

Summer 2018/19 • Presbyterian Church of Victoria



FELLOW WORKERS

—
**SUMMER
ISSUE**



FELLOW WORKERS

Summer 2018/19 • Presbyterian Church of Victoria

CONTENTS

- 3 **Editorial** | Luke Isham
 - 4 **Women's Ministries Victoria launches new training course** | Mairi Gigis
PYV East Camp | Jacob York
 - 5 **Rye Cup BBQ** | Hui Lim
My Life with Christ | Kerry Jensen
 - 6 **Letter: Celebrating 100 years of God's Grace** | Stella Bromilow
Ministry Moves
 - 7 **Opinion: Gender in the light of faith and reason** | Luke Isham
 - 8 **Book Review: The Westminster Confession** | Stephen McDonald
 - 10 **Book Review: The Justice Calling** | Brett Peatman
 - 11 **Book Review: The Good Life in the Last Days** | Ben Nelson
 - 12 **Partnership: APWM newsletter**
-

Fellow Workers

Quarterly Magazine of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria.

State News Committee: Luke Isham (convener),

Stephen McDonald, Phil Betts, Tony Zirngast

Editor: Courteney Maxwell

Sub-editing: John Ballantyne

Design: Shiloh Longbottom

Photography: Stella Bromilow and Kerry Jensen

Submission deadline for Autumn edition: 1 February

Front and back cover: Stock Photograph of Australian Summer

Page 9: *The Assertion of Liberty of Conscience by the Independents at the Westminster Assembly of Divines*,
painted by John Rogers Herbert, c. 1844

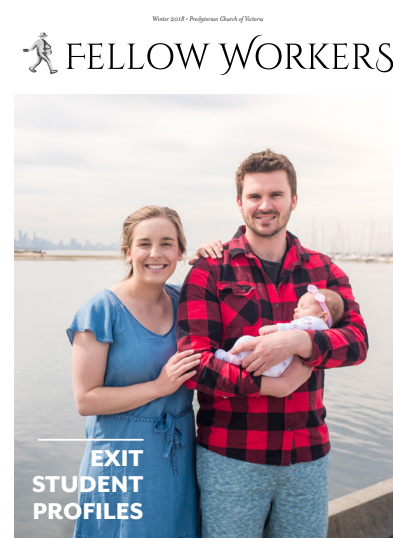
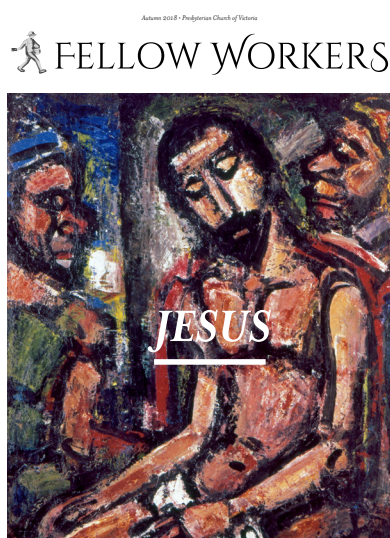
Privacy Policy: The information you provide to the State News Committee has been collected and disseminated in conformity with the Privacy Policy of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria (which can be found at pcv.org.au or mailed to you on request).

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.

EDITORIAL

On this side of eternity, “all good things come to an end.” If we belong to Jesus then we will enjoy God forever on the other side of eternity. Perhaps a more fitting truism is, “everything has its season”, a phrase that echoes King Solomon’s famous poem about time in the book of Ecclesiastes. My rumination was prompted by AP (*Australian Presbyterian*) ceasing publication last month. Publishing a printed magazine is a tough endeavor, it’s expensive to print and distribute and difficult to find content. Originally *Fellow Workers* was created to share news, a role supplanted by email and social media. With a quarterly publishing schedule, a shoe-string budget and busy Presbyteries the State News Committee is carefully considering this magazine’s future. Our designer, Shiloh Longbottom, of Crossroads Presbyterian Church is going on maternity leave in the new year. So there may be a pause in publication as we seek a suitably talented and generous graphic designer to take her place. In the meantime enjoy this bumper summer edition.

Luke Isham, Convener of the State News Committee



WOMEN'S MINISTRIES VICTORIA LAUNCHES NEW TRAINING COURSE

THIS YEAR WOMEN'S Ministries Victoria stepped out in faith by running a live-streamed Training Course. If you joined us it was great to have you "along"!

Over the course of 8 weeks, gifted women shared practical and biblical insights on topics of relevance to every Christian woman: How men and women can work together in gospel partnership; being centred on God's Word and prayer; evangelism; hospitality; pastoral care; mentoring; the how to of leading and participating in a bible study; and dealing with conflict from a biblical point of view.

While these topics apply to everyone it has been a real blessing to have the perspective of women teaching women. There is a different nuance as the various topics are put into the context of women's lives and experiences. It has also been incredibly rewarding to run training that allows women from right across the state (and country) to connect in real time, no matter how isolated they are. We hope this is the start of many other opportunities to bless the wider church, and equip women to serve in their communities, whatever their age and experience in life.

Knowing that groups and individuals across the state were tuning in live each week was an incredible experience. To be able to use technology to serve God's people in our churches in this way opens many opportunities to serve in a different ways. Being able to record the sessions also means

that churches can continue to use this resource into the future, and individuals can be built up through quality training in their own homes when they are able to. We are grateful to God for this provision, as well as the help of the technologically savvy!

