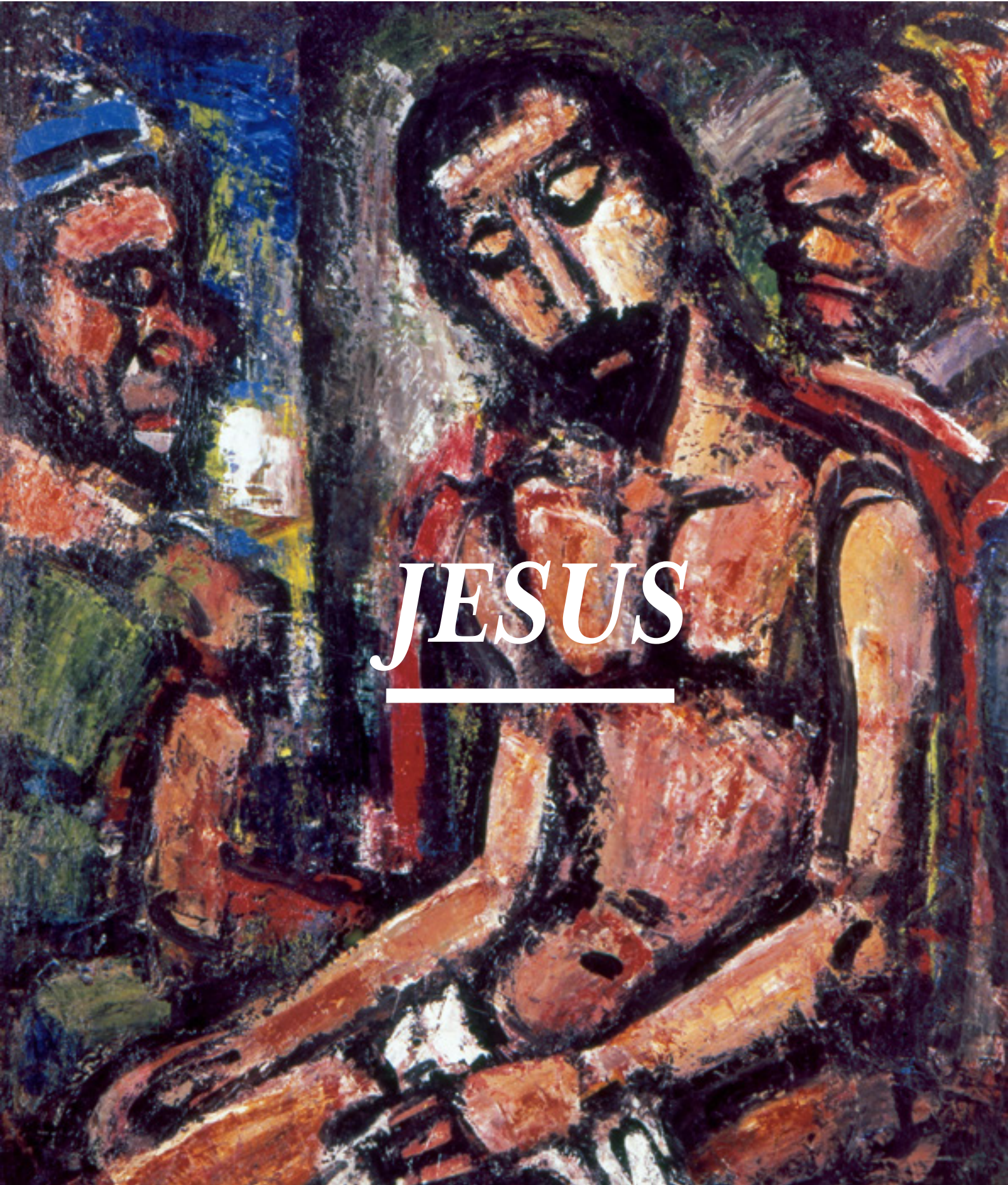


Autumn 2018 • Presbyterian Church of Victoria



FELLOW WORKERS



JESUS



FELLOW WORKERS

Autumn 2018 • Presbyterian Church of Victoria

CONTENTS

3

Brimbank Church Celebrates 10 Years

Enna Scordo

Multicultural Mildura | Rev. Stuart Withers

4

Ten reasons Jesus suffered so greatly on the Cross: His victory before the resurrection

Jared Hood

6

Movie review: The Miracle Maker | Luke Isham

7

Book review: How to Preach and Teach the Old Testament for All Its Worth | Stephen McDonald

8

On Track: PIM newsletter

12

Partnership: APWM newsletter

EDITORIAL

I ponder once again the mystery of the cross, and the life and character of the man who hung upon it; Jesus. The man who is God. The one who is, as Heb. 1:3 tells us, "the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being". In scripture, we have Jesus' time on earth recorded for us and we're invited to come and see God actually living among mankind. We read him growing tired and hungry, being covered in dust and dirt, struggling and being tempted in every way possible as he walked, talked and ate with us. We see him teaching, washing feet, healing us, and loving us completely. Loving us so much that he chose to die in absolute agony under the weight of all our sin and shame. We see through the person of Jesus the nature of the true and living God. This is he who made us, who saves us and who calls us to be his own. The one on whom we build our lives and our churches, because it is from his death that our life springs. As you read these articles, I invite you to stand with me in awe of our God and King, as I marvel at the mystery of the manhood and the deity of Christ.

Courteney Maxwell, Editor of Fellow Workers

Fellow Workers

Quarterly Magazine of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria.

State News Committee: Luke Isham (convener),

Neil Harvey, Phil Betts, Tony Zirngast

Editor: Courteney Maxwell

Sub-editing: John Ballantyne

Design & Illustrations: Shiloh Longbottom

Photography: Enno Scordo and Stuart Withers

Submissions, 'Ministry Moves', address changes, & unsolicited book reviews and letters:

ed.fellowworkers@gmail.com

Submission deadline for Winter edition: 1 May

Cover credit: *Christ Mocked by Soldiers* by Georges Rouault, 1932, Public Domain

Privacy Policy: The information you provide to the State News Committee has been collected and disseminated in conformity with the Privacy Policy of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria (which can be found at pcv.org.au or mailed to you on request).

