen small country congregations successfully connected together, live, for Sunday

morning services. Isolated people have also been able to actively participate in mid-week Bible studies, by joining electronically with a small group gathered elsewhere. Please pray for Dennis Rayson in Balranald, NSW, as he leads the development of this new initiative.

WANDERING AROUND WITH ANDREW LETCHER



Andrew Letcher

There is nothing quite like camping solo. Completely alone in the bush. The silence, the pleasant lack of mobile phone coverage and a vast open sky full of diamond stars. On the way home from a recent meeting in a country town, I opted to camp on the banks of a river way off the beaten track. I was privileged to watch the full moon rise over the river and arc its way across the sky as I sat by the campfire and enjoyed the solitude. Just me and God.

Some years ago, I attended a leadership course where they taught us the value of times of ‘solitude’. I regret that I don’t do this often enough. But when I do it is always worthwhile to step back from the noise, the clutter, the busyness of daily life and to spend time alone with God. Not just five minutes but hours of quiet

and solitude. Time to slow down, to pray and just to ‘be’ with no agenda, no task list, no interruptions.

The work of PIM takes our teams into places where it is possible to be completely alone, isolated, in the middle of nowhere. In these places we can reflect on the Grace of God, on His love for us and on His compassion for the lost. It is in these places that we can pray for those with whom we are seeking to share Jesus, and we can draw near to Him who saves – with less noise and less distraction. We can truly be still and know that He is God (Psalm 46:10).

When was the last time you were alone, truly alone with God? If it has been a while, set a date, go on I dare you! It will be worth it.



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Kim and Kathryn Jaeger  
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Keith and Jenny Bell  
E: kjbelle@pim.org.au M: 0438 719 956 Alice Springs PIM Church

RESPONSE FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Donation – PIM general funds		Donation – PIM NW NSW/David and Gae McDonald	
Donation – PIM Mid West/Surendra Wesley		Donation – PIM Mungo/Colin and Alison Morrow	
Donation – Tasmania/ Kim and Kathryn Jaeger		<b>Total</b>	

Payment details:

☐ Cheque enclosed (Payable to Presbyterian Inland Mission)

☐ Charge my Credit Card     ☐ Visa     ☐ Mastercard

Card No.  Expiry date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Name on card \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Return with payment to:

PIM  
PO Box 4014  
Croydon Hills Vic 3136

Ph: (03) 9005 8256  
Fax: (03) 9876 1941  
email: admin@pim.org.au

# Partnership

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
AUSTRALIAN PRESBYTERIAN WORLD MISSION

www.apwm.org.au • 81 Shaftesbury Road, Burwood NSW 2134 • (02) 8073 7490 • national@apwm.org.au

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



2017 #4

## Mission Impossible? Tripling Churches

Colin and Catherine Puffett, with their son Julien and a baby on the way, are partnering with APWM and CMS to be part of a French church planting movement.

France is a secular state, in which no religion is officially recognised. It's also a "multi-confessional" country, in which Roman Catholics, Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, Sikhs and evangelical Protestants live and work together. Unofficial surveys count 38 million people – around 60% of the population – as "Christian", but church attendance is far lower.

There is a great spiritual need in France, for the establishment of new churches for Christians and seekers to gather together. The National Association of Evangelical churches in France (CNEF) has a goal of planting one Church per 10000 people – this will triple the number of churches!

Colin and Catherine are living in Massy (a satellite town in the Paris metropolis)



COLIN & CATHERINE PUFFETT

while they undertake language study. They have been amazed at how multicultural this part of France is, with people of many ethnic backgrounds living, travelling and working together. Contrary to their past experience and the reports of their French contacts from other parts of the country, there are no obvious signs of ethnic discrimination in this part of France.

The family are settling well into life in France. They've been guided through administration and daily tasks by French friends from language school, and other missionaries who have been here long-term. They love and miss their independence, friends, and families. But they remember that our contribution is small, but that our God is big, and he will use their willingness to "go" to bring them closer to him, and to enable them to serve effectively in France.

Please pray, with APWM, that Colin and Catherine will find a church in Paris where they can be active members during their year of language study, and for clarity about where they should be serving in France. Pray also for the new churches being started in France – on average one every 10 days! – that they will be faithful communities witnessing to the secular surrounding culture. If you'd like to support Colin and Catherine in their ministry, contact the APWM National office for more information.

## Training the Trainers

Lauren Crase left Australia in May 2016 to be our missionary in Timor Leste. She serves the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and the wider community by training nurses, teaching English, and making pastoral care visits. Last year Lauren spent a few months in Dili, the capital city, undertaking language classes and getting her first visa approved. She then went out to work in the community of Weberek in the southern district of Manufahi.

Lauren has recently relocated her ministry base to Dili. In addition to her ministry in the Dili church, her immediate plans include spending some time with a team at the National Hospital, to learn about a nurses' training program that might be suitable for replication in smaller health centres

across the country. This is strategic work in a field where currently no local "upskilling" programs exist beyond initial training.

