

Autumn 2021 | Presbyterian Church of Victoria



FELLOW WORKERS



Fellow Workers

Quarterly Magazine of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria.

State News Committee: Stephen McDonald (Convenor), Phil Betts, Jo Craig, Luke Isham & Tony Zirngast.

Designed, sub-edited and distributed by Virtual Church Assist.

Address changes: <https://pcv.org.au/committees/fellow-workers/>

Submissions, 'Ministry Moves' and Letters to the Editor via Virtual Church Assist: info@virtualchurchassist.com

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.



FELLOW WORKERS

CONTENTS

Editorial: Is the Church catholic? | page 4

Where to From Here? | page 6

Ministry Moves | page 6

From the Church and Nation Committee | page 7

Interview with Phil Campbell | page 8

Hard Decisions Bring Lasting Blessings | page 10

A Dream for Women's Ministry Victoria | page 12

Review: Puritan: All of Life to the Glory of God | page 14

Review: The Mighty Weakness of John Knox | page 16

Review: The Life of the Mind | page 18

Growing Church at Mordialloc | page 20

From Donvale to New Dunesk | page 21

Australian Presbyterian World Mission | page 22



EDITORIAL: IS THE CHURCH CATHOLIC?

Long car trips are a challenge to parents and kids alike. What do you do? There are only so many games of 'I Spy' that you can play.

As a kid, cries from the back seat of 'Are we there yet?' and 'I'm bored!' weren't soothed with an iPad. More likely was that we'd run through the times tables.

Memorisation and saying things out loud wasn't much of a feature of education when I was at school, and seems to be less so today. But reciting and repeating a set of words helps us to learn them in a way that activities and discussions do not.

That's something I wasn't really too worried about when I started out in ministry, much to the disappointment of people at church who love the Lord's Prayer. But as our own kids have grown a little older, I'm seeing the need to say out loud what we believe in a memorable form. Frankly, I'd be ashamed (both as a dad and as a pastor) if kids in the church grew up not knowing the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, and the Ten Commandments.

In these COVID times when there are question marks about singing, isn't that the perfect time to look at other ways we encourage one another through our words, including in our gathered worship (Colossians 3:16, 1 Thessalonians 5:12)?

In an article entitled *Why do we say things together in church?*, Andrew Errington makes a good case for not only singing together, but also speaking together, whether

Bible verses, psalms, creeds, and prayers. (The Australian Church Record, February 2021).

Now, I'd resist any attempt to impose a prayer book on our public worship, as Jenny Gedde did when Archbishop Laud tried to require the Scottish church to use the Book of Common Prayer. But our more recent Anglican brother, Errington, makes some good points: Speaking and praying together reminds us that we are members of Christ's body, it teaches us to pray, and it gives us words to live by as it etches the Scriptures into our memory.

For those reasons and others, we can benefit from saying the same words together at church.

One way we do that at Benalla is by saying the Apostles Creed. It's a wonderful expression of the Christian faith. But one line sometimes feels a bit funny to say: "*I believe in... the holy catholic church*".

Surely that doesn't mean we really should be going to that other church across town?! How can we believe in a catholic church, when the Catholic Church has pronounced a condemnation on everyone who believes in justification by faith alone (in the Canons of the Council of Trent)?

Part of the problem is that 'catholic' doesn't just mean the Church of Rome. It's a word that's been taken by the Roman Catholic Church to describe itself, because it thinks of itself as the universal church. The true church is not defined by being connected through a particular organisation or under

the jurisdiction of a particular human leader. The real catholic church is the church that is under the headship of Jesus Christ, wherever it may be.

As the Westminster Confession of Faith says, “The catholic or universal Church which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the Head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of Him that fills all in all.” (WCF 25.1)

The church we see on Sunday isn't all of the church. As the creed and the Confession remind us, the church is bigger than those who worship with us. It encompasses Christians from all sorts of places and backgrounds who confess the same faith in Jesus (Revelation 5:9-10). Because we're part of a catholic church, we can confess our universal faith together, including in what we say in worship.

But if we could gather together all the Christians alive on the earth in one place to worship God, even then we wouldn't see all of the church. The wonderful truth we confess in the Apostles' Creed is that God is gathering His church through every age. It may not always look like it, but Christ's church is clothed with God's glory and will be victorious because of Jesus' death for us (Revelation 12, especially verses 1 & 10-12).

Being part of the catholic/universal church isn't just something to look forward to in heaven. When we get together on Sunday and through the week, we are part of a spiritual (but very real) reality “the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven” (Hebrews 12:22-24).

“THE WONDERFUL TRUTH WE CONFESS IN THE APOSTLES' CREED IS THAT GOD IS GATHERING HIS CHURCH THROUGH EVERY AGE.”

Speaking the same words together might seem strange, especially when we think of ourselves so much as individuals. But confessing our faith together reminds us that we are not only individuals. If we follow Jesus, He has made us part of His body, His church, along with each and every other person that God chose before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4-5).

That's a reality we should enjoy and embrace now, especially as we have opportunities to do good to others, including those who are not part of our local congregation but who nevertheless belong to the household of God (Galatians 6:10). How is Jesus calling us to serve Him as He builds up the church beyond our own home congregations (Matthew 16:18 & Ephesians 4:16)?

Fellow Workers, do we believe in the holy catholic church?

