

Winter 22 / Presbyterian Church of Victoria



# FELLOW WORKERS



**CHURCH PLANTING:  
THE BENEFIT OF  
HINDSIGHT**

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*Fellow Workers*

Quarterly Magazine of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria.

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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](mailto:info@virtualchurchassist.com)

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# FELLOW WORKERS

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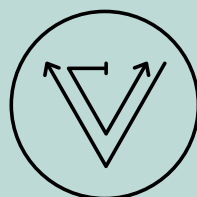
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# EDITORIAL: ONLY ONE HEAD

**STEPHEN MCDONALD**

When people ask, ‘Which church is your church?’, I usually respond, ‘The church I go to is...’ or ‘The church I’m the pastor of is...’ Perhaps I’m a bit pedantic. But it’s a helpful way for me to remember that whichever church I go to is not my church. Even if I’m the pastor.

## WHOSE CHURCH?

It’s Jesus’ church. Many times, discussing situations in different congregations, that’s been very helpful to remember. We need to keep coming back to that fact. The church is Jesus’ church.

As we rejoice in the fruits of missionary work, think of the successes and failures of church planting, grieve with congregations who are suffering, and learn about new graduates starting out in full-time ministry, we need to tell ourselves, ‘It’s Jesus’ church’. But we easily forget.

The church doesn’t belong to an ancient saint or to an ethnic group (even one so distinguished as the Scots!). The head of the church isn’t the Pope or the monarch of Great Britain or the Moderator of the General Assembly.

The Westminster Confession of Faith reminds us of this Biblical teaching: “There is no other Head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ: nor can the Pope of Rome, in any sense be head thereof; but is

that antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the Church against Christ, and all that is called God.” (WCF 25.6).

It’s not the minister’s church or the treasurer’s church or the organist’s church or the board member’s church or the most generous giver’s church or the loudest-person-to-speak-at-the-meeting’s church.

But as human beings, we’re much more likely to forget that we are not the head of the church. It can be a trap for pastors, but any of us can fall into it. And it’s much more likely to happen in the way we live as Christians, rather than in our stated doctrine.

## BUT WHO RULES CHRIST’S CHURCH?

The fact is, when we act like it is someone else’s church other than Jesus’, we’re giving in to the spirit of antichrist. Yes, there will be one identifiable antichrist at the end (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). But we are deceived if we don’t think that the antichrist is operational today.

Perhaps we get confused by the name, thinking that it’s only the one ultimate anti-Christian leader. But ‘antichrist’ has a more basic meaning: ‘anti’ doesn’t only mean ‘against’ but ‘in the place of’. So, the temptation to put someone (especially ourselves) in the place of Jesus in His church is a constant danger.

John tells us to expect that and to actively guard against it: “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognise the Spirit of God: every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.” (1 John 4:1-3, see also 1 John 2:18 and 2 John 7).

So, antichrist is anyone who does not actually recognise Jesus as Lord but puts themselves in Jesus’ place. Specifically, the spirit of antichrist is at work when we make the church about ourselves instead of about Jesus.

## DOES CHRIST RULE OUR HEARTS?

So, how would we know? What gives away a secret change of heart where we actually think we’re the head?

Maybe it could happen without others really noticing. Our approach to church would be about what we get out of it, instead of how we can honour and serve Jesus and His people, including the lost.

But if we actually believe that the church is about us, it will show eventually. We’ll get annoyed or even angry when the church service doesn’t serve our preferences or the people don’t recognise us as we think we deserve.

And our words will give us away, even if our actions seem spiritual. We’ll say things like:

“No one knows how to do things properly (except me)”

“This church is falling apart (unless I do something)”

“If we don’t do it this way, I’m leaving!”

Every expression of self-importance is a denial of the spirit of Christ. It’s a failure to put our salvation into practice. But the more we truly embrace Jesus, the more we will become like Him who humbled Himself to be our Saviour. And we’ll become much more able to resist giving ourselves the place which only He deserves in our lives and in the churches we belong to (Philippians 2:1-18).

“THE CHURCH WASN’T  
INVENTED BY PEOPLE  
LIKE US TO DO WHAT  
WE WANT WITH.  
IT IS JESUS’ BODY.  
HE SETS THE AGENDA.”

Paul spells it out for us in Colossians 1:18, “And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.”

The church wasn’t invented by people like us to do what we want with. It is Jesus’ body. He sets the agenda. We respond to His direction. He is supreme, not just in the universe, but also in the church.

## SO WHAT?

What a difference that makes! Because Jesus is the head, we can be certain that He will care for His church (Ephesians 5:29-30). And we know what that will achieve in the end: the Father is putting all things under Jesus’ authority (Ephesians 1:20-23). And Jesus is exercising all authority in the universe to save, sanctify, and strengthen His Church (Matthew 28:18-20 & Revelation 19:6-8).