If you would like to view or update any of your information held by the church please contact the PCV at 156 Collins St, Melbourne 3000.

BRIMBANK CHURCH CELEBRATES 10 YEARS

ON THE 17TH OF SEPTEMBER 2017, 70 familiar faces from the past, special guests, friends and current members of the Brimbank Presbyterian Church, came together to celebrate and thank our mighty God for 10 years of parish ministry. We were pleased to welcome the Moderator of the General Assembly of Victoria, Rev. Robert White, and the Moderator General of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, Rev. John Wilson, along with their wives.

Our Rev. Adam Humphries opened the service and detailed the events which led from our church beginning as a ministry of the Melton Presbyterian Church to becoming a separate congregation with the status of an Appointment Parish in 2007. There were definitely some bumps in the road in the beginning, highlighted by a selection of old minutes that were read out. One described a group from Melton Presbyterian who attended Brimbank to pad out the pews and encourage the fledgling group as a 'rent a crowd'! At one point the future of Brimbank Presbyterian came down to one member, Stuart Walton. Stuart bravely held a Board Meeting on his own (in which he nominated himself as a member of the Board of Management), which was passed unopposed. Stuart sent a letter and the minutes of his 60-second solo meeting to Melton Presbyterian, in which he asked for a minister to be sent to Brimbank to tend the flock, provide stability and bring people in the area back



to worship. By God's grace Rev. Peter Owen began to minister both at Melton Presbyterian and at Brimbank. He was then appointed as full time minister of Brimbank in 2008. Adam Humphries (our current minister), was appointed in 2013.

As part of our celebration Wilson preached on a fitting topic close to our hearts at Brimbank. Titled 'What Does a Good Church Strive For?' the sermon renewed our focus on being a church that is gospel-centered, a congregation that practically serves one another and the wider community in love, and that worships God in spirit and in truth. A special offering was then taken up to purchase some new Bibles, which reflects our commitment to being a Word-centred church.

Brimbank Presbyterian would like to thank everyone who has supported us over the years, especially the congregation at Melton as well as the Presbytery of Melbourne West. While we are very grateful to past ministers, our faithful elders, current minister and the attendees of the Brimbank parish, we know that without the work of the Holy Spirit and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ there would be no parish.

All praise and glory to God alone for building His church. Soli Deo Gloria!

Enna Scordo attends Brimbank Presbyterian Church in Victoria.

MULTICULTURAL MILDURA

"... what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." (2 Timothy 2:2)

GOOD THINGS HAVE BEEN happening in the Mildura congregation. Just over a year ago numbers swelled with the arrival of some Cook Island brothers and sisters in the Lord. We have been praying that the congregation would grow in the Lord and that the Lord would add to their number those being saved. Our prayers are being answered.

In August 2017, I was pleased to take an elder ordination service for Neo Teopenga and Joseph Daoud. Around 80 people crammed into the small church for the service, after which we shared lunch out in the warm Mildura sunshine. Neo is a recent missionary graduate from a small college in the Cook Islands. He has worked locally tending vines and more recently has taken on two days a week as a cross-cultural worker for the church. We are thankful the PCV is able to offer such support. Joseph is a new Australian, originally from Egypt, who works locally as a Pharmacist and has been a part of the congregation for a few years. The congregation have been watching the godly progress of these men and recently decided to elect them as elders. Of course, their ordination means they have reached a new starting line, not the finish - an important mindset for all Christian leaders. Please join us in praying that Neo and Joseph would shepherd eagerly and by example as the Lord Jesus would have them do (1Pet 5:2-4).

Rev. Stuart Withers is the Minister of Rochester Presbyterian Church, Victoria.

TEN REASONS JESUS SUFFERED SO GREATLY ON THE CROSS: HIS VICTORY BEFORE THE RESURRECTION

by Jared Hood

At the Cross, Jesus engaged in battle. He acted as the man of war, the warrior. What constituted the battle for Him? How did Jesus suffer? Here are 10 reasons Jesus suffered so greatly on the Cross. The first four are suffering in the more expected sense of what was done to Him by the world and the Devil. The next four are struggles that arose because of who He is and what He was trying to accomplish. Finally come two fundamental, underlying realities without which nothing else is explicable.

I affirm these principles at the outset: (a) Jesus suffered in His humanity; the deity does not suffer; (b) Jesus was divinely sustained; (c) Jesus suffered in body and soul, but was without fault – He remained the faithful Son.

1 *He battled physical suffering*

Jesus didn't suffer physically more than others. Crucifixions typically took days of torturous agony. The Father spared His Son from that. At the ninth hour Jesus prayed for help (citing Ps 22:1), and at the ninth hour the prayer was answered.

Still, 'the terrors of death have fallen upon me' (Ps 55:4). His pain was as unbearable as pain could be – the type of pain that typically slides into unconsciousness and death. In crucifixion, unconsciousness was relief. It brought cessation of suffering, but also cessation of struggling, which hastened death. The Romans countered by allowing sour wine – short-term kindness; long term cruelty. Jesus rejected the analgesic, intensifying His suffering, but shortening His life.

2 *He battled shame and rejection*

Scripture consistently connects the Cross to shame. Shame is what you feel when rejected by the community – the awareness of transgressing community standards and of being small in the eyes of others. With it come isolation and other consequences.

The community opinion was unambiguous. The

Sanhedrin and the Roman state condemned Him. The Sanhedrin represented the people of God, and its rejection meant Jesus had no spiritual home. Rome represented civilisation and justice. It treated Jesus as the greatest of fiends – a troublemaker, a disturber of the Pax Romana – and left him with no home anywhere in the world.

The ostracisation 'went viral'. Soldiers insulted Him. His own disciples cowered before the community's opinion. He was unprotected, ridiculed, alone.

Yet Jesus knew He was in the right. I know what communal rejection would mean to me. Self-doubt: how could I be right, when the world tells me I am wrong? Fear: what consequences will I experience? Anger: at the injustice of it.