Stephen McDonald is the Convenor of the State News Committee

Remote administrative and design services for your church



VIRTUAL CHURCH ASSIST
virtualchurchassist.com

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

PETER BARNES

The Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Bill has now passed through both houses of the Victorian parliament. It forbids any attempt to change or suppress, or induce any person to change or suppress, his or her sexual orientation or gender identity. Prayer or counselling designed to change a person, even at that person's request, is prohibited. In short, this means that sexual preference is protected by law, as is any person's gender preference. Homosexual sex is not permitted to be called 'sin', and a male today can claim to be a female tomorrow.

What is the Church to do? Two things come immediately to mind:

1. The apostle considered himself innocent of the blood of all because he proclaimed the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:26-27). We are

obliged before God to preach all that He has revealed to us, whether law or gospel, and to do so in a spirit of love and truth.

2. There is nothing unique in such legislation. When King Darius exceeded his God-given authority, Daniel did 'as he had done previously' (Daniel 6:10).

It is our task to keep on keeping on, to proclaim and to live out so far as we can the gospel of Christ which has been entrusted to us.

May God give us all wisdom and strength in Christ.

Rev Dr Peter Barnes is the Moderator-General of the Presbyterian Church of Australia

MINISTRY MOVES

James Hoey was appointed as part-time assistant at Mordialloc Presbyterian Church and commenced on 1 February 2021.

On Friday 19 February 2021, Mr Dong Jin Choi was ordained and appointed as Assistant Minister at Canterbury.

Licentiate Andy Wong was ordained by the Presbytery of Melbourne West on 5 March to work as pastor of the Flemington congregation.

Rev Simalu Cowley retired from 31 years of ministry at the Samoan Presbyterian Church in Coolaroo with his last service on 7 March 2021.

Stephen Jones was inducted as Associate Minister at Drouin Presbyterian Church by the Presbytery of Gippsland on 7 March 2021.

Licentiate Wayne McArdle was ordained and inducted at the Gisborne Church on 12 March 2021.

Rev Phil Campbell was inducted as the Senior Minister of Scots' Church Melbourne by the Presbytery of Melbourne West on 19 March 2021.

Presbyterian Inland Mission have reappointed Colin and Alison Morrow for a further 4-year term in the Mungo Patrol, covering south-west New South Wales and north-west Victoria.



CHURCH AND NATION

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VICTORIA

CHRISTOPHER DUKE

The Church and Nation Committee would like to thank all those who prayed and contacted MPs over the last few months regarding the grievous problems inherent in the Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Bill 2020.

The Church and Nation committee has been informing our Church members about the Victorian Government's intention to introduce a ban on 'conversion practices' for well over a year through our monthly updates and emails. During this time we also prepared numerous government submissions and conducted private meetings with MPs and government representatives to express our concerns about the upcoming the Bill and lobby for reasonable wording. When the full text of the Bill was released, we discovered that the government had not only ignored our pleas and recommendations but had actually penned the single most radical and punitive 'conversion therapy ban' in the world.¹

Despite our collective efforts to campaign for amendments, ultimately the Bill was passed in full. Although this is an unwelcome outcome, we want you to know that our efforts and those of many other concerned Victorians were not in vain.

Originally, almost all Upper House crossbenchers and the Opposition (Liberals and Nationals) were leaning toward supporting the Bill in full, but an unlikely coalition of concerned Christians, atheist feminists and libertarians managed to win over seven cross benchers and even two Liberal MPs who 'crossed the floor' to vote against the Bill. This is truly something to be thankful for.

Regrettably, at no time did the Labor Party nor its allies in the Greens, the Reason Party and the Animal Justice Party, demonstrate any practical concern whatsoever about the numerous negative impacts of the Bill on vulnerable gender dysphoric children and

adults with unwanted same-sex attraction nor its consequences for freedoms of speech, conscience, association and upon religion in particular.

It is also regrettable that at the time of writing, the Liberal Party has flatly refused to make a public commitment to pass amendments to the Bill if elected at the next state election. Privately, one or two Liberal MPs have given assurances that they will do so (Neil Angus has communicated as such) however the trustworthiness of such assurances, expressed thus far by public action leaves doubts to their validity. I hope and pray that I'm wrong.

However, shortly after receiving the sad news that the Bill had passed unamended, it was truly encouraging to find that ours was the first denomination in Australia to publicly declare that it will continue to provide loving Biblical counsel and to espouse the full gospel of God, regardless of government diktats to do otherwise.

In light of all that has happened, we would humbly make one more request. In addition to praying for Victoria, we ask that our members write just two more emails on this issue:

1. To thank those who voted against the Bill, at great personal and political risk: Beverley McArthur, Bernie Finn, Catherine Cumming, Jeff Bourman, David Limbrick, Tim Quilty, Clifford Hayes, Tania Maxwell, and Stuart Grimley.
2. To advise every political party and Independent MP that you will only preference votes to those who publicly promise to amend the Change or Suppression Bill in line with the Institute for Civil Society recommendations in the 2022 state election.

We thank you for your kind consideration of our request.

Rev Christopher Duke is the Convener of the Church and Nation Committee

¹ Sneddon, Mark, Institute for Civil Society, Problems and Proposed Amendments: Victoria's 'Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Bill 2020'

PROFILE:

INTERVIEW WITH PHIL CAMPBELL

Who is Phil Campbell (background, family, etc.)? And what led you into gospel ministry?