That means we can try our best, even if we fail. Things at church might not go our way. We can serve God somewhere else, or we can keep going in difficulties. Why? Because it’s Jesus’ church.

Fellow Workers, could anyone tell by observing our lives that Jesus is the head of the church?

*Stephen McDonald is Convener of the State News Committee.*

# CHURCH PLANTING: THE BENEFIT OF HINDSIGHT

**ANONYMOUS**

I write with the dubious credentials of having helped close a church plant. As an elder in the “mother” church, we planted in 2013, but seven years later made the painful decision to close the plant.

Christ promises to build his church, but that is not a promise to every local church or each church plant. When we start new gospel work of any kind, we never know how God will use it or whether he will establish it. That is in his hands alone. So every venture is, in a sense, a risk. It is essential that we take such risks, stepping into the unknown. In a talk for *The Gospel Coalition Australia*, I recently heard Rory Shiner say, “The only failure is moral failure.” It is not a failure in the sight of God to embark on a well-intentioned, biblically faithful, carefully planned venture that does not succeed. That’s faith, not failure.

So I do not want the closing of our church plant to discourage others from planting, nor do we as a church want it to stop us from planting again in the future. Rather, we conducted a review of what happened so as to learn from the experience and not waste the pain.

As we look back we recognise the sovereignty of God. Some things happened that were entirely out of our hands, but fully in his. For reasons he alone knows, he allowed some difficult providences. The church planter was diagnosed with cancer part way into the venture, requiring chemotherapy and extensive time off. That is a massive challenge for a young church planter and a small plant. No one could have foreseen that.

Another challenging providence was the kind of people the church attracted. In God’s grace it became a spiritual home for a number of non-Christians, new Christians, and people with significant personal difficulties. That is a beautiful thing. Speaking of Jesus’ ministry, Matthew quoted the words of Isaiah, saying, “a bruised reed he will not break and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out” (Matt 12:20).

A church for the broken and bruised is good and right. But the challenge of that providence was that the core team was not growing sufficiently in numbers or strength, while having to stretch itself further and further to meet the needs of those who came. That is difficult when you could really do with a few robust, mature, committed Christians joining as well.

So there were things like that which were out of our hands. But looking back, there were also things we could have done differently. Of course we need to be careful about generalising the learnings. These are our reflections in hindsight, and they may or may not be relevant in other contexts or other church planting models. But with the benefit of hindsight there are five things we will pay attention to next time we plant.

## 1. A STRONGER BASE

We would have been better to plant from a stronger base both in the mother church and in the church plant. The mother church gave away many of its best: young, passionate leaders with a heart for mission. In sending them out to plant, the mother church took a big hit. It depleted leadership depth that took years to rebuild.

But while we gave away more than we could really afford to, we didn't give away enough. The plant needed a stronger core team, consisting of a larger number of people with greater ministry and leadership experience. There were only about thirteen adults in the initial core team. We should have waited longer so as to develop more leaders first. When you lack people resources, you risk burning out good people. By the end, some really good people were very, very weary.

Of course there are different models of church planting, with different ideal core team sizes. For us going forward, we'll look to give away more like 40 adults, half of whom have significant ministry and leadership experience. We'll look to do that when we have sufficient leadership depth in the mother church to keep going well without them. That will require a much larger church base than we had.

## 2. A MORE STRATEGIC LOCATION

From the start, we had our eyes on a nearby green-field development. At the time of starting the plant, however, that area was still largely undeveloped and had no location for a church to meet. So the plant began in an old suburb nearby, first in a school hall and then in a borrowed church building. But it was hard planting in an old suburb that had no central areas for gathering, where people were not looking to form new community connections, and where most Christians travelled to other locations for church.

Eventually, the new greenfield location opened up and the church plant moved there, to its third location in just a few years. The new development had good options for meeting in the heart of a new and growing community. Being there was a very different experience to the old suburb. But by the time that happened a lot of the seed funding was already used up, as was much of the initial energy of the core team.

We should have waited longer and only begun when the Greenfield development was ready. There we would have had a more strategic location for mission and better options for where to meet.

### 3. A STRONGER PRESENCE

The location issues meant that most of the core team did not live in the church plant area. They were not that far away, but they were not in it. It would have been preferable to have a distinct geographic target area from the start, with the planter and the vast majority of the core team present there from day one. That would make it far easier to have a community presence, to build relationships with neighbours, to assess community needs, and to develop relevant ministries.

Next time we will look to have most of the core team, including the planter, living in the target area, not driving to it.

### 4. A TIMELY LAUNCH

We see that we probably started church services too early. There was an initial time of training, strategizing and preparation, then a soft launch, and then the main launch. But more time in the preparation phase would have been valuable.