In August this year, Sheryl Sarkoezy travelled to Timor Leste to spend a week with Lauren. They travelled from Dili to Weberek (about 70 km over the mountains as the crow flies, but a 7-hour, 170 km journey by road!) to meet with friends in the local church, and for Lauren to present certificates to students from her English classes. It was a wonderful time of mutual encouragement with Christian brothers and sisters, and an opportunity for Lauren to reconnect with people with whom she's formed special relationships. In Dili, Lauren and Sheryl were able to encourage the believers in



LAUREN CRASE & FRIENDS

the local church, and learn more about the history and culture of the country.

Please continue to pray for Lauren as she begins her pastoral visitation ministry in the church in Dili, and as she makes plans to train nurses who will one day go out to train others in the districts of Timor Leste.

## John & Rose Evans

It is with a heavy heart that APWM announces that the Evans family will not be continuing their ministry in Japan. This is due to a series of health issues that they have been struggling with for some time.

On Thursday, 31st August 2017, the Australian Presbyterian World Mission National Committee met with John and decided that because these health issues have not been resolved it was in the best interests of the Evans family that APWM draw their service in Japan to a close.

This decision has not been taken lightly. It arises from over 18 months of face-to-face discussion regarding their health. As a sending organisation APWM has a duty of care toward John, Rose and their children, and this has led us to make this painful decision.

The Chiba City church plant is gaining momentum and many of the planned key elements have been put in place. At times

such as this, it is natural to ask why the Lord would permit something like this to happen. The simple answer is that, for His sovereign purposes, the Lord has determined that the Evans' ministry in Japan should be concluded. We trust Him and know that even through something as difficult as this, God is working for the good of the Evans family and for His glory.

Please join with us in upholding John, Rose, Asher, Isabelle, Lily, Ivy, Jairus and Boaz in prayer. Naturally this is a very difficult time for them as they process their disappointment and grief.

Where to from here? The Evans family will be returning to Japan on the 2nd of October and will remain there until early



JOHN & ROSE EVANS AND FAMILY

January 2018. This will enable them to say their farewells, pack up their house, spend time with the church planting team and hand over the team leadership. When they return to Australia, John will be seeking a ministry position which doesn't involve him being the lead pastor of a congregation, in order to facilitate rest and healing for the family.

We thank the individuals and churches that have partnered with John and Rose in seeking to take the gospel to Japan.

## From Student to President ...



FIRST LADY ESTELLA MOSES, HIS EXCELLENCY PASTOR TALLIS OBED MOSES AND THE PCNSW MODERATOR, THE RIGHT REV DAVID BURKE AT CHRIST COLLEGE IN SEPTEMBER

Sometimes one of the most valuable things that we can do in mission is to invest in the training of believers in the local churches of other nations.

In 1981 the NSW Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union, a standing committee of the State PWA, offered a bursary to Obed Moses, a young theological student from Vanuatu. He used this to study at the Sydney Missionary and Bible College (SMBC) from 1981 to 1982. When he returned to Vanuatu he served for many years as a pastor. In 2012 he served as Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu.

Sadly, in June 2017 the President of Vanuatu, His Excellency Baldwin Lonsdale, died suddenly. When the Parliament of Vanuatu met to choose a new President they chose Pastor Obed Moses.

In his first address as Head of State, President Moses said "We have only one religion in Vanuatu and that is Christianity. We have declared this Nation in Yahweh's name and no other God.

This Nation is declared in His name. So now I would like to call on all Vanuatu to be serious in living in God maintaining togetherness and unity."

President Moses was recently in Australia and among other things visited SMBC, Christ College, and the Presbyterian Church NSW Church Offices. He also joined in the Sunday worship service of the congregation of Redemption Hill, the new church plant in Sydney's Green Square.

A particular highlight of his visit to Sydney was the opportunity to meet and thank the NSW PWMU committee for its generous investment in him and, in turn, the nation of Vanuatu. It was a touching moment when, as old friends do, he embraced Mrs Shirley Ralston. The President lived with Shirley and her late husband for a short period prior to living at SMBC. There was obvious Christian affection present in that embrace!

The President went on to tell the gathering "I am the fruit of your labour. You are not working in vain."

Please pray for the President that he will lead with godly wisdom.



THE PRESIDENT OF VANUATU WITH MRS SHIRLEY RALSTON

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



# APWM CHRISTMAS GIFT CATALOGUE 2017

This Christmas why not give gifts to your family and friends and at the same time help someone who doesn't have the basics that we take for granted? The items below can provide for the needs of Christians and others in our Overseas Partner Churches.

**MOSQUITO NET (ETHIOPIA)** A gift of \$7 will provide a mosquito net for a blind person in a South Sudanese Refugee Camp in Ethiopia.

**NUER BIBLE (ETHIOPIA)** A gift of \$10 will provide a Nuer language Bible for someone in a South Sudanese Refugee Camp in Ethiopia.

**NUER HYMN BOOK (ETHIOPIA)** A gift of \$10 will provide a Nuer language hymn book for someone in a South Sudanese Refugee Camp in Ethiopia.