Some of the feedback we have received:

"The Women's Training Course was a well presented biblically based course that was accessible to many women across the state from their own homes. It challenged and encouraged women to live out their Christian calling in all aspects of life in the complex world we live in." Jean – Donvale

"It can be difficult in isolated areas when we feel we miss out on events which city people take for granted. It was, therefore, a great joy to be able to join in, in real time, with the WMV training sessions. A number of ladies from the North-West of Victoria, including some on isolated properties from our P.I.M. Patrol, have benefitted greatly from this wonderful ministry. Thanks to all involved for organising this event which could be enjoyed by people all over the state." Alison – Mildura

"It was great meeting in homes each Wednesday night with a small group of Warragul Presbyterian ladies to tune in to the WMV Training Course. I appreciate the time and effort that all eight wonderful speakers put into their talks. So much was packed into each two hour session and I always left encouraged and challenged by what they had to say." Jo – Warragul

If you missed out on tuning in for this training you can still register online as a church or individual at wmv.org.au. Proceeds from the training support our 2019 ministry programs to rural Victoria.

Mrs Mairi Gigis (WMV Co-ordinator)

PYV EAST CAMP

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS was the topic for East Camp '18. Nick Arundell, our guest speaker, challenged youth and leaders alike to fear the LORD, for this is the beginning of Wisdom. It is amazing that though God is so big, He can be known through trusting in His son the Lord Jesus. After establishing that all godly wisdom comes from fearing the LORD, which ultimately demonstrates itself in trusting in Jesus, we were encouraged to be wise in the way we use our money and our words. Both these things can be good, but they can also be very dangerous, so it was good to learn that God cares about what we do with our money, and what we say. In His Word He gives us practical ways we're able to use these things to please Him. We looked at these in greater detail in small study groups and found them great for encouragement discussion, questions, and prayer.

Our camp theme was 'More than Gold', reminding us that God's wisdom is worth pursuing and possessing more than anything else we can possibly find or own. Lots of campers and youth came dressed in fancy golden costumes for Sunday night's dinner, some even covered themselves in golden paint! Activities included the classic Scavenger Hunt (wouldn't be a PYV camp without one) around the enormous Camp Rumbug site, searching for clues and completing tasks. Other highlights consisted of basketball games, delicious food, catching up with old friends and getting to know new people too. What a privilege to come on camp and be challenged and changed, and leave better knowing who Jesus is and more equipped to do what He asks of us, particularly in relation to what we say and how we spend our money. We sang at camp:

‘One day every tongue will confess you are God. One day every knee will bow. Still the greatest treasure remains for those who gladly choose you now’.

Most of all, we as leaders pray that the campers who came would learn to fear the LORD, trusting in Jesus as their Saviour and King, so they, along with us, will joyfully bow and worship the Lord when he returns.

Mr Jacob York is a member of Drouin Presbyterian Church in Victoria.

RYE CUP BBQ

NEITHER “THE RACE THAT STOPS A NATION”, nor the heavy rain could stop Sorrento Rye Parish from having a fellowship BBQ lunch on Cup Day. Around 40 people mingled freely over lunch with our Mission Talk speakers Craig & Jayni Manners and their children. Craig and Jayni gave a very helpful update on the work of Orbus Ministry in Malawi, sharing challenges, hopes and prayer points. Orbus Ministry started in 2007 ministering to AIDS orphans in Malawi, Africa. They hope to extend their high school education for the orphans in the coming years. We count it a blessing to be in partnership with

Orbus through our ongoing prayer and financial support. Special musical items were performed by Alison, Bruce and Don, bringing delight to all. We thank the Lord for His goodness and grace, and good Christian fellowship at Cup Day, even though our gathering had nothing to do with the greatest horse race in Australia.

Rev. Hui Lim is the minister of Sorrento and Rye Presbyterian Church in Victoria.

For more information on Orbus Ministries visit orbusministries.org

MY LIFE WITH CHRIST

EVERY CHILD OF GOD has a story of their life with Christ. On Saturday 1st September 2018, at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Clayton, about 80 ladies from the Clayton community and several different Presbyterian churches were privileged to hear the stories of Dhruvi Christian, Lavena Mercer,

Vivian Ajawin and Mary Turcato at our women's conference entitled, “My Life with Christ”. We laughed and we cried as we journeyed with them. Their backgrounds so different; a Brahman Hindu, growing up in a dysfunctional home, a “Christian” teaching Sunday school who didn't know the one she was teaching about, giving your life to God as a small child then struggling with doubt and unbelief about your own salvation and the character of God. The common theme in them all was coming to know who God really was, his character, his salvation, his great love and his provision for all our needs. We heard a devotion about God's perfect timing, we sang, we prayed and enjoyed fellowship over morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea.

We thank God for this wonderful day.

What is your story? Have you shared it with someone recently? So often we think that our story is not very important or significant, but every story of God's work in our life is God's story, therefore it brings glory to Him. I encourage you to share your story of your life with Christ, it will be a blessing to others.