I do not say that Jesus doubted Himself, but the burden must have been enormous. I cannot say how the sentence buffeted against the One who was the righteous Son – such a contradiction of who He was in Himself.

Jesus was victorious, though, not just afterwards, but throughout. He turned His face towards 'shame and spitting', setting 'His face like a flint'. 'And I know that I will not be ashamed. He is near who justifies Me' (Isa 50:7). He was not intimidated, but He 'despised' the shame (Heb 12:2). He thought little of it! He put it in its place.

3 *He battled the power of Satan*

Jesus fought against Satan, even though submitting to Satan's 'hour of darkness' (Luke 22:53). Why did Satan persist in bringing Jesus to death, for surely he knew the prophecies? At first, he tried to stop Him. 'Get behind Me, Satan', Jesus said to Peter. Then Satan switched tactics. This was the plan: to send Jesus to death ('Satan entered Judas'), but to have Him succumb to fear, doubt, anger and bitterness.

'Not my will, but thine'; but if, for even a moment, Jesus had said, 'I resent Your will', Satan

would have won. If, for just a moment, Jesus had spitefully hit out at His captors, if He had failed to reach out to the thief, if He had glared at Peter with vengeful anger, Satan would have won. If, just for a moment, Jesus had in His heart left the presence of God, Satan would have won.

From Satan's perspective, the odds were good. No one in human history had come through sustained attack without being spiritually scathed. Adam and Eve gave in with barely a fight.

Jesus fought temptation in the Garden with prayer. ' "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak". Again He went away and prayed' (Mark 14:37). This is at the very heart of Jesus' battle.

4 He battled the loss of the sight of God

The Father did not desert the Son. He sustained Him with faith, and many 'tokens of blessing' throughout (Pilate's affirmation, Simon of Cyrene, His mother's presence, the darkness demonstrating the hour was divine, the thief's conversion, prophecies being fulfilled, a quick death...). But the Son had to battle to maintain His sight of the Father.

Jesus had known the full heights of communion with God. That sustained Him in the wilderness. It meant He could sleep through the storm! But at the Cross, a very human, physiological reality comes into play. As His body reacts to pain, as electrical signals light up His brain, as chemicals race around His body, there is reduced mental space for awareness of the presence of God. The temptation is to let the pain rule.

Faith remained, and union remained; but now there is a clamorous, violent grasping upon His God. Three times, He prays in the Garden. There is the 'cry of dereliction', but this was no mere whimper. He cried out with a 'loud voice', with an iron determination to take hold of His God again. 'My God'!

What a sufferer, but what a Victor! And what a model for us when our minds cloud over and pain overwhelms. We need to shout it aloud, and place it at the very front of our minds: 'My God'!

Jesus had trained for this, in His temptation in the desert. What is fasting? It is partly training for the soul, not merely to master the body, but to remain in union with God in the evil hour.

5 He battled to love

Jesus battled because He loved. Jesus wept when others wept (John 11:35), so He sensed the impending loss His disciples would experience. He knew this: 'Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered' (Matt 26:31; Zech 13:7). He knew Peter would be sifted. He knew the tears of His mother and the daughters of Jerusalem. He knew He would

not be there to comfort His distraught disciples.

Jesus battled to love. He gives, even when one would have thought He had little left to give. He prays for His disciples. He reaches out to Peter. He cares for His mother. He even reaches out to the dying thief.

6 He battled His own freedom

Jesus offered up His life. He had power to lay it down, and power to take it up again. Nothing happened at the Cross to which Jesus did not acquiesce. Others have sacrificed themselves; none has had such control over every movement and moment. Jesus stepped forward to be betrayed. He held Himself there to the Cross. This, despite full awareness He could call the angels to deliver Him (Matt 26:53).

7 He battled being the catalyst of judgement

'Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered' (Zech 13:7), and Zechariah says that 'two thirds will be cut off'. Jesus knows His death will 'justify many', but He also knows it will bring judgement to many more. It will bring judgement to Jerusalem – not a stone will be left in place. It will turn the world-upside down, setting family member against family member. He dispenses justice even during the event, with His words to the High Priest, and His deafening silence to the other thief. On the final day, many will be condemned for rejecting the Gospel (2 Thess 1:8). And it brings Jesus to tears (Luke 19:41).

8 He battled the weight of responsibility

The Cross was the central act of history. The fate of millions weighed on His shoulders. These were the things that angels enquired into, that the prophets foretold, that was at the heart of the divine plan for the world. It was a cosmic event, an apocalyptic event, precipitating the coming of the Son of Man on the clouds of heaven. A whole new creation depended upon the outcome.

I do not mean that He feared to take the work up, but we speak of the 'weight of responsibility' and the 'burden of office'. If ever those statements meant something, it was at the Cross. The burden drew on every fibre of His being.

9 He battled the divine sentence

The condemnation of the human court was shameful, but there was also the divine sentence. Jesus' soul was 'exceedingly sorrowful, even to death', in view of the 'cup' of divine judgement. I don't know how the 'guilty' sentence affected the Holy one, hearing at the divine bar the words, 'You will be treated as being everything that is repugnant to You. You will become sin.'

Continued on back cover

AN INSPIRING AND FAITHFUL DEPICTION OF JESUS

Luke Isham reviews ‘The Miracle Maker’, a widely acclaimed stop motion-animated film about the life of Jesus Christ

Reviewing films about Jesus should be done cautiously. I’m always conscious of never wanting to cause my ‘weaker brothers and sisters’ to sin. Presbyterians value both robust discussion and pastoral care. So if you interpret the second commandment as a prohibition against any depiction of Jesus, then skip this review: I mean no offence. If you’re not bothered either way, please read on and I hope this review will be useful.

If you’re not sure about depictions of Jesus, especially cinematic ones, let me explain briefly my interpretation of the second commandment. Notably, the commandment is a prohibition against worshipping anything instead of God, natural or created, real or imagined. As John Calvin said, our hearts are ‘idol factories’, and when we’re left to our own devices we’re eager to turn anything except the Son of God into God’s image. At the same time, the gospels invite us to imaginatively interact with the earthly ministry of our Messiah because of the way God has created our minds and because God’s ministry is one of self-revelation, revealing to us who God is and how God saves.