An early launch means a lot of resources are directed toward running church services. As soon as you launch you have to think about children's ministry and Child safe policies, about music ministry, welcoming teams, set-up and pack up, sound and tech, advertising, morning teas, and everything else that goes into running a weekly service. A delayed launch would have allowed more of that time and energy to be invested into better preparing and training the core team, building more bridges into the community, and further developing outreach initiatives.

### 5. A ROBUST FINANCIAL PLAN

It is not that we didn't have a clear financial strategy, but the agonising reality is that at end of the day, we closed the church because of finances. We didn't close it because it wasn't doing good work; it was doing beautiful gospel ministry to people who loved it. But the reality is, it took too long to become financially self-sustaining. The initial seed funding dried up and support from the mother church could no longer be extended. The church planter reduced from four days to three days a week, but that only increased strain on him and everyone else.

“WE HOPE TO PLANT AGAIN AND WE HOPE MANY OTHER CHURCHES WILL CONTINUE TO PURSUE A VISION FOR PLANTING CHURCHES.”

It sounds so unspiritual, but a church plant can't succeed without money. No money, no church. Of course God provides richly and abundantly, and we were blessed with generous gifts and grants. But these are only for a season. Great care is needed, then, in deciding when and how to begin using that funding in relation to the issues of timing and location mentioned above. Once underway, there needs to be careful monitoring and managing of those funds in the early years of the plant, prior to financial independence. Everyone, both in the mother church and the church plant, needs to be very aware of where things are at financially.

As we look back on what happened and on these five lessons, we are convinced that what was done over those years was not a waste. People were saved. A beautiful community was formed that truly blessed people. Many were trained, equipped, served and grew spiritually. God wastes nothing. So we are thankful for what was done for the Lord through the plant, even though it broke our hearts to close it.

We don't want our story to be discouraging. We hope to plant again and we hope many other churches will continue to pursue a vision for planting churches. We just hope that the things we have learned will help both us and others plant well in the future.

*Names, locations and other details have been omitted to facilitate critical reflection on principles and practice.*



# SOUTH YARRA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FIRE

## THE SOUTH YARRA SESSION

The South Yarra Presbyterian Church Session and congregation are thankful for the prayers and concern expressed by members of the PCV following the large fire on our church property on the morning of Thursday 12 May, 2022.

The fire started in a building rented by a school, and severely damaged two halls used by it. Fire-fighters attended quickly, and mercifully there was no loss of life or serious injury.

We are thankful that our church building was preserved, though there is some water and smoke damage. We are currently holding our Sunday morning worship services at the Balaclava church thanks to the generosity of that congregation and its minister, Rev Luke Isham.

Please continue to pray for us and our Board of Management as we plan for our return to our building.





# HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE REGIONAL EFFECT?

## RUSS GRINTER

In John's Gospel, Philip lets Nathanael know that they've found the Messiah, "Jesus of Nazareth". Nathanael's reply is famously stereotypical of regional areas, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

Nazareth is a regional town that many people wouldn't give a second thought to, except every Christmas. Can anything good come out of regional areas?

The gospel teaches us again and again, that God turns the way the world thinks upside down, that the Lord works through our weakness, and there is much to learn when we look to regional Victoria, where our weakness is used by Christ for His strength.

It's all about the "Regional Effect".

In 2005 a journalist for the Sydney Morning Herald, John Huxley, wrote about some research conducted by skills acquisition specialists at the Australian Institute of Sport. His article<sup>1</sup>, 'The Wagga Effect: Why players from the bush are worth two from the city', outlined the many factors that are at play in developing high profile players of sport. He wrote of the "Wagga Effect", referring to a city in regional NSW, and also of the "Bendigo Effect", and the "Ballarat Effect" in Victoria.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.smh.com.au/national/the-wagga-effect-why-players-from-the-bush-are-worth-two-from-the-city-20051110-gdmexe.html>

I grew up on a farm at Temora, north of Wagga. I lived in Wagga for a few years, then in inner Sydney a few years, and now in Bendigo. I've seen the "Regional Effect", I think it's very real.

It happens where a large proportion of leading sportspeople come from regional areas due to two factors found in regional cities and towns:

1. A large enough population to warrant sporting facilities for many sports;
2. Yet a small enough population that people are exposed to a high level of competition at an earlier age.

Here's my big idea: I think the Regional Effect can be seen in church planting and gospel ministry.

There has been a lot of talk about how strategic cities are in Christ's commission of making disciples, and even how influential city people are in our thinking on mission. I don't wish to discount this. Actually, I don't wish to say anyone is more strategic than someone else. If we're meant to be making disciples of the nations then there is no "type" of person more strategic than another. Our local churches ought to look like our local neighbourhoods, wherever that neighbourhood is found.