Mrs Kerry Jensen, Clayton Presbyterian Church



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

LETTER



CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF GOD'S GRACE

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 9, 2018 marked the 100th anniversary of St Andrews Presbyterian Church, Reservoir (RPC) with an all-day celebration attracting more than 250 past and present members plus others who had a connection with RPC. The program included two services, one of which was live-streamed overseas, and a series of interviews with representatives from each decade, starting with the 1950's. Mrs Gwen Young, our earliest member, recalled being baptised, married, their children baptised, a parent buried, and a daughter married at St Andrews. Mrs Heather Fairweather, another early member, cut the cake and recalled busy, happy times over the years. An abundance of food was served throughout the day.

The Centenary Committee worked hard to gather photos and memorabilia to create a display for each decade and a time line showing significant developments. They also produced a booklet to continue the story from the 75th anniversary publication. This shows the di-

versity of today's congregation with reflections written by 40 people.

Over the years RPC has experienced growth and decline, and is currently growing steadily. We have welcomed people from at least 35 countries, and today's congregation of over 150 reflects the diversity of Reservoir. Since 1970, through our Faith Promise program, we have supported overseas and home missionaries, some of whom grew up in RPC's youth group.

A recent church member, Rebekah Loh, when interviewed, said she noticed on her arrival that there were "lots of old people" at RPC. This has changed with the influx of overseas arrivals through the English classes started by Lois Cox in 2007, and a growing number of La Trobe University students. Some have found us through the church website, and others through Carols on the Lawn.

For a while we had no children so no Sunday School (though in the 1950s there were 300 children attending), but now Kids Church runs at two levels, there's a youth Bible class, and shortly a Play Group is starting. We recently welcomed perhaps our youngest ever communicant member, Tom Vines, and last year appointed our youngest church elder, Isaac Evans, and another, Amir Kashani, who came as a refugee.

Preaching in the morning service, the Moderator-General, Rev. John Wilson, once a member of the youth group, later our pastor, and now a returned member, urged us to remember that while it is good to celebrate growth, it is vital to keep the Word of God central, with faith in Christ, and always to do our best to secure the next generation for Christ.

Rev. Andrew Vines, our current pastor, preached an evangelistic message at night, challenging us regarding the future of the church in Australia. He expressed confidence that God will continue His work as the Father reveals Jesus to people, as Jesus builds His church, and as His people use His keys. He ended

with a final reminder that when we preach the gospel, we are using the keys to the kingdom of heaven.

A number of those who attended enjoyed catching up with people with whom they'd had a previous connection. It was a wonderful day of giving thanks and glory to God.

Mrs Stella Bromilow is a member of Reservoir Presbyterian Church in Victoria.

MINISTRY MOVES

Presbytery of Ballarat

Mr Tobias Crabb was employed as a resident supply preacher in the Kaniva Nhill Charge on 11 Dec 2018.

Presbytery of Maroondah

Rev Dean Carroll resigned from Heathmont Presbyterian Church from 27 Jan 2019 to take up a position as the assistant to the minister at Reservoir Presbyterian Church.

Presbytery of Melbourne East

Rev Nick Arundell was ordained and inducted into the pastoral charge of Chalmers Presbyterian Church on 17 August 2018

Rev John Huynh was inducted into the pastoral charge of Surrey Hills on 9 November 2018

Rev Barry Oakes was inducted into the pastoral charge of Ashburton on 30 November 2018

Presbytery of Melbourne West

Rev Stephen Jones has resigned from Melton Presbyterian Church to take up a position as the assistant to the minister at Drouin Presbyterian Church.

Rev Phil Court retired from full time ministry on 6 December 2018.

Rev Adam Humphries will be resigning from Brimbank Presbyterian Church on 30 Dec 2018 to take up a position as the assistant to the minister at Darebin Presbyterian Church.

GENDER IN THE LIGHT OF FAITH AND REASON

By Luke Isham

Given how controversial gender has become, I thought it might be useful to share my pastoral notes about gender with a wider audience. I'll start with a summary of what Christians, particularly Presbyterians, believe about gender and then survey a few practical issues. Gender has three dimensions: 1) it can be empirically observed, 2) it is subjectively experienced, and 3) we socially construct gender-specific roles.

Christians are epistemological and metaphysical realists, which means we believe that things really exist and that we are able to say coherent things about reality. Therefore binary male-female gender can be observed in the world and in Scripture (Gen 1:27), notwithstanding abnormalities that sometimes turn up in a world broken by sin (Matt 19:12).

We are able to observe biological differences between men and women. Most men have an XY chromosome pair, their pelvis bones are larger and heavier and they produce different concentrations of hormones from those of women. Additionally, we can observe gender differences across large groups, both in physical performance and personality.

This is not to say that gender abnormalities do not occur; but highly ambiguous cases are rare and genuine psychological gender dysphoria is also scarce. Christians know that God created the mind and therefore rationality, so they can be confident that logical arguments which apply globally are constructed deductively and do not start from these types of exceptions.

Just because gender differences can be observed does not prevent us all from experiencing gender subjectively. Dorothy L. Sayers observes in her famous feminist treatise, *Are Women Human?*, that our existential experience of gender is genuine and varied. You see the social expression of gender-specific traits in the demeanour of both men and women.

Gender-specific tropes are also present in fiction, with men often presented as more action-orientated and women presented as more passive. Furthermore, gender roles may also be socially constructed, and can vary between cultures. However, Christians affirm that universal gender roles exist for both the church and the family, for example 1 Timothy 2:12 and 5:8.