The many films that have been made about Jesus are of varying quality. The best measure of quality is to compare how far the form supports the content. Is your attention drawn to Jesus and his ministry? Or is it distracted by the director’s hubris (e.g., Mel Gibson’s *The Passion of the Christ*, 2004) or the low production values (e.g., *The Body*, 2001)?

Until recently, the older version of *Ben Hur* (1959), starring Charlton Heston, set a high standard. Its understated depiction of Jesus was both moving and, on the whole, accurate.

However, one movie about Jesus that stands head and shoulders above the rest is *The Miracle Maker* (2000). It is a stop motion-animated film using marionettes, like the old *Thunderbirds* TV series, but interspersed with cartoon-animated sequences for parables, flashbacks and side adventures.

The use of marionettes is initially disarming, but ultimately prevents the film from feeling out-dated. Additionally, the narrative’s swift pace and Biblical accuracy make it re-watchable and suitable for a variety of audiences. But, most remarkable of all, is the emphasis on faith. Ostensibly, *The Miracle Maker* is a retelling of Jesus’ adult ministry; but the film-makers weave into it the reactions of periphery characters who respond to Jesus in a variety of ways. Most notable is the faith of the Roman centurion at the Cross.

Sometimes, our interactions with the gospel stories become overly pietistic or dryly scholastic and we forget the raw humanness of Jesus. We forget this is God experiencing human nature – that is, Emmanuel, God with us. At other times our over-familiarity with the stories about Jesus can make them appear lifeless. So a provocative or inspiring depiction of Jesus stirs us to return to him, to re-imagine him as the human historical person that he is.

Presbyterians are characterised by a desire to think and speak carefully about God. So it’s refreshing to find, among so many other depictions of Jesus, something both true and moving. If your family listens to Handel’s ‘Messiah’ at Christmas, then you should add the tradition of watching *The Miracle Maker* at Easter. I think you’ll be blessed.

Rev. Luke Isham is the minister of Horsham Presbyterian Church, Victoria.



IMPORTANCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

How to Preach and Teach the Old Testament for All Its Worth

By Christopher J.H. Wright

(Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2016). Paperback: 288 pages.
ISBN: 978-0310524649

Reviewed by Stephen McDonald

For many of us, reading, preaching or teaching from the Old Testament is like calling your mother: you know you should, but it's probably been too long since you did.

To preach or teach from an Old Testament text requires more thought, especially about how these words apply to us who live after the cross in the day of the New Covenant.

In *How to Preach and Teach the Old Testament for All Its Worth*, Christopher Wright lays a solid foundation for why we should preach and teach from this difficult set of books (with all their unpronounceable names, ancient history, strange rituals, brutal violence and continual war): The Old Testament comes to us from God (2 Timothy 3:14-4:2), it lays the foundation for our faith, and it was the Bible of Jesus (pages 18-25).

Wright's main idea is that 'the Old Testament tells the story that Jesus completes' (page 27). His approach is simple: not only must the preacher or teacher understand the literary form of the passage to interpret it correctly, but they must locate it within the 'story' of salvation (pages 36-38).

Wright notes that the Old Testament story is 'driven forward' by the covenant promises God makes: 'They come in a sequence and are connected to each another. You could say that God's great promise goes on being fulfilled and then "re-fuelled" for another part of the journey' (page 32).

As he wrote in his earlier book, *Knowing Jesus through the Old Testament* (1992): 'The writers of the new (sic) Testament... looked at all the events surrounding Jesus, and they understood them, illuminated them, explained and finally recorded them, all in the light of the whole sweep of Old Testament promise' (page 102, see also 56, 73, 77-102).

Since Wright acknowledges that covenant is the Bible's own internal framework, it's a pity that he didn't develop this idea in the present work. Instead, he uses a simple outline of Biblical history: Creation, Fall, Promise, Gospel, Mission and New Creation (pages 33-36).

On the practical question of how to get from one point in the story to the lives of believers today, Wright has helpful advice. The chapter, 'Don't Just Give Me Jesus', is probably the most controversial one as he challenges the tendency to link directly for almost any passage to the substitutionary atoning death of Jesus.

Reducing the whole Bible to an evangelistic call has several dangers, namely ignoring the original meaning of the text, introducing fanciful interpretations, and overlooking other big things that God teaches. This process can thereby flatten the Bible story, removing the uniqueness of the Incarnation, and ultimately making all one's preaching sound the same (pages 52-61).

He adds: 'Please don't misunderstand me. Of course I believe in the importance of evangelistic preaching and in telling people about Jesus and inviting them to put their faith in him... But there are many more texts throughout the Bible that do not do that. And if our preaching is supposed to be teaching people what the Bible actually says, we should do that – preach what the Bible text says, not what we can make it say by jumping quickly to Jesus and calling for conversion.'

'Indeed, I would say that faithful preaching of the great variety of the Bible's teaching over time will lead people to a better understanding of Christ and what it actually means to trust in him as Saviour and follow him as Lord' (page 60).

As Western culture becomes more and more unfamiliar with what the Bible says, teaching the Old Testament can only grow in importance for our own Biblical literacy, evangelism and engagement with society. Wright will be a helpful assistant in that task.

So, I'm going to go call my mum, and then plan my next series of teaching and preaching from the Old Testament.

Rev. Stephen McDonald is minister of the Benalla Regional Parish of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria.



ON TRACK

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PRESBYTERIAN INLAND MISSION

ISSUE 1 2018

MAKING DISCIPLES OF JESUS IN
AUSTRALIA'S HARD-TO-GET-TO PLACES.

INTRODUCING 'CONGREGATION CONNECT'

For some time we have been grappling with how we might be able to develop a system to help small, country churches without a pastor connect with other congregations using internet technology. Along the way we discovered that the Presbyterian Church of Australia's Public Worship and Aids to Devotion committee (PWAD) have been exploring the same concept. So, we partnered together with them and have been exploring this challenge together.