Yet, if we just look at numbers (and we often do), then what is strategic about regional areas is that there are people here. There's about 1.5 million of us in regional Victoria<sup>2</sup>. Along with this, if we are thinking strategically, I don't think that regional people are as culturally influenced by Melbourne as often is said we are – I think that it's the regional hubs that matter. It's in these regional hubs where we could be planting churches and seeing revitalization of churches across regional areas.

For, just like in the sporting fields of our regional areas, I think the conditions exist that see training and development opportunities opened up for people at a younger age. In regional ministries that I have been part of at Temora, Wagga and now Bendigo – we see so many weaknesses present wonderful opportunities.

The vacancies of small churches can provide opportunities to train people in preaching and teaching. The many small churches in regional Victoria mean that younger folks have opportunities to learn leadership earlier. Like the John Williamson song about 'The Farming Game', the whole "solve problems on your own" translates to regional areas where a 22 year old may be the leader in a regional church – praying to raise up other leaders.

The "regional effect" means that people live, work and play in the same community of people who know them well, so that they have opportunities to be real and honest about themselves – showing the hope they have in Christ. It means that local leadership has opportunities that are born out of necessity. Where a church with a full functioning Session and Board of Management may not be an option, why not host a small group Bible study for all in town and link it to a local regional church?

All this does mean that regional churches are often stretched. Often serving large areas where long distance is a way of life, where the needs are great and we have to "do more with small". Yet this helps us to rely on Christ's strength in our weakness.

## “IT'S IN THESE REGIONAL HUBS WHERE WE COULD BE PLANTING CHURCHES AND SEEING REVITALIZATION OF CHURCHES”

Yes we have a perception problem, “can anything good come out of Regional Victoria? There's no beach, no airport, and long distances...” There's a history here of regional people not being loved by short-term ministry, as sometimes pastors or people part of churches see regional areas as a stepping stone back to where life is better in Melbourne. Yet there is a lot of joy here, seeing people exposed to high level leadership, preaching, teaching, planting of groups and ministries in towns around – God is doing something here.

I love seeing the “regional effect” in church planting and gospel ministry, I love seeing God work in our weakness. I love seeing regional people saved, shaped by healthy churches, led by country people, with a culture of Christ. We country folks do take a little pride in seeing the names of those in the sporting hall of fame who come from regional areas – but that is nothing compared to the glory that is to be revealed when we see country people whose names appear in the Lamb's Book of Life.

*Russ Grinter is teaching elder at Reforming Church, Bendigo. This piece was originally delivered at the Advance Church Planting Conference hosted by the Church Planting Committee in November 2021.*

<sup>2</sup> <https://profile.id.com.au/australia/population?WebID=190>



## KOREAN MEDAL PRESENTATION NIGHT

**ROSLYN BROWN & ALISON STANLEY**

In February, PWMU was approached by the Consul at the Embassy of the Republic of Korea to ask us to arrange an event where the Korean Ambassador could present medals to family members of our women workers, Isabella Menzies, Margaret Davies and Daisy Hocking, to honour them posthumously. These women supported the Independence Movement against Japanese occupation in 1919. The National Foundation Medals and citations were sent to Australia after the honours were announced in Korea on 1 March, 2022.

A committee of representatives from PWMU and the PCV was formed, headed up by Rev John Wilson, the Clerk of the GAV, and Mrs Roslyn Brown, State President of PWMU. Several months of intense collaborative planning ensued, in liaison with the Korean Embassy, the Melbourne Consulate, and staff at Scots' Church.

Approximately 200 people attended the celebration held at The Scots' Church Melbourne on 3 May, including many from the local Korean community. Korean Presbyterian churches in Melbourne contributed to the event and were well-represented. It was a delight to meet the three family representatives accepting the medals, Mr John Thompson-Gray (for the family of Margaret Davies), Mr Stephen Hocking (for the family of Daisy Hocking) and Rev Dr Andrew Menzies (for the family of



Belle Menzies). They had all made a huge effort to be there and were very gracious in their responses. John has passed the Order of Merit for National Foundation Medal and citation for Margaret Davies on to Cheryl Penberthy, Principal of PLC, to be housed in their new heritage centre, to inspire future generations of girls.

Ambassador Jeong-sik Kang from the Korean Embassy was equally gracious in his response, acknowledging that these women had gone to Korea primarily as missionaries, but had contributed to the transformation of Korean society. Apart from having the world's 10th largest economy, South Korea sends out more cross-cultural Christian workers than any other nation except the United States of America.

As the evening was an opportunity to share the gospel in what is normally a secular event, Moderator Rev Peter Phillips reminded everyone of the desire these women had to tell people the good news of Jesus. Mrs Brown's speech highlighted the influence of the gospel on