Christians do not just believe that binary male-female gender exists; we believe that it also has a theological significance. The binary pair of male and female is a theological symbol of our relationship with God. Men and women are created as a complementary pairing (Gen 2:24) and therefore a symbol of our relationship with God (Eph 5:32).

Masculinity is a theological symbol of God's rule of creation. This was most clearly represented by Adam's special role as leader of humanity and therefore, sadly, as the one responsible for introducing sin into Creation (Gen 3:9, Rom 5:17 & 1 Cor 15:22). Femininity is a theological symbol of God's responsiveness to his people (Luke 13:34).

Our existential experience of gender is genuine and varied.

Practically and pastorally, it's important that Christians respond with clarity and charity. Some genuine gender disorders are deeply rooted in our biology and therefore require great compassion and understanding. More recently, as the concept of binary male-female gender has been challenged and many people treat gender differences more casually, it's important to affirm that our identity is in Christ, we are God's children seeking to 'keep in step with the Spirit' (Gal 5:25), rejecting sinful desires and living according to Scripture.

Some Christians may find it very difficult to present themselves in accordance with their biological gender and will need support from their pastors and congregations. On the rare occasions that babies are born with ambiguous secondary sexual characteristics, surgery should be delayed until the underlying biology is clearer.

Finally, when it comes to names and pronouns and relating to someone whose gender is ambiguous, we should be polite and use their preferred name or pronoun until a genuine relationship is established. However, participation in the church community would require living and acting according to their biological gender as far as humanly possible.

Rev. Luke Isham is the pastor of Horsham Presbyterian Church.

SCRIPTURE-SOAKED WISDOM TO BUILD YOUR FAITH

The Westminster Confession

(Edinburgh: *Banner of Truth*, April 2018). Hardcover: 688 pages.
ISBN 978-1848717688

Reviewed by Stephen McDonald

It's shocking to hear that, for many years, you couldn't buy a copy of the Westminster Confession of Faith, even from Melbourne's Presbyterian Bookshop at 156 Collins Street. The retired minister who told me that said some of his classmates took the vow 'I own the Westminster Confession of Faith' very literally. As long as it was on their shelf, they were okay. One didn't even go that far, asking if he could borrow a copy of the Confession because he 'should probably have a read of it' before taking his ordination vows later that day.

But, as C.S. Lewis's senior devil Screwtape would say, only a junior devil would think ignorance was the only way to keep people from reading good doctrine. You can cram it into thick, poorly formatted books that no one can read. Or, even better, convince believers that the words of dead white men are 'good, but old', meaning that they are useless to help us today.

This new edition of the Westminster Confession of Faith meets all those devilish challenges.

***The Westminster Assembly
has given us a hard-fought,
carefully drafted and
pastorally helpful statement
of the essential doctrines of
Christianity.***

Appearance

It looks sharp! Instead of Big Ben on the cover, the volume has an understated three-tone turquoise dust-jacket over the robust dark navy cloth binding standard to all Banner hardbacks.

The main text is set in single columns of 10.5 pt Adobe Garamond Pro on robust light cream paper, with moderate line-spacing and plenty of white space.

While the 1976 Free Presbyterian edition placed the Scripture proofs at the bottom of the page in double columns, the Banner edition inserts them after each paragraph. This makes connections between paragraphs harder to trace. It also spreads the chapter over multiple pages; and with no chapter titles in the header, it can be hard to tell where you are.

Contents

This edition contains the 1647 text of the Confession, with the three American revisions of 1788 in a section of their own. You'll need to note the Presbyterian Church of Australia's revisions to the WCF 24.4 and 28.4 yourself.

Also included are the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, which are absolute gifts for training and discipleship both inside and outside the family home. As Ben Nelson of Melbourne's Presbyterian Theological College (PTC) warns, failing to catechise our kids 'means surrendering to others who will make up their minds for them'. Consider:

'The "catechising" of mass media. The 'creed' of the school playground. The "discipling" of the class room where "critical thinking" is so often code for overturning parental values in favour of the latest ideology. None of these claim to indoctrinate, and so their indoctrination is all the more powerful.

'In fact, by being so blatant, a Christian catechism actually gives space for our children to respond. It appeals to memory and argument, not emotion or subliminal messaging. Alongside Bible verses, Christian songs and family prayer times, a catechism gives our faith sharp and clear outlines. Our children are free to reject this one day, but they can't say they weren't told what Christianity is.' (AP Magazine Online, December 7, 2015).

The Directory for Family Worship (as well as the two opening letters to the reader) impresses upon us the importance of individual and family worship. The original Westminster Assembly would have agreed



with Don Whitney's refrain in his helpful book *Family Worship* (Crossway, 2016): 'God deserves to be worshiped daily, in our homes, by our families.'

The *Directory for the Public Worship of God* distils the Biblical requirements of worship. Observers of traditional Presbyterian worship may be surprised to find how different truly Presbyterian worship is. Hopefully, we will all benefit from the helpful examples of Biblical worship given there.

The *Form of Presbyteral Church Government* outlines the Biblical principles for living and serving together as God's people.

We should learn from engaging discerningly with both present-day evangelicalism and from Confessional believers in the past. Our personal devotions, discipleship, family worship, corporate worship, and church government would all be enriched if we thoughtfully applied the Scripture-soaked wisdom in these documents to our present contexts.