Neither PIM nor PWAD wanted to develop a system where people would sit passively at home and 'watch' a church service. We wanted to find a way to help God's people to 'gather and participate' together in worship – even if they were not actually in the same location. To help us do this we engaged the services of Dennis Rayson, who also serves as the part time home missionary at Balranald, NSW.

Dennis explored many software options before settling on a video conferencing system that had originally been developed to run university tutorial groups. He then set up a basic system, including laptops, cameras and microphones, in the church buildings at Balranald and Tocumwal that allowed people in both those locations to participate together in Sunday morning worship. Because the system allows two-way participation, it means that people in both locations could actively take part in the service. Within a few weeks the congregations in both those places became comfortable with the system and the idea that some parts of the service, for example the sermon, might be delivered to them by a person

standing in front of them, and other parts, such as a bible reading, would be on the screen in front of them because it was being read by someone in the other location. Once the bugs were ironed out of the system, Dennis ran further experiments by connecting the small congregation in Mt Isa with Balranald, an arrangement that has been very successful and created fresh possibilities for the way services might be held in Mt Isa in the future.



Gareth and Dennis

**Congregation Connect is a system that helps make disciples
– See what Gareth of Oxley says about it:**

Testimony from Gareth a member of Balranald Presbyterian Church

I attend Balranald Presbyterian church in the Riverina of NSW and live 90km away in a two-horse town. Due to my eyesight deteriorating and the resident roo population I have been unable to attend the men's study Thursday nights. But with new technologies and the NBN I now attend via a face to face video conferencing application. What I write about now is the blessing it has brought upon myself in that I can fellowship with the blokes and talk about Jesus Christ without having to be there in person. First, I must say it will never replace that personal touch you get when you are with God's children meeting together and worshipping together but it is the way of the future for those isolated Christian communities that want to reach out or be reached. The hardest thing is the thoughts of "wish I was there" but it most certainly is winning hands down at the moment in my situation. The study we are doing is on Solomon and Chronicles and having to do it day by day is bringing a form of discipline to my life I otherwise would not have gotten living way out here. It's very easy to slip into laziness being isolated but this new study and communication form I pray will remedy this and bring blessings upon all who participate.

May our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ be blessed, known and honoured in all we do whether on the world wide web or in person.

*In Christ's Love
Gareth of Oxley*

Along the way, we discovered that this new system, which we have named 'Congregation Connect' can also be used to run Bible studies. One minister even recently used it to run a session

meeting. With the system now working properly, we are 'rolling it out' in 2018 as a tool that congregations and presbyteries all over Australia can access to develop their ministries. Congregation

Connect is easy to set up and use, it is cost effective and can be easily run using internet accessed through the mobile phone network. To find out more, give Dennis a call on 0428 830 276.

A NEW DIRECTION FOR PIM MISSION CHURCHES

For more than a decade PIM has operated a number of 'Mission Churches'. These have been developed as a means to plant churches in locations where no Presbyterian Church was in place, and then to base a PIM Patrol out of those churches.

An example of this is the Albany Presbyterian Church in Southern Western Australia. It began life as a PIM Mission Church and a base for a Patrol in the area. The Albany Mission Church developed and grew quite quickly and within a few years PIM was able to hand over responsibility for it to the Presbytery of Western Australia, who formalised it as a Presbyterian Church and took oversight of it. PIM then focused on developing the patrol ministry in the area, through Padre Chris Woonings, who also continued to serve as an elder at Albany.

PIM also started Mission Churches in Darwin, Alice Springs and Mt Magnet. The PIM Committee had grappled for some time with trying to work out the best way to oversee these Mission Churches. In 2017, a Special Commission of the General Assembly of Australia was held and, among other things, made some decisions related to future operations of PIM Mission Churches. In addition to transferring the Darwin Mission Church out of PIM and under a Presbytery, the Commission also



The Final Service at the Alice Springs Mission Church

requested PIM to develop a plan to hand over its other Mission Churches to suitable Presbyteries.

On October 26 2017, the Darwin Mission Church became a formal Presbyterian Congregation under the Presbytery of North Queensland. It now has elders in place, is forming a local committee of management and the participants there are progressing towards becoming 'members' of the Presbyterian Church. This will provide the congregation with the benefits, privileges and protections that come from being a Presbyterian Church, at the same time that they are challenged to take up the responsibilities associated with that membership. This is a wonderful development and, Lord willing, will help to sustain an ongoing Presbyterian

Church in what is Australia's second fastest growing capital city. PIM now has no involvement in the Darwin Church, but has provided significant financial assistance to help with this transition.

After much thought and prayer, the PIM Committee determined that, sadly, it was not possible for PIM to sustain the Alice Springs Mission Church any longer. Many good and God-honouring things have been done through this Mission Church over its four and a half year life, but without the personnel or finances to sustain it indefinitely the Committee had to make the hard decision to cease work there. A final service was held on December 3 2017. Assistance was given to help the dozen or so participants find a new church to attend.

For some time the PIM Committee has been considering how best to provide proper Presbyterian oversight of the Mission Church in Mt Magnet. With a growing range of ministries, including a burgeoning Sunday School, the Committee considered it important that the Mission Church be given the proper oversight of a Presbytery. Discussions are developing between PIM and the Presbytery of Western Australia and we expect that during 2018 a formal arrangement will be made. PIM will still remain very active in the area, is committed to long-term support of the church in Mt Magnet and will work closely with the Presbytery to ensure that the church and the PIM ministry work well together for many years to come.



Mt Magnet Mission Church

NEWS AND UPDATES

Some problems are great to have!

The Sunday School in Mt Magnet has outgrown the facilities there! We are very pleased with this, but it does mean we have to do some building works to keep up. Mark Jellis has volunteered to help us (again) and will be leading a work party to Mt Magnet in mid-2018 to undertake an extension to the Sunday School room, as well as some needed maintenance on the manse and church buildings.