**BLANKET (ETHIOPIA)** A gift of \$15 will be a blanket for a blind person in a South Sudanese Refugee Camp in Ethiopia.

**SLEEPING MATS (ETHIOPIA)** A gift of \$20 will provide sleeping mats for people in a South Sudanese Refugee Camp in Ethiopia.

**PRISON MINISTRY (MALAWI)** A gift of \$30 will be used to purchase much-needed blankets and other living essentials for prisoners in Malawi who live in very difficult conditions.

**EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE (MYANMAR)** A gift of \$60 will help support the Evangelical Reformed Church in its work of educating children.

## APWM CHRISTMAS GIFT CATALOGUE 2017 ORDER FORM

### HOW IT WORKS

1. Choose the item(s) on our list that you would like to purchase for your friends/family.
2. Send us your order, including payment. Please note that these gifts are **not tax deductible**.
3. We will send you the cards you have ordered. You are then free to give these cards to your friends/family for Christmas. The cards state which gift(s) you have purchased, on their behalf, for someone in one of our Partner Churches or for APWM Aboriginal ministry. There is no monetary value printed on the card.
4. APWM then sends the money to our overseas partners to purchase items locally, or uses it for APWM ministry as specified in Australia.

Item	Qty	Cost
MOSQUITO NET (ETHIOPIA) \$7		
NUER BIBLE (ETHIOPIA) \$10		
NUER HYMN BOOK (ETHIOPIA) \$10		
BLANKET (ETHIOPIA) \$15		
SLEEPING MATS (ETHIOPIA) \$20		
PRISON MINISTRY (MALAWI) \$30		
EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE (MYANMAR) \$60		
<b>Total</b>		

- ☐ I enclose a cheque / money order for \$\_\_\_\_\_ or
- ☐ I have made a Direct Deposit of \$\_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Please tick here if you do not wish to receive cards and simply want to make a donation for these items

Please note that if any item is over-subscribed then the money will be allocated to a similar need.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

### ORDER FORM / PAYMENTS

Complete this order form and send it with your payment (cheque or money order made out to 'APWM'). Please DO NOT send cash.

Payment can also be made via Direct Deposit (details below) ([www.apwm.org.au/supporting/finance](http://www.apwm.org.au/supporting/finance)).

**Bank:** Westpac

**Account Name:** Australian Presbyterian World Mission

**BSB:** 032 260 **Account #:** 151207

For Direct Deposits, please write your name in the description box and send an email informing us of your deposit ([finance@apwm.org.au](mailto:finance@apwm.org.au)).

All order forms should be mailed to:

**APWM Christmas Catalogue**  
81 Shaftesbury Road,  
Burwood NSW 2134



## PRAYER AND FINANCE Response Form

Please send to: **APWM**  
81 Shaftesbury Rd, Burwood NSW 2134

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Church \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to support the following:

☐ Missionary's Name \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please send me the *missionary's prayer letter*.

☐ APWM ministry in a particular country \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate an amount

☐ \$20 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100

☐ other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate how regular your payment will be:

☐ one-off ☐ monthly ☐ quarterly

☐ half-yearly ☐ yearly

### Four Ways to Give

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

**2** Credit card ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Name on card: \_\_\_\_\_

Expires: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: we are unable to accept AMEX

**3** Direct debit

Your account name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

BSB \_\_\_\_\_

Account number \_\_\_\_\_

Bank name \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Credit card and direct debit payments will be processed on or about the 20th day of the month. Please indicate which month payments should commence.

**4** Direct deposit

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

Account number: 151207

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

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

### Enquiries

[finance@apwm.org.au](mailto:finance@apwm.org.au) • (02) 8073 7490  
[www.apwm.org.au/supporting/finance](http://www.apwm.org.au/supporting/finance)

## Growing Global Churches



RICHARD UTBER

Sometimes churches would love someone who can help them think about how to better engage with overseas cross-cultural mission. It's relatively easy for a church to implement a 'mission programme', but how can a church develop beyond that? How can a church develop a missions culture that is part of its DNA?

Richard Utber, from Growing Global Churches, is a former pastor who is available to help churches grow a missions culture.

If you'd like to find out more then please visit the Growing Global Churches website [www.growingglobalchurches.org](http://www.growingglobalchurches.org)

You can view a short interview that Sheryl Sarkoezy conducted with Richard at <https://vimeo.com/233946655>

## The Reformed Presbyterian Church of India

Our newest Partner Church is the Reformed Presbyterian Church of India. The Church ministers in a difficult environment and needs our prayer for great wisdom. Please pray with us:

- 1) Asking that God will comfort and strengthen several pastor's families that have recently been affected by death and illness;
- 2) Giving thanks for the steady supply of people training to serve with the Church;
- 3) Giving thanks for the Rev Vijai & Mrs Suchitra Tagore, and asking for wisdom for our plans to bring them to Christ College so that Vijai can undertake PhD studies in 2019.
- 4) Thanking God for Chanreiso Lungleng (Aso), who is currently undertaking postgraduate studies at PTC Melbourne as a Victoria PWMU Bursary Student.

## Including APWM in your Will

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

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

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



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