Why read it?

So, why should a Christian bother reading a confession of faith, anyway? It's not like it's the Bible!

Well, you should read a confession of faith if you want help to see how the Bible's teaching fits together. That's what any statement of systematic theology does: it gathers up what the Bible teaches, examines the developments, and states it succinctly.

As Carl Trueman writes,

'Ask any Christian what they believe, and, if they are at all thoughtful, they will not simply recite Bible texts to you; they will rather offer a summary account of what they see to be the Bible's teaching in a form of words which are, to a greater or lesser extent, extra-biblical.'

You should read a confession to check your interpretation of the Bible. As church history teaches us, a new discovery in Biblical interpretation is often an old heresy with a new name.

We are always in danger of what C.S. Lewis called 'chronological snobbery' because of the inherent blind spots and cultural pressures of our own time. But confessions help us to evaluate and build on the understanding of believers before us, as well as our own.

And if none of that is convincing enough, confessions help us to focus on what is most important. If we emphasise only the aspects of Christian doctrine which matter to us, we risk transmitting an unbalanced, incomplete and unbiblical Gospel. Confessions provide a 'form of sound words' (2 Timothy 1:13), a comprehensive statement of the Christian faith to pass on (2 Timothy 2:2).

Dare I say it, the Westminster Confession of Faith really is the best. In 12,500 words (or about 45 pages without the Scripture proofs), the Westminster Assembly has given us a hard-fought, carefully drafted and pastorally helpful statement of the essential doctrines of Christianity – a statement, moreover, which is valued by Christians well beyond the bubble of Western Evangelicalism.

If you have time to read two chapters of J.I. Packer's *Knowing God*, Graeme Goldsworthy's *Gospel and Kingdom*, or R.C. Sproul's *The Holiness of God*, then you have time to read this helpful summary from start to finish.

So, read a paragraph or two as part of your daily devotions, or set aside time on Sunday afternoon to study a chapter and follow the Scripture references. You might prefer to use a booklet of the Confession on its own, download it from Reformed.org, or get one of the many apps like *Christian Creeds & Reformed Confessions*.

You'll also be helped by the many commentaries on the Confession. I prefer Chad Van Dixhoorn's excellent and accessible *Confessing the Faith* (Banner of Truth, 2014), which includes a modern English version in parallel to the original.

Recommendation

This edition from the Banner of Truth will become the new standard. May it be used to strengthen you in God's grace, 'building yourselves up in your most holy faith' (Jude 20), so that you 'more and more die unto sin, and rise unto newness of life' (Westminster Larger Catechism 75).

You can be sure, the Devil won't like it.

Rev. Stephen McDonald is minister of the Benalla regional parish, north-east Victoria.

RUNNING TOWARDS THE DARKNESS WITH THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

The Justice Calling: Where Passion Meets Perseverance

By Bethany H. Hoang and Kristen D. Johnson

*(Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Publishing, 2017). Paperback: 240 pages.
ISBN: 978-1587433993*

Reviewed by Brett Peatman

Has the Church lost its longing for justice? Have churches become more concerned with preaching a message rather than living out its consequences? Have Western Christians lost sight of the Holiness of God?

The co-authors of *The Justice Calling*, Bethany Hoang and Kristen Johnson, seek to outline the Bible's teaching on justice and to inspire Christians to take more seriously their role in doing good to their neighbour. Yet they are not satisfied with producing a mere academic treatise; they want to see more Christians actively working for God's justice in God's world.

The book, which won Christianity Today's 2017 Book Award in the category of politics and public life, is written particularly with younger readers in mind. It aims to outline and apply Biblical teaching on justice. The issue of evangelical theology and social action remains in the background. Theologians such as René Padilla are quoted, but there is no engagement with any of the debate around the role of the church and social justice.

The goal of this book, in Hoang and Johnson's words, is to explain the 'justice, righteousness, and shalom that God longs to see in the world'. Justice is simply defined as 'setting things right'. For the authors what is right becomes clear when we come to understand the 'righteousness of God in Jesus Christ'.

The Hebrew word *shalom* is broadly defined by them as the 'flourishing of all of God's creation' in which 'God, humans, and the rest of creation [are] living together in harmony, wholeness, justice and delight'. Saving grace is portrayed as central to God's justice and central to the motivation to work for justice today.

The structure of the book seeks to outline these three characteristics in terms of creation, the fall, the identity of Jesus and the church today, all in the context of addressing injustice.

Dispersed throughout these categories are the authors' own stories of working against injustice which, for them, has involved fighting against people-trafficking in a global context. While their ex-

amples of fighting international slavery are emotive, they do not give much guidance as to what it might mean to take this seriously in a local context. This has dangers of leaving the reader in a state similar to watching the evening news, that is, seeing horrible images but lacking any clear means to respond constructively.

In the section on creation the authors place a strong emphasis on the importance of the Sabbath and its implications for seeking justice. It is curious that none of the other Ten Commandments are addressed. This is a significant gap, as all love of neighbour finds its only sure grounding in love for God. The authors quote American Presbyterian preacher and author Timothy Keller's dictum that 'justification and the justice of God are joined at the hip'.