* * *

Many people will be volunteering their time for this, but there will be lots of building materials and supplies to purchase for this project. Would you like to help contribute to the \$50,000 needed to make this happen? If so please contact Andrew Letcher on 0438 868 964, fill in the form at the back of On Track or visit pim.org.au to make an online donation.

* * *

After more than four and a half years serving in Alice Springs, Keith and Jenny Bell have relocated to Bendigo. We praise the Lord for their contribution to the ministry of PIM, and wish them well in this next phase of their lives.



Outgrowing the Sunday School Room

WANDERING AROUND WITH ANDREW LETCHER



Andrew Letcher

One of the privileges of my role is to meet with some of the people that our patrol teams are ministering to. Just recently, I was able to spend a few days on patrol with Kim Jaeger in Tasmania. Kim took me to visit a variety of people he has been getting to know. Some of those are lovely Christian folk living in isolated places, with little access to a church. It was a joy to spend time with these folk and encourage them as they seek to be witnesses for Jesus in their small communities – in some cases they are the only believers in the area. Some of those we visited were struggling with health challenges, loneliness, trying to sell a house or working through some difficult family matters. It was great to pray with them and cheer them on as they seek to live lives that bring glory to Him and grow as disciples of Jesus.

Others who we visited were not

followers of Jesus, but had an interest in learning more. Over the months ahead, Kim will build these relationships and find ways to clearly share the Gospel. We look forward to what God might have in store as He seeks to change lives.

Like all our PIM Teams, Kim will often knock on the door of a homestead only to be met with indifference to God. Whilst overt hostility is not very common, it does happen and gives us reason to pause. Often those who are the most hostile to God and His people are carrying some deep hurt from the past. Our hearts long to be able to share with them the true love of Jesus, but in many cases we are not able to get past the front gate. Please join with me in praying for the people our PIM Teams will meet, work with and minister to during 2018, that God would work through them and transform lives.



Partnership



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
AUSTRALIAN PRESBYTERIAN WORLD MISSION

2018 #1

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.

We Don't Want to Steal Church Members!

In October 2017, the Evangelical Reformed Church of Myanmar celebrated its 25th anniversary. Those present from the Presbyterian Church of Australia were Bill & Jenny Lutton, Heather Smith, Jan Turner, Kevin Murray and APWM Treasurer Peter Burke.

In this article the Rev Dr Thang Bwee reflects on the state of the church.

Reformed ministry in Burma is a real struggle. We are still very young. We still need some people to help support us in this work. I really thank those that have supported our Reformed ministry. Myanmar Christianity is more than 200 years old but does not have Reformed teaching.

Our Reformed teaching began in Chin State in early 1993. We started under a tree in the jungle and within five years God blessed us with 30 churches. That was rapid growth but we were weak in faith and strength. We needed teaching. After a couple of years the church split in various ways as some churches headed away from Reformed teaching.

We currently have 25 churches in Chin State. We have about 35 pastors, evangelists and lay preachers. Our main mission work is:



REV DR THANG BWEE, MRS JENNY LUTTON,
REV BILL LUTTON.



THE CONGREGATION AT THE ANNIVERSARY SERVICE.

1) The Pastor Training Programme

(a) Lay Preachers' Training Programme
(b) Pastors' Training Programme.
These are done through the Reformed Bible Institute (RBI) which provides theological training for the long term.

2) Student Ministry in Chin State

We have school dormitories in rural areas with 60 students under our supervision and care for secular and Christian education. We are raising these children to grow educationally and spiritually. We need many young people to serve the Lord for His kingdom.

3) Evangelism and Church Planting Ministry

At RBI we train people for evangelism and Church planting where there is no church. This is our main ministry to extend the Kingdom of God as well as extending Reformed teaching in Burma. We need to plant new churches to glorify God.

4) Reformed Books

We need Reformed books and booklets. We have recently translated and published 6 booklets.

What are our needs? Our foremost need is that the church still needs to grow in

Biblical and Reformed theological knowledge. Second our churches need to grow in their zeal for evangelism. Sadly our church is declining in evangelism. When we started 25 years ago the church grew rapidly for the first 10 years but then the growth slowed.

What is our purpose in mission? We want to evangelise non-Christians but not move around within the Christian churches and steal their members.

We want to teach our neighbours the Reformed faith. Only the Reformed faith is biblical. We do this to glorify God through taking the gospel to people. We all need to cooperate to bring glory to God. We need to be like the church at Antioch in the book of Acts which spread the gospel. We want to see many such churches in Myanmar. Myanmar has been covered by Buddhism. We need to plant churches for the glory of God.

We thank God for your sacrificial, supportive and comforting partnership that the Presbyterian Church of Australia has with the Evangelical Reformed Church of Myanmar.

Please visit vimeo.com/242169590 to watch Thang Bwee greet the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

“

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)

”

A Strategic New Beginning for Reformed Theological Education in Africa

2016 saw a new beginning in the training of pastors for the Churches of Africa: the formation of African Reformation Theological Seminary (ARTS), a new theological college in Kampala, Uganda. This project has involved strong support from Australia, including the service of APWM Associate missionaries, Ian and Norma McIver. Ian writes a remarkable story of people walking by faith into the works that God has planned for them to grow his kingdom.

The vision of ARTS is both simple and strategic. The goal of ARTS and its parent company, African Reformation Ministries (ARM), is to develop a range of ministries to serve African churches. The establishment of ARTS is the first stage. As the Lord enables, others will follow, including an agency for a mission to Africa through the work of seminary graduates among people of their own tribes and nations: disciple-making and church planting "by Africans, to Africans, in Africa". Further on, we aspire to begin a print and book ministry, and even a radio ministry.

At the heart of our confessional life is a commitment to the Reformed and Presbyterian confessions. These traditions have been historically strong in east, central and southern Africa; but both have succumbed to the same theological modernism that has characterised other Presbyterian and Reformed denominations in the western world. We know that the only adequate response is a robust commitment to the sovereignty of God's grace as expressed in the creeds of the early church (particularly the Athanasian with its emphasis on the tri-unity of the Godhead and the deity of Jesus Christ), and the reformed



NORMA MCIVER MEETING WITH JEAN DESIRE (BURUNDI) FOR CONVERSATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE

confessional traditions of the Reformation.