I grew up in rural NSW. Mum and Dad were semi-regular attenders at Inverell Presbyterian Church. I came to faith there as a teenager—in fact, probably as a Sunday School kid. I went on to study Electrical Engineering at UNSW in Sydney, and worked with NSW Main Roads in traffic control, where I helped introduce an electronic lane changing system on the Sydney Harbour Bridge. I met Louise when we were tasked to lead a Bible Study group together—the perfect start to both a marriage and a ministry partnership. Our four children are now married with kids of their own, spread around Queensland, Tasmania and New Zealand.

You've ministered in NSW and Queensland, both as a solo minister and in team ministry. What is the same in each of those ministry contexts, and what sorts of changes have you had to make in your approach to ministry?

Never as a solo minister, thankfully, because as I mentioned above Lou and I have always ministered in partnership together. Her role has typically been in hospitality, Women's Ministry and Pastoral Care—but she's also a gifted evangelist and parish strategist. I credit her with all my best ideas. Perhaps most importantly, she is always honest enough to tell me when my preaching is boring. Our first ten years were spent serving in Maclean in Northern NSW, where we were able to plant a new congregation at nearby Yamba. Perhaps the biggest change when we moved to Mitchelton, on Brisbane's north side, was the opportunity to work more closely with ministry trainees. I've always loved training young preachers, whether in a church context or through QTC (Queensland Theological College), our Presbyterian training college.

Changes in my approach? Perhaps I haven't made enough, to be honest. There's been significant generational change, and I've had to learn that Gen-Y students are very different to those who came before. They've taught me quite a lot though!

What do you see as the present and future challenges for the PCA, and the reformed and evangelical church in Australia more generally?

The challenges before all Bible-believing Gospel-confessing churches are huge. For a start, we need to stop thinking that we're in charge of our cultural norms. In the words of blogger and author Steve McAlpine, we are no longer seen as "the good guys." We've spent our cultural capital to the point that we're now bankrupt—our moral protestations are seen as not just narrow and 'hateful', but also as hypocritical. How do we rebuild a platform in a context like this? It's astonishingly difficult. But I remain convinced that the best remedy is to teach the Bible clearly enough so that the Gospel of grace is intelligible even to first-timers, and pray that through that, God will grow authentic, loving communities of Jesus followers where the fruit of the Gospel is evident. We sow and water, and God gives the growth.

'Saving Eutychus', which you wrote with Gary Miller, has been helpful to many preachers. Why does it matter whether we are being dull when we proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ?

For the uninitiated, Eutychus is the guy in Acts 20 who falls to his death having dozed on a window sill during a late night sermon from the Apostle Paul. Soporific preaching can be dangerous.

To be honest, Gary and I have been amazed at how warmly our book has been received around the world. I think the answer to your question is simple. If we're dull, people just don't hear the message. When you're dozing, it literally doesn't matter what's being said up the front... you're not going to hear it.

The book is very practical, largely because—as I said earlier—Louise has always been very honest with me when I’ve been boring. I had to figure out how to do better. (Gary, on the other hand, has always been scintillating. Seriously. So his input is helpful too!)

Tell us about Mitchelton Presbyterian Church. What makes it tick? What will you miss?

Our 22 years at MPC have been an absolute delight. Over the years we’ve grown and planted; people have been flexible and sacrificial, which you’ll find are pre-requisites for any effective mother-church. I think one of the things that made MPC tick has been a sense of authenticity—people have been able to be honest about their struggles, doubts, failures and fears. There’s also been a real hunger for clear but intellectually substantial Bible teaching, and a focus on ‘growing followers of Jesus’ which has kept me working hard. There’s been a big investment in kids and youth ministry too, along with a real love for our older folks—in a word, multi-generational.

Why does ministry to the inner city matter? What opportunities (and challenges) do churches in the CBD have that other churches don’t?

To be honest, I’m not sure of the answer to that question in post-COVID Melbourne. Will life in the inner city ever be the same? Will the thousands of exiles ever return to their empty apartments? Will CBD offices remain at half capacity forever? Who knows. Obviously, they’re big issues for a church like Scots’. In any case, we’ll be doing our best to work out what it looks like to love the city, and God willing, become something of a Gospel hub. Having come to CBD ministry from an effective suburban church, I’ll be keen to learn as much as I can from the experience and wisdom of others—but again to be honest, I’m not quite as persuaded as

leading lights like Tim Keller in New York that inner city ministry is fundamentally more strategic than other ministries. Different, certainly. Strategic? We’ll pray that it is.

What are your hopes/priorities for your time at Scots’ Church?

I’m keen to see Scots’ grow in our capacity to serve the denomination better in all kinds of ways, because due to our historical privileges we’re both centrally located and well resourced. I’m praying that the pulpit ministry will be strong, gracious and Gospel-centred, preaching Christ in a way that makes sense to ordinary people. At the same time, I’m aware that Scots’ has a certain gravitas—and the music ministry is superb. I’m keen that those things continue. Lou and I would certainly appreciate your prayers as we get established over the coming months!

Phil Campbell is the Senior Minister of Scots’ Church Melbourne.



HARD DECISIONS BRING LASTING BLESSINGS

DARREN MIDDLETON AND MATT DEROON

What do you do with a church that has to close? This challenge faces Presbyteries more often than we would like.