The remainder of their general logic is Gospel-shaped and well expounded. Sin and the fall are described as the opposite of *shalom*, that is, the 'fundamental disruption and distortion of what God envisioned for his creation'. The solution to the evil in our world is found in Christ. However, we cannot merely receive Christ. They assert, 'To find life for ourselves and for the world God is calling us to love, we must run toward the darkness with the light of Christ.'

They do not mean that we find salvation through works, but that God's saving work calls us to join God in bringing His righteousness to the world. The authors are trying to move their readers from comfortable, safe contexts towards the darker aspects of our world. Churches and Christians are not to retreat from the world but to engage in its mess. 'Moving toward the darkness involves hearing and seeing stories of injustice that we'd rather not witness,' write Hoang and Johnson.

They argue for a dependence on Christ that will lead to bold action in loving the lost. This dependence and hope – fostered through regular worship, which anticipates the world to come – will enable the Christian to persevere through the brokenness of the sinful world in which we live. Timothy Keller's book, *Generous Justice: How God's Grace Makes Us*

Just (Viking Penguin Books, 2010), is another book in this category, which is a briefer treatment of the subject and ends with a focus on the poor.

Hoang and Johnson's *The Justice Calling* articulates a picture of justice that is clearly broad and far-reaching. They are clearly passionate and keen to convince Christians of the importance of justice, and their book is a good introduction to the topic.

Rev. Brett Peatman is the minister of Aspendale Presbyterian Church.

The book, aimed as it is at younger Western Christians, aims to engage the reader emotionally first and academically second, while leaving it clear that seeking justice is not an optional extra for the people of God. The authors articulate lucidly that a genuine desire for God's justice comes out of knowing God and the Gospel he has given us.

WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN LIFE?

The Good Life in the Last Days: making choices when the time is short

By Mikey Lynch

*Publishing details = (Sydney, Matthias Media, 2017). Paperback: 195 pages
ISBN: 978-1925424256*

Reviewed by Ben Nelson

Everyone says that modern life is complex, fast-paced and chaotic. We struggle to meet the competing demands of work, family, friends and personal interests. It is disconcerting then for Christians to discover that knowing the Lord who redeems and gives meaning to all things only makes it more complex! The compelling call to serve the living God now sounds like a clarion through the clamour of our daily demands and desires, making the struggle even more intense. We are often left frustrated, guilty and confused. But Mikey Lynch, in this his first book, wants to reach out to those caught in this dilemma with a helpful and biblically informed response.

It is a complicated book. Not because of its style, which is clear and contemporary, but because Lynch refuses to give the routine answers of Christian 'folk wisdom' – avoid burnout, observe a set hierarchy of priorities, feel the cost of sacrifice, imagine 'what Jesus would do'. Nor does he reach immediately for theological categories, however sound. Rather, Lynch makes us pick our way carefully through the complexities of navigating daily life as a Christian, all under the searching light of scripture, and so uncover how little biblical support there is for much of what passes as 'Christian' common sense.

Instead, Lynch wants us to develop biblical wisdom, moored in God's revelation and not in our own pat answers. The careful reader can see the theological principles undergirding this wisdom. God's creation teaches us that he has made a di-

verse world, with a host of competing spheres and demands 'built in'. His sovereignty determines our very particular circumstances – who we are, when we are and where we are – that do not allow every avenue of service to every believer. His word is our guide, not our imagination of what Paul or Jesus or Calvin or Amy Carmichael might do, and not the enthusiastic analogies pressed by over-eager preachers. Most importantly, our situation in the last days, waiting for Christ to return 'when the time is short', will mean that good things will sometimes be sacrificed for what will be far better, a tension running all through the New Testament.

I found his treatment of Christian freedom using I Corinthians 7 particularly helpful. Lynch stands with the Reformation in arguing we are not only free from the curse of judgment but also from those human authorities, however well meaning, that go beyond scripture to dictate to our consciences and thus stunt their growth. Christian freedom means there must be more than one right answer to the common dilemmas of daily life. Not just old-fashioned legalism, but the subtle legalism of our program-driven churches that deal in 'typical' ministry paths and the 'wisest option' for believers here receive from Lynch a carefully considered rebuttal.

The principles Lynch outlines will be fodder for my own meditation for a long time to come, and I would invite you to join me in reading and thinking through the implications of this important book.

Rev Ben Nelson lectures at the Presbyterian Theological College, Melbourne.

Partnership



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
AUSTRALIAN PRESBYTERIAN WORLD MISSION

SUMMER 2018 /19

www.apwm.org.au • 1 Clarence Street, 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.

Will Our Generation Miss the Opportunity?

This story was told by an APWM couple serving in a remote part of the world where their personal security is important. For that reason we have removed any reference that would identify them or their ministry location.

At harvest time in our country, if there are not enough workers to do the millet harvesting, the grain heads will fall to the ground. Instead of being harvested and put into the grain storage, much will be lost to the ants or to the birds or chickens or livestock that wander in the fields.

Our family has a small, one-hectare field. Last year we used some very simple improved farming strategies on that land and our yield was three or four times the average per hectare! Our neighbours were very impressed at the yield that we received from the millet that we planted. We had worked hard, and were so encouraged, and we were thankful that it had been a good demonstration to our neighbours of better farming strategies.

But with just our family to bring in the harvest, and because we were often being busy with other things, we weren't able to

harvest the millet quickly enough. Some of the millet heads fell to the ground and were taken away by the ants, who were working hard to store up their own provisions! Some of the crop we had worked hard to grow was wasted.

Often our ministry amongst the people group we serve felt just like that: people were open and interested, ripe for turning to follow Jesus, but there was only a small team labouring for the harvest.

We have been encouraged since coming home to hear of others who are interested in working among these people. We know of two other families heading to our country and have heard that there are some people from a nearby country that are also hoping to join the work. We are so thankful for your part in this gospel labour



and look forward to sharing more about all God has done.

Keep praying that God will raise up more workers, as the harvest is vast, but the workers are few. There are tens of millions in our people group and the vast majority of them have not yet had the chance to hear the gospel.

May it not be that in our generation we miss the opportunity to harvest the fields that are ripe and ready to be harvested for lack of workers.

Bibles for South Sudan



Please join with us in praising God that, at the time of writing, \$134,000 had been donated toward our \$330,000 target to buy 33,000 Bibles for South Sudanese Presbyterians in the refugee camps in Ethiopia.

APWM plans to close this appeal in late

January and will then place an order for the printing of the Bibles in the Nuer language.

If you would like to make a donation by direct deposit then the APWM deposit details are:

Bank: Westpac

Account Name: Australian Presbyterian World Mission

BSB: 032 260

Account Number: 151207

“

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)

”

Ministry in the Face of War...

Rhys and Rhondda Hall serve with ACROSS/Pioneers in war-torn South Sudan and are currently located in Uganda for safety reasons. Their ministry consists of developing educational and Christian media for South Sudanese people. They are excited as they see God answering various prayers:

- 1) A Dinka Bor prayer-hymn book and a Nuer hymn book have been printed for use by a Korean mission group.
- 2) Dinka and Nuer boys (the two warring

tribes) playing each other in a soccer tournament. This step is a significant one at the local level.

- 3) World Vision (already financing), Christian Aid and UNHCR (considering) are interested in smaller numbers of Digital Audio Players for peace building &/or Christian outreach.

A peace agreement was signed on the 5th August. Please pray for the signatories to keep their word. Rhys and Rhondda are currently in Australia on home assignment.



RHYS & RHONDDA HALL



ASSEMBLING HYMN BOOKS

Yats Uganda Bound



EVA LEADING A DISCUSSION

The Rev Chuol & Mrs Kathrine Yat were recently approved as APWM missionaries serving with Pioneers in Uganda. Chuol has been appointed to tutor in theology at the African Renewal University, while Kathrine will have a pastoral care ministry among the female students there. They will both spend some time of their week ministering to South Sudanese refugees in Kampala.

They hope to leave by July 2019, taking with them their two youngest children, Janthin and Chamgoy. They will begin support raising as soon as possible and would love to visit your church in that process. Chuol can be contacted at cyat@mail.com (not gmail) and/or on 0434 055 102.

Pray for Fruit!

Laszlo & Eva Mihalyi serve with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Central and Eastern Europe in Hungary. In this newsletter excerpt they share about the opportunities provided through camping ministry.

When school finishes, life changes totally in Europe, and so does Hungary. People start taking their holidays and parents send their kids to summer camps. Some of the kids spend most of their three months of vacation going from camp to camp, especially if their parents do not have holidays.

Every year there are more and more camps with a great variety of 'themes' ranging from horse riding to canoeing and from astronomy to pottery. Even the military has started running boot camps for young men hoping that it will lead to enlistments.

These camps are a great opportunity for the churches also to spread the Gospel. The Presbyterian Church too, is organising several camps every year for young adults, youth and children. This year we participated in three of them.

First Laszlo went to the Ukraine to a camp run for 12-14 year old kids. We received some funds from PWMU to help finance the camps in the Ukraine as it is a poor country. Add to this an ongoing war with many economic and social problems that greatly affect families and the children especially. We would like to thank those who have contributed.

Then there was the Pioneers' English Camp where we have been doing the translation for many years.

Following that we went to Romania to lead two consecutive English camps in



EVA LEADING A DISCUSSION

two different towns: one with a few Hungarian kids, the other with a group of Romanian children in a rather derelict old mining town, in the high mountains.

We had not used our Romanian for a long time and so we were anxious about how we would cope as leaders of the English tutorials.

We praise God for a great time, and the appreciation from both the kids and the parents. Also, the pastors have booked us already for their next year's camp.

Praise God, the camps went well and the children have heard the gospel clearly presented. We could see some of the kids touched by the good news and the hope it gives.

Please pray that there will be some fruit in the years to come, especially in the isolated areas of Romania and the Ukraine.



From Little Things...

THE ANGURUGU CHURCH

In early 2019 Matt and Kate Vinicombe from the Bundoora congregation head for Groote Eylandt in the Northern Territory where they will serve a small church.

An encouraging email...

Here is an excerpt from an email that we received this month from Terry and Liz (retiring CMS missionaries on Groote).

"Hi Matt and Kate,

We want to share with you some good news of what God is doing in Angurugu. Here is a photo of our church service this morning where 11 local people came, some for the first time and several who have come only in the last few weeks."

We are encouraged to hear this news of

people gathering with one another to hear from God's word. Please join us as we pray that this momentum would be sustained even with the departure of Terry and Liz.

This may not look like much, but when you consider that the week we visited there was only one person at church, it's pretty great. I was reminded this morning that God can give immeasurably more than we ask or imagine - please continue to pray for this church.

Give thanks • for the recent increase in the number of people meeting for church



in Angurugu (The community where we'll be living). • for the seven churches who have agreed to partner with us as we head to Groote – this has been an answer to prayer and a great encouragement.

Please pray for the new people who have started to go to church in Angurugu – join us in praying Eph. 3:16-20.

Administry?

Probably very few people pray that God would bless them with the gift of administration or management. Yet in 1 Corinthians 12:28 Paul lists this as one of the gifts or graces that God gives to the church so that it can function properly. Joy Hill serves in administrative support to three Pioneers team leaders who are based in Hungary. Her service, often in the background, allows these team leaders to carry out the more public work of their various ministries.

Joy writes about a recent trip to a Child Safety Conference and Training in Nairobi, Kenya:

"The conference itself was really good, although I didn't actually hear too much while fulfilling the purpose for which I was there, ie. Administry.

It was a blessing to be able to support the facilitation team by taking care of things they did not need to do, and spending a good bit of time running errands between the buildings,



JOY HILL

picking up printing from the reception ladies, trying to sort out arrival and departure information, and toddling back and forth to work in my room which was blessedly where the better internet could be found.

It was wonderful to meet members of our global Child Safety Team, as well as Pioneers folk from Kenya and other nearby African countries who are just starting to set up their Regional Child Safety team. It was an exceedingly busy time for me and I came home pretty much wiped out, but what a privilege and blessing to be in Africa, in Kenya, serving His people."

Happy 30th Birthday Talua!

Whenever someone has their 30th birthday, it's not uncommon for someone to ask "Where did all those years go?" Talua, the the primary Bible College of the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu, recently celebrated its 30th birthday.

We praise God for our 30-year long partnership with Talua that has seen the following people serve on staff:

Peter & Lyn Barnes, Ian & Jenni Smith, Beryl Burke, Robert & Pam McKean, Chris & Leah Balzer, Philip & Sandra Burns, Darrell & Margaret Thatcher, Norah Taylor, Andy & Rosemary Williamson, Glen & Rachael Connor, Andrew & Marilyn Schache — and currently John & Kara Dekker and Tom and Margaret Richards.

We pray that God will keep Talua faithful

to the teaching of the Bible and that God would use the College in a mighty way. As part of the birthday celebrations there was

a re-enactment of the coming of the ship the *Dayspring*, bringing with it some of the early missionaries.



A RE-ENACTMENT OF THE ARRIVAL OF THE BOAT THE DAYSPRING AT ANENITYUM IN 1848. THIS MARKED THE BEGINNING OF THEOLOGICAL TRAINING IN VANUATU

PRAYER AND FINANCE Response Form

Please send to: **APWM**

1 Clarence Street, 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

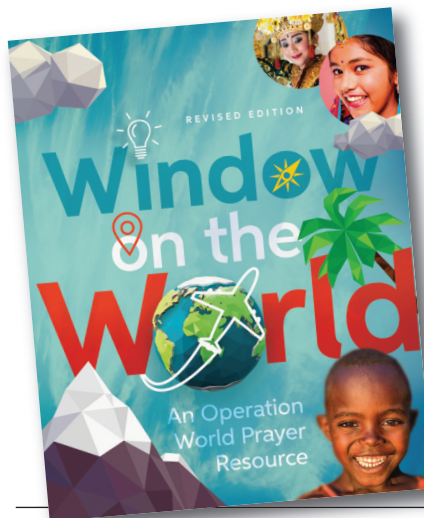
Please write your name and the surname of the missionary you are supporting in the description box.

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

"National Geographic meets the Great Commission..." – Tim Keesee, Creator, "Dispatches from the Front"



Window on the World: An Operation World Prayer Resource

Molly Wall \$29.99

This book is a child's version of Operation World. It has a beautiful layout and is packed with information about each country together with prayer points. It would make a great resource for family devotions and sparking a child's (and perhaps a parent's) interest in what God is doing in His world.

For more information see www.ivpress.com/window-on-the-world

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

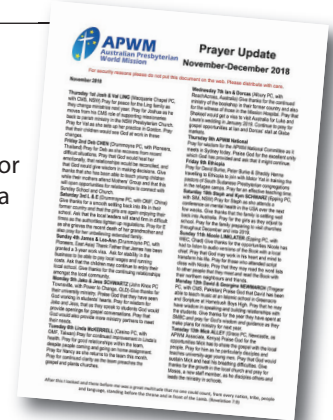
gift] free of testamentary charges and duties for [here insert 'its general purpose' or the specific purpose you desire] and I declare that the receipt of the Secretary of the Trust shall be sufficient to discharge to my Executors."

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

Praying for Mission

Every two months the APWM National Office produces 'Email Update'. This provides two months of prayer points for APWM missionaries all around the world. If you would like a copy sent by email then please send an email to Sheryl Sarkoezy national@apwm.org.au or phone Sheryl on (02) 8073 7490. Please provide the name of your minister so that we can check that you attend a Presbyterian Church.

For security reasons we do not make this available on the internet.



AUSTRALIAN PRESBYTERIAN WORLD MISSION

NATIONAL OFFICE

1 Clarence Street, 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

www.apwm.org.au

STATE CONVENERS

Qld Scott Kroeger

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