Our mission is to restore a confessionally sound basis for the training of pastors for the Churches of Africa. ARTS' vision is to spread a passion for God's glory by training pastors and church leaders who will be used by the Holy Spirit to bring the transforming power of Christ's Gospel of Grace and the Word of God first to the African Church and then to all of African society. We further aspire that the African Church may be used by God for Biblical reformation and world-wide gospel missions and impact.

Amazing things have happened since the beginning of 2016. In February we had nothing. No seminary, no library, no facilities, no money. Nothing but faith. By April we were able to purchase a property for \$US 500,000, and renovate it for use as a residential seminary. By the end of 2016 we had 10,000 books in our library, sent from the United States, Australia, and Canada. We gained accreditation as a

graduate seminary to teach the M Div. and various MA degrees. Classes commenced in January 2017. The student body now numbers some thirty to forty students from about twelve African countries. They come from a range of denominations: Presbyterian and Reformed, and also Anglican, Baptist and Pentecostal.

Our lecturing staff come from Uganda, Zimbabwe, Canada, the United States and Australia. I teach three or four subjects each semester in Biblical Theology and Biblical Studies, and Norma volunteers in the Library and assists students with the improvement of their English skills.

Norma and I have received extraordinary financial support from around the world: unsolicited donations amounting to \$AUD 300,000, including a pledge of almost \$AUD 120,000 over four years for student scholarships! Australian donors have also provided funds to purchase land and build a duplex home on the ARTS campus. We'll use one of these two bedroom units whenever we are in Kampala. Lord willing this will happen again in March 2018.

The Lord is raising a Reformed standard in the heart of Africa. We believe that God has a great purpose for this work as He builds the walls of Zion in the heart of Africa. With Nehemiah of old we would say, "we are carrying on a great project, we cannot come down (from the walls of God's Zion)" (Nehemiah 6:3). Please join us in prayer on the walls of Zion (Isaiah 62:6,7) that God will accomplish great things among us.

For further information please see the ARTS web site: <http://arts.ac.ug>



IAN MCIVER WITH ARTS STUDENTS FROM RWANDA AND BURUNDI

A Simply Extraordinary Ministry!

The nation of South Sudan was born in 2011 after 20 years of bloody civil war. It was a time of extraordinary optimism after years of fighting for independence from the northern part of Sudan.

South Sudan has two major tribes — the Dinka and the Nuer — and they have a long-standing rivalry.



SOME MEMBERS OF A PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SOUTH SUDAN CONGREGATION IN ONE OF THE CAMPS

How could this rivalry be overcome for the sake of the new nation? The President of the new nation was chosen from among the Dinka and the Vice President from the Nuer.

However in late 2013 these two leaders had a falling out. The Dinka President retained power and so the government forces entered into conflict with the Nuer Vice President and his supporters. The result was a fresh civil war. It is estimated that this has led to 300,000 deaths. That's right, 300,000 deaths!

Many of the South Sudanese fled with little more than the clothes that they were wearing. Some went to the UN refugee camps in South Sudan, some of which were later attacked. Others fled to surrounding nations such as Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia. It is thought that as



CHILDREN LEARNING WITH A BLACKBOARD SENT FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

many as one-third of the South Sudanese population now lives outside the country. The majority of them live in refugee camps.

APWM missionary Motor Isaac Yat was born in South Sudan. He studied theology in Egypt before returning to Sudan where he was granted refugee status and sent to Australia. He subsequently took out Australian citizenship. He joined the Clayton Presbyterian Church in Victoria.

However it wasn't long before Motor sensed God calling him to serve the emerging nation of South Sudan and so in 2008 he returned to serve with the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan in training leaders.

When the current civil war began in 2013, APWM recalled him to Australia for his own safety.

Two years ago Motor was redeployed to serve the South Sudanese Presbyterian congregations in the refugee camps in western Ethiopia. He now teaches the Bible among the 100 or so Presbyterian congregations. In addition to this he tries



MOTOR YAT PRESENTING A BLIND REFUGEE WITH GIFTS FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA — A MOSQUITO NET, BLANKET & SLEEPING MAT.

to raise support from the Presbyterian Church of Australia to help meet the almost overwhelming physical and spiritual needs of the refugees. Many of the refugees are traumatised as a result of seeing loved ones murdered and experiencing other atrocities that are associated with civil war.

In November Kevin Murray, together with Motor's pastor, Michael Jensen and Alex Christian an elder from the Clayton church, visited Motor in western Ethiopia. They were able to witness his extraordinary ministry first hand.

As a former refugee himself, Motor knows



ALEX CHRISTIAN, MICHAEL JENSEN & MOTOR YAT

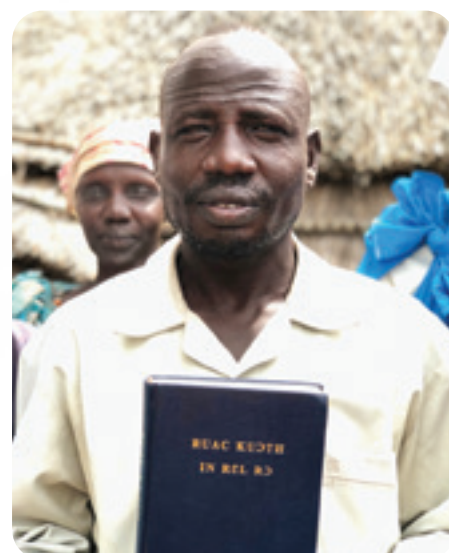
what life is like in a refugee camp. God has granted him the necessary resilience to teach the Bible and hold out the word of life to so many desperate people. One commentator who knows well the refugee camps said "When you look at what is happening in the camps, if you didn't trust God then there would be no hope".

The team from Australia conducted training workshops for 60+ pastors from the refugee camp congregations. Time after time the pastors expressed their gratitude for the teaching from the Bible and said "Your coming to us is a great encouragement and reminds us that we are not alone. We are so glad to have brothers and sisters in Christ."