In 2017, the Moorabool charge had small congregations in Bannockburn and Batesford with a third congregation (Anakie) already closed. Services at Batesford had recently ceased, and those who remained gathered at Bannockburn. There was no minister, one elder, and very little Gospel leadership. Closing the churches was the obvious next move.

At that time, North Geelong Presbyterian Church was in the early stages of preparing to plant a church at Lara. Part of the preparation was the expansion of the leadership team, with three new elders elected, and recognising the need to select and train others.

Given the rapid turn of events in the Presbytery, the North Geelong Session thought it might serve the Kingdom best if it redirected its energies to revitalising ministry in the Moorabool charge—with a particular focus on Bannockburn. The Session wrote to Presbytery with a proposal that North Geelong could form a union with the ‘old’ Moorabool charge, to repot the Bannockburn congregation, under the leadership of the North Geelong session. However, separate finances were maintained so that it would be easier to separate.

It was decided that we would take approximately 40 people from North Geelong, who were willing, gifted and able to do local ministry. Some people lived there already, or close by, others rented, and others sold their homes and moved into the area.

The replant team consisted of our experienced elders, Bible study leaders, musicians, and many

mature Christians. The Presbytery of Geelong moved as fast as possible and by November 2017 North Geelong people relocated to the Bannockburn congregation.

The primary goal was enculturating a missional culture (Matt. 28:18-20) through preaching, teaching, modelling, and leadership. The goal was to see the saints equipped for the work of ministry (Eph. 4:12)—that is, gospel ministry is congregational ministry. A large part of securing a culture change was leadership modelling and encouraging that culture and making good use of hospitality as an effective means of gospel enculturation.

It was not without difficulties. Not everyone from the original Moorabool charge was enthusiastic about the changes. Additionally, there was instability around filling the pulpit and mistakes made by the Session that made things difficult at times, primarily through lack of communication.

The truth is, humanly speaking, the revitalisation came a few years too early for the North Geelong congregation. It left a leadership vacuum that resulted in a missional drift at NGPC. This manifested in a drop in mid week meeting attendance, from 90% of all adult attenders to 72% within 18 months. It was the result of new people joining but not buying into the discipleship culture; the accumulation of ministry fatigue at North Geelong; and the often overlooked demographic change from young couples with energy and time to young families with emotional, financial and time demands.

Additionally, the North Geelong congregation felt the loss of so many loved members and leaders of the congregation, as well as going through the change



of moving into a new larger building with a noticeably smaller congregation.

Having said that, Gospel ministry is always hard. You cannot plunder the strong man's kingdom and not expect difficulties. We are involved in spiritual warfare, so prayer is fundamental to any such work. Since the arrival of Matt Deroon at the beginning of 2020, we have seen a strong preaching ministry and growing leadership, resulting in greater stability, clarity and urgency.

Matt and the elders' leadership of Bannockburn has meant that they were in a position to stand on their own spiritually and financially. Three years after the repot and only a short time after Matt's ordination, the Presbytery of Geelong could declare Bannockburn a pastoral charge and separated the North Geelong and Bannockburn in June 2020. It was a great day of rejoicing.

None of this is to say that we have done this particularly well, or there are not better ways of it doing it. Still, it is to say, as presbyteries and as a denomination, we need to find avenues to address the challenges of how we plant new churches and revitalise gospel ministry in our state. And it is to say: it will take a collegial gospel approach that sees the Kingdom much larger than our own congregations. This will mean a culture change for many. We face hard decisions: it will require us to embrace gospel risk-taking with a disposition of giving sacrificially and joyfully to see churches planted and congregations revitalised if the gospel is to be proclaimed, and Christ and his Kingdom honoured.

Darren Middleton is the minister of North Geelong Presbyterian Church.

My first year out of college into a 'repot' with a linked charge has been the best of both worlds.

I was given a great deal of freedom to make decisions as the minister of Bannockburn Presbyterian Church on the one hand, while having the invested interest, prayer, advice and experience of a wiser and older minister in Darren Middleton.

Due to the wisdom, effort and training of North Geelong, the elders are all mature and Gospel-minded men, which is a great blessing and encouragement. Many of the people that make up the body of Christ are mission-focused as they chose to leave North Geelong in order to reach Bannockburn and the surrounding region with the gospel.

Joining BPC has felt like boarding a train that is already heading in the right direction. Spending my final two years of college placement at North Geelong was advantageous in helping with the transition. Even though there will always be challenges we face in church and on mission, I would heartily recommend this method of church planting/repotting for other healthy Gospel-driven churches who desire to see Christ made known.

Matt Deroon is the minister of Bannockburn Presbyterian Church.

A DREAM FOR WOMEN'S MINISTRY VICTORIA

MAIRI GIRGIS

Women's Ministries Victoria (WMV) started 7 years ago as a grassroots movement, which is, in many ways, the best and worst way to start anything! Change can be exciting and dynamic, but it can also be slow and frustrating. Having been part of a national conversation around nurturing women's ministry within the Presbyterian Church we wanted to move from words into action. Seeing this vision supported and formalised within our Victorian church with the creation of Women's Ministries Victoria as an official Assembly committee is an exciting next step in this journey.

WMV has energized a bigger conversation about what it means to be fellow and equal workers in the cause of the gospel. It has been good to partner with local congregations to actively build them up, to challenge thinking about how women can contribute in deeper ways within the local and wider church, to wrestle with difficult contemporary issues which affect us as Christians in a secular world, to strengthen our faith and fortify it for difficult days ahead.

Today I heard a story that encouraged me greatly, about a group of women in a local church praying for the men in the congregation, and the men choosing to consider how they could better serve and encourage the women in the church. It is a simple but powerful story, and it gives me hope!

Sometimes it feels like we spend so much time talking about "how" men and women should work together that we forget to actually work together. It can be exhausting to have the same well-worn conversations over and over again. Wrestling with difficult theological issues is necessary, but it can feel like getting the "women's issue" right is more important than the spiritual growth and encouragement of women within our church. A commitment to loving each other well takes courage, laying aside preconceived ideas and defensiveness in order to build up. When men have engaged with

us in a way that is open and non-defensive it has been enormously encouraging. Too many of our congregations are still sending mixed messages to our women, causing hurt and confusion. We can do better at addressing this.

I don't know what WMV will look like in a year's time, or in ten year's time. But I do know that God has a purpose in it, and I pray that it will honour Him above all. The most powerful change occurs when individuals take up the challenge to live as Christ called them to, with vulnerability, sacrifice, courage, hope, humility, and above all love. There is, of course, a place for institutional change, but this begins with each of us as individuals. Imagine what we can do together! Please, look for ways to encourage women in our church, both by the words you use, and the actions you take. As men and women we can learn so much from each other, bringing fresh insight, iron shaping iron, spurring each other on to love and good works.

As I step aside from WMV in the next few months in order to make way for someone to be employed to lead the next step of the journey, allow me to dream a little of what could be...

- Congregations actively and specifically praying for women's ministries in church, for women at home with children and women bearing witness to the gospel at work and for the appointment of a suitable women's ministry worker.
- Women expressing with enthusiasm their value and place within God's Kingdom, actively involved in sharing the gospel and discipling each other and young women feeling they have a vital role within our denomination.
- Women being encouraged to use their gifts, not just in the workplace or home, but in their local church, the wider church, on church committees and in the world around us.

“LOOK FOR WAYS TO ENCOURAGE WOMEN IN OUR CHURCH, BOTH BY THE WORDS YOU USE, AND THE ACTIONS YOU TAKE.”

- Women reading, writing, researching, studying and enriching the pages of this and other Presbyterian publications with their God given wisdom as we open and apply God's Word.
- Broken and lonely women being nurtured and cared for by the local church, abuse being dealt with properly, and the struggling finding hope.
- Congregations financially and sacrificially supporting the ministry of women within our denomination, actively backing a WMV women's ministry worker.

It is an incredibly humbling experience to be at the service of the same God who created the universe. Seeing the way He uses our imperfect and often stumbling efforts to create something beautiful is awe-inspiring. I don't know what He will call me to next, but I have a feeling it will involve cheering on the WMV team, continuing to meet people where they're at, and hopefully equipping God's people to do well in caring pastorally for each other.

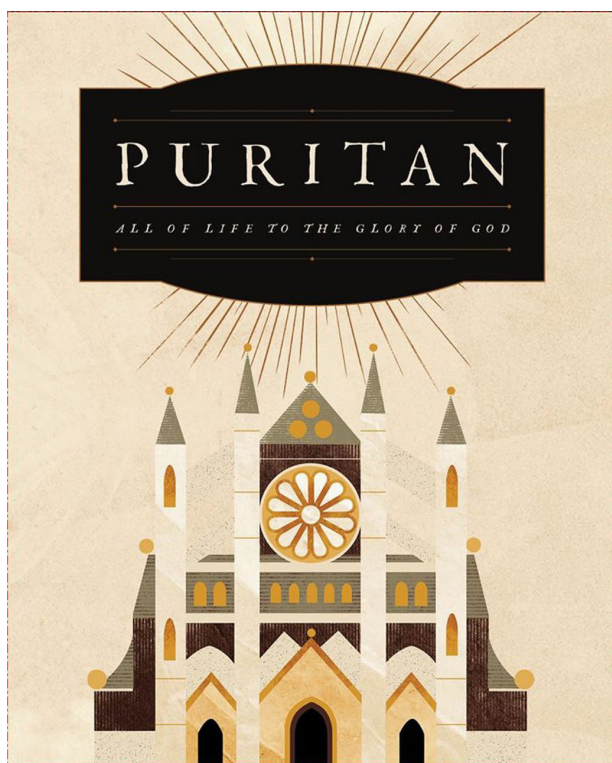
Mairi Girgis was the Women's Ministries Co-ordinator at Women's Ministry Victoria.



REVIEW:

PURITAN: ALL OF LIFE TO THE GLORY OF GOD

REVIEWED BY DEAN CARROLL



Puritan: All of Life to the Glory of God
 Multimedia Pack
 Reformation Heritage (2019)
 ISBN: 040232379062

Calling someone puritanical is not meant as a compliment, but it could sadly also be true that most Christians would not appreciate being called a Puritan because of the many misconceptions they may have about these 16th and 17th century Christians. The deluxe boxed edition of *Puritan: All of Life to the Glory of God* (2019) is a set of six DVDs (which includes a brilliant 2 hour documentary) along with a workbook and a cloth-bound gift book called *Following God Fully: An Introduction to the Puritans*. This material is a great means to help this generation understand who the Puritans really were, and how beneficial their biblical emphases can be to us today. 35 video lessons of between 15 and 20 minutes each are roughly split between who they were (short biographies on influential Puritans) and what they taught. The final lesson deals with their legacy.

Misconceptions about the Puritans are gently and firmly repudiated, followed by an explanation of what is true of Puritan doctrine, as well as the life that flowed from the knowledge of God and his world. Two examples should be sufficient to make the point.

Firstly, when speaking about suffering and providence, the Puritans did not tell people who were suffering to just ‘suck it up’ because God is in control. They encouraged compassion towards those who were suffering by reminding their people to “Speak truth in love, but know also *when* to speak truth in love”. Certainly this is still good advice today.

Secondly, contrary to the accepted narrative that the Puritans were sexual prudes, “The Puritans were the first group of writers in church history who agreed that sexual love was one’s due debt to one’s spouse... two people were to give their bodies to each other and *enjoy the act of so doing*”. The Puritans held to the biblical teaching that God created sex, and therefore in the right context it is good and to be enjoyed with thanksgiving.

18 subjects are unpacked in the section on Puritan teaching, starting with a brief overview of the Westminster Assembly. Two of them were particularly helpful to me.

In relation to preaching, the Puritans preached to the mind because they understood that “a mindless Christianity would soon foster a spineless Christianity”. They also preached helpfully to the conscience, but they preached most skilfully to the heart, seeking to woo the hearer as spouses, to marry them to Christ. This challenged me to think how winsomely I preach to the people God has entrusted to me as his under-shepherd.

The Puritan joy, dare I say near ecstasy, in relation to enjoying the Sabbath was a great encouragement and helpful rebuke to how intentionally and extensively I engage with God on his day. They deliberately set aside the whole day to public, family and private worship, particularly warning against the idea that under the New Covenant there was no

moral obligation to set aside the day in its entirety. On the contrary, we are to delight in God on the one day in seven he has set aside for his glory and our benefit for the whole day. George Swinnock said of the Lord’s Day that it was “highly favoured of God, thou golden spot of the week, thou market-day of souls, thou daybreak of eternal brightness, thou queen of days, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among days”, and that on it God’s people should enjoy Jesus through “the mountings of mind, the ravishing happiness of heart, the so-lace of soul”. Overstated? Or do we undervalue its benefit as God intended.

Puritan: All of Life to the Glory of God is not cheap, but is well worth the investment for personal edification. Each presentation (along with the workbook) is also brief enough to be useful in a small group/Bible study context, to generate discussion as to who the Puritans were and what they actually believed and taught. The workbook can help greatly here, as the chapters correlate to the video presentations, each chapter having five sections entitled Meditate, Learn, Reflect, Discuss and Read. *The Puritan (Deluxe Edition)* is available at reformers.com.au and the digital only version at shop.mediagratiae.org.



MOPS.ORG.AU



Want to reach young families?

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

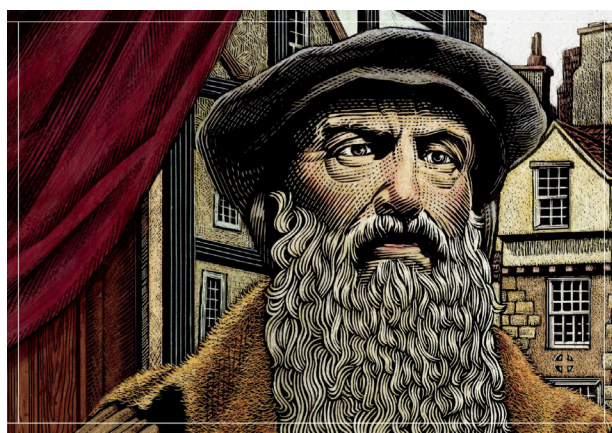
To find out more, email info@mops.org.au to get an info pack

#thisismotherhood

BOOK REVIEW:

THE MIGHTY WEAKNESS OF JOHN KNOX

REVIEWED BY STEPHEN MCDONALD



The Mighty Weakness of
John Knox

DOUGLAS BOND



A Long Line of Godly Men Profile

The Mighty Weakness of John Knox
Douglas Bond (Reformation Trust: 2011).
151 pages.
ISBN 9781567692556

Not that long ago, students at the Presbyterian Theological College had hoodies made proclaiming them to be students at the School of Hard Knox, with a muscular image of Scottish reformer John Knox emblazoned across the front.

It was pretty cool (so, obviously, I had nothing to do with it).

For Christians with a smattering of church history, Knox lives in the imagination as an irresistible force. No doubt, he was a bold preacher, and mightily used by God in bringing Gospel change to the church in Scotland.

But Douglas Bond paints a more accurate picture of Knox. Imprisoned by the French for 19 months, he was far from the weightlifting hero on the PTC hoodies. Knox lived with severe physical limitations. So much so, he often signed letters 'John Knox, with his one foot in the grave'. Yet, he would also preach three or four times a week, and regularly for three hours at a time.

I was glad to find that Knox's strength in the pulpit was not a product of a naturally strong personality. Knox wrote, 'I quake, I fear, and tremble.'

In fact, when he was first asked to preach, he ran from the room crying! He said of himself, 'The person of the speaker is wretched, miserable, and nothing to be regarded, but things that were spoken are the infallible and eternal truth of God.'



How could such a weak man be used so mightily by God?

That's the question at the heart of *The Mighty Weakness of John Knox* by Douglas Bond.

Beginning with a 24-page summary of Knox's life, Bond goes looking for the source of Knox's power. He inspires readers by showing us the power of a Christ-subdued life and prayer, which then shaped Knox's ministry in the pulpit and with the pen.

Along the way, we're shown that Knox was not the woman-hater or tyrant he is often portrayed as. But neither was he a man of his age, bound by the social and cultural conventions of the day.

In fact, the influence of his first and second Books of Discipline (procedure manuals for the newly reformed church) build on the fact that God does not show partiality based on birth or status. They provided for a national education system, the

first in the Western world. (Oh, for the day when churches would not consider its giving sufficient when they could pay their minister, but gathered as much again for diaconal needs and again for Christian education!)

Preachers especially will be encouraged, even we who cannot thunder like 'a Hebrew Jeremiah set down on Scottish soil' (as Mark Galli described him).

But there's something here for all Christians. Rather than idolising the heroes of church history, we can learn from them to depend on the mighty God they trusted and followed.

That's why Paul could write, 'Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ' (1 Corinthians 11:1). And that's why we can all benefit from this short biography of John Knox.

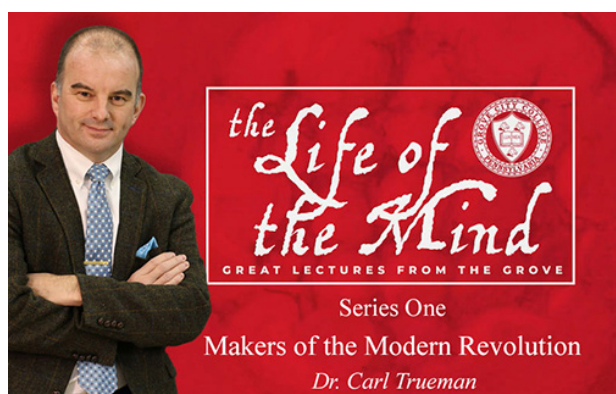
Stephen McDonald is the minister of the Benalla Regional Parish

REVIEW: THE LIFE OF THE MIND

REVIEWED BY STEPHEN MCDONALD

Grove City College (2020)

Eight 20 to 25-minute lectures



If we're honest, most of us have been surprised by the frantic pace of cultural change in the West. In particular, the prevailing way of thinking about sexuality and gender is radically different to what was widely accepted even 20 years ago.

So, Grove City College has done a service to Christians around the world by releasing a series of eight short lectures by Carl Trueman on YouTube called *The Life of the Mind*, they trace the formation of the Modern Mind.

We might think that people have always had the same mental framework as we do, but Trueman defines modern people as having four distinctive features to their thinking:

Expressive Individualism: the idea that to be fully you means to give public and social expression to that which you feel inside, rather than looking around to society and finding out what we need to learn in order to conform. So, authenticity and spontaneity are highly valued.

Happiness: defined as an inward sense of psychological satisfaction.

The world is seen immanently: there is nothing transcendent, nothing beyond our physical world, no sacred order beyond our social order, to which we can appeal for authority or a standard to live by.

Moral codes have been completely overthrown by the sexual revolution: any standard of sexual behaviour has come to be seen as oppressive, hindering expressive individualism and psychological happiness.

Trueman traces these ideas through the lives and writings of Rousseau, Marx, Nietzsche, Wilde, Freud, Reich and Firestone. But don't be spooked by that list! Trueman's lectures are aimed at the upper high school or first year university students. So you don't need to have done a subject on philosophy to get a lot out of this series.

While the historical aspects are informative, the real value of the course comes as it explains how these ideas politicised sexuality, especially in lecture seven. He then concludes by considering where this modern worldview has left its fingerprints on modern society: in law, in ethics, and in freedom of speech.

At times, I wanted Trueman to tear these flawed ideas apart, as he often does in his books and on the podcast *The Mortification of Spin!* But his main aim here is to explain the thinking of others so that we can understand our times and respond more effectively to them.

The lectures are based on Trueman's newest book *The Rise and Triumph of Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to the Sexual Revolution* (Crossway: 2020). If you're hesitant to commit the time or money to a 400+ page book, *The Life of the Mind* would be a great place to start. Parents will likely find the lectures suitable for them to view with their mature teenage children.

May we be better prepared to respond to our world as we speak even better news to it than seeking happiness by giving expression to our fallen hearts.

Stephen McDonald is the minister of the Benalla Regional Parish.

GROWING CHURCH AT MORDIALLOC

PAUL HUYNH

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Mordialloc has a long history in the community with earliest records showing that services began in late 1885.

Mordialloc PC had a vibrant community presence through the many social activities including church fetes, picnics, catering groups and sporting events, during the time when being involved in the local church was prevalent in society. It has been known to be a very loving and caring congregation. However, like many other churches, Mordialloc PC has seen decline in recent decades.

In recent times, by God's grace and the loving support and faithful prayers of the leadership of the church, we have seen the work of the gospel bring local Christians and new converts into the church community.

Under God's grace, the congregation has grown and in order to continue to effectively reach out in Mordialloc and the neighbouring suburbs, we have appointed James Hoey as a part-time worker to help in this great Gospel task. James will be focusing on growing our music ministry, discipleship, Bible teaching alongside his partnership role at MTS (Ministry Training Strategy). James is also a Presbyterian Candidate and will begin some studies at the PTC this year.

Please pray for James, Melody and their 6-month-old son Levi as they settle into life at Mordialloc and that God would use them for his gospel purposes.

Please pray that God would enable Mordialloc PC to be a strong gospel presence in the community, so that many more will come to Christ.

Paul Huynh is the minister at Mordialloc Presbyterian Church



FROM DONVALE TO NEW DUNESK

ANDREW LETCHER

In less than six hours, Noah Paterson transitioned from the leafy green of Warrandyte to a brown summer in Ardlethan. But the journey was not just a road trip to a new geographic destination, it was an opportunity for an adventure and a chance to step out and do something different during that important season of moving into adulthood.

Noah has spent more than a decade at Donvale Presbyterian, growing up through the church and being involved in youth group and PYV. Upon finishing year 12 last year, Noah decided to embark on Presbyterian Inland Mission's Gap Year at New Dunesk in NSW to explore a different way of life and see what the Lord might have in store for him.

At New Dunesk, Noah's days are varied. He is enjoying developing a range of farm related skills and undertaking introductory theological studies through the Timothy Partnership. He is also teaching RE in two local schools, connecting with the local community and helping serve through the Temora Presbyterian Church.

The months ahead hold the promise of many new experiences for Noah, with plans for him to undertake a road trip to see PIM's work in Mt Magnet, WA and then to enjoy a six week posting to a large cattle property in Queensland.

The Gap Year at New Dunesk is part of PIM's new initiative to Inspire, Equip and Send out people for Gospel ministry in Inland Australia. Noah is PIM's first 'Gappy'.

To find out more about doing a Gap Year with PIM, visit pim.org.au/gap-year

Andrew Letcher is the CEO of Presbyterian Inland Mission.





IT TAKES A VILLAGE

It's sometimes said that it takes a village to raise a child. What does it take to raise a theological lecturer?

These two men are world-changers. On the left is Chanreiso Lungleng, better known to many as 'Aso'. On the right is Vijai Tagore. They are gifted and intelligent men who could easily make a comfortable living in a lucrative career back home in India. However, they have turned their back on such prospects to pursue equipping others with the wealth of the gospel. Both lecture at the Presbyterian Theological Seminary (PTS) in Dehradun, India.

About four years ago Aso came to Australia to pursue first a Master's degree, and then a PhD in the Old Testament at PTC Melbourne. Aso and his family have just returned to PTS following the completion of his studies.

In 2012 Vijai and his family came to Australia so that he could study for a Master's degree at Christ College Sydney and returned to PTS where he continued lecturing. 2019 saw Vijai and his family back at Christ College and he is now in the final year of his PhD in the New Testament.

For many years the Presbyterian Church of Australia has enjoyed a rich partnership with PTS. Our support for these men is a very real, practical outcome of that partnership.

Through their Gospel teaching ministry, these men and their families will change countless lives throughout India. Their training was made possible through the partnerships that exist between PTS, the Victorian PWMU who sponsored Aso, Canterbury Presbyterian Church (Victoria), PTC Melbourne, APWM NSW, Revesby Presbyterian Church, Chatswood Presbyterian Church, Christ College and many unnamed individuals. We praise God for raising such a rich 'village' of supporters. We thank those who generously make all of this possible.

These men are part of the next generation of theological lecturers at PTS—and we, the Presbyterian Church of Australia—have been privileged to serve the work of the gospel in training them. They will then go on to serve their brothers and sisters as they equip them with the gospel to go throughout the length and breadth of India and beyond. How can people who cannot read or do not yet have the Bible in their mother tongue be reached for Christ?

THOSE WHO CAN'T READ

One solution is provided by Global Recordings Network, which sends recordists across the globe to record people reading the Bible and singing Christian songs in over 6,000 languages.

Yousif and Vivian, from Clayton Presbyterian Church in Victoria, have served with Global Recordings for several years. Yousif is a trained recordist and has recorded Gospel messages, songs and scripture in Africa and central Australia. They had planned to travel to Africa in 2021 to carry out recordings, but COVID changed those plans.

Since they couldn't travel overseas, Yousif and Vivian spent 2020 studying linguistics at the SILA training college in Kangaroo Ground, Victoria. In 2021 instead of heading for remote locations in Africa they will be travelling to Indigenous communities in northern Australia to record audio and audiovisual materials—translated scripture, songs, Bible stories, testimonies—in Indigenous languages, voiced by Indigenous people.

They are now waiting for an invitation to go, and they will need to increase their support team which has diminished over the course of 2020. Would you be willing to pray for Yousif and Vivian and the people they serve? Can you contribute to this vital ministry?

To learn more go to: globalrecordings.net/en/yousif



VANUATU: WAITING TIME

What do you do when you're ready to serve and not one, but two borders, are closed? APWM planned that after an orientation course at Kangaroo Ground Rob and El Falls would leave Australia in March 2021 to serve at Talua, Vanuatu. Vanuatu has no known cases of COVID and so has kept its border firmly closed.

Making good use of "waiting time", Rob has commenced study for a Master of Theology at Christ College. In addition he has commenced working two days a week for Talua doing remote curriculum development work with Tom Richards (Westminster Presbyterian Church) who currently serves at Talua.

We pray that Rob and El will undertake the orientation course in July and head to Vanuatu in August.

We praise God that Rob and El's support level is at 70%. If your congregation, or you as an individual, would like to join their support team then please go to www.fallsvanuatu.info or contact the National Office. You can view an interview with them at shrtm.nu/nOf7