As we met with the pastors it became clear that the congregations had one clear need — Bibles. They need 35,000 Bibles. Earlier this year APWM sent 3,000 Nuer Bibles to these refugees but what are 3,000 Bibles among so many?

We hope that early in 2018 we will be sharing details about you can help meet this enormous need.

Kevin Murray



AN ELDER WITH A NUER BIBLE

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 telling us that you have made a deposit and provide the name of the missionary that you are supporting.

Enquiries

finance@apwm.org.au • (02) 8073 7490
www.apwm.org.au/supporting/finance

Rick & Kayleen Manton: A Landmark Day

Sunday 17th December was something of a milestone for APWM and Rick and Kayleen Manton. Rick and Kayleen concluded their 20-year long ministry at the Mount Druitt Indigenous Church in western Sydney.

Rick and Kayleen attended their final service in the morning and in the afternoon a gathering was held for those who had partnered with them during those 20 years. It has not been an easy 20 years.

Some of the comments made during the afternoon were:

"We thank God for the constancy of their faith in him and the work that has been done through Rick and Kayleen in people's lives."

"We thank God for what he has done in the Mount Druitt community through the Manton family."

"It has been a privilege to see how the church has developed over the years. God



is the one who planted this church."

The human driving force behind Rick and Kayleen serving at Mount Druitt was the late Dr Rex Burns, who in 1997 was the APWM National Convener. Rick and Kayleen made an initial commitment to serve for 10 years.

What does the future hold? Rick and Kayleen will now be taking 6 months long service leave and annual leave before commencing a new ministry with the wider Indigenous church in July 2018.

Barbara Sayers: With Christ



On Saturday 11th December, Barbara Sayers was called home by Christ. Barbara served for many years in North Queensland, first as a nurse and then as a Wycliffe Bible translator. It was said at her funeral "If there is one lasting legacy that Barbara has left, it is the translation of the New Testament into Wik-Mungkan, the language of the Wik aboriginal people in North Queensland." Sydney University recognised Barbara's linguistic gifts and allowed her to complete an MA in linguistics without requiring her to first undertake a primary degree. We praise God for all that he did through Barbara!

AUSTRALIAN PRESBYTERIAN WORLD MISSION

NATIONAL OFFICE

81 Shaftesbury Road, Burwood NSW 2134 T: (02) 8073 7490

Sheryl Sarkoezy E: national@apwm.org.au • Bruce Campbell E: finance@apwm.org.au

NATIONAL DIRECTOR

Kevin Murray

M: 0421 366 720

E: kevinmurray@apwm.org.au

FEDERAL CONVENER

Alex Shaw T: 0403 778 151

E: alex_4_shaw@internode.on.net

STATE CONVENERS

Qld Keith Stewart E: qldconvener@apwm.org.au

NSW Derek Bullen E: nswconvener@apwm.org.au

Vic Noel Johnston E: vicconvener@apwm.org.au

Tas Phil Simmonds E: simmondsphil68@gmail.com

SA Gary Ware E: gjware@internode.on.net

WA Darrell Thatcher E: waconvener@apwm.org.au

www.apwm.org.au

Continued from page 5

I know what it is to be treated as righteous even though I am guilty. The imputation of Christ's righteousness to me doesn't make me righteous: the Spirit of God works that within me. It doesn't make me loved: I was loved from the foundation of the world. But it is the gateway to blessing, opening the way to the personal experience of God's love. I hang on to imputed righteousness for dear life! I delight in it.

But I cannot imagine being treated as guilty even though being righteous, entirely and only righteous. It did not make Him unrighteous. It did not make Him unloved (not even the 'children of wrath' for whom He was dying were unloved). But it was the gateway to the curse. Humanity can try what it may, but only the Father's sentence opened the floodgates of suffering. He freely agreed to be the second Adam, but how repugnant still was the association with sin? How did the sentence batter His mind, heart and conscience?

Satan's play was wide open. To Adam, and Jesus in the desert, Satan had said, 'God withholds good things from you.' Now he can use the more potent formula: 'God wants to pour all evil upon You'. What was Jesus' response? 'Not My will, but Thine'. He was victorious against the threat! Moreover, He confidently believed that God would justify Him, raising Him from the dead. As Jesus saw it, the Cross was His glory! 'Father, the hour has now come. Glorify your Son' (John 17:1).

10 *He battled the insult to His person*

Jesus suffered physically – and people say, 'That is not enough'. He suffered the shame, but still, 'Not enough to pay for sin!' This forgets who He is. He is the Son of God. We cannot grasp the offence to His person, position and dignity. Matthew says it: 'all those who passed by blasphemed Him' (Matt 27:39). The humiliation began at the incarnation: true majesty hidden by decaying flesh. At the Cross, the desecration – the outrage – was complete. By the time His captors finished with Him, He barely appeared to be human, let alone divine (Ps 22:6).

No-one else has suffered like this. He 'endured most grievous torments immediately in His soul, and most painful sufferings in His body' (Westminster Confession). Yet He was victorious throughout. He remained faithful, and not with a bare minimum of spiritual life, cut off from the Father. He remained in vital union with His God, with full love, trust and hope.

What assurance this brings to us. Our sins truly are covered. And what a model for us! Union with God can remain at the darkest moments of our lives. I would not use that against anyone who was overwhelmed – I know how quickly my own heart melts into fear. But can I train myself now, in the brighter days of my life, to be better prepared for the evil hour, to follow Jesus on the Cross?

Rev. Dr Jared Hood is a lecturer at the Presbyterian Theological College, Melbourne, and editor of the Reformed Theological Review.



**YOUR
ADVERTISEMENT
HERE?**

Contact Fellow Workers on
fwadvertising@pcv.org.au
for design advice & reasonable rates



MOPS.ORG.AU



Want to reach young families?

MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) is a ministry for your church that serves mums and creates connections.

#thisismotherhood

To find out more, email info@mops.org.au for an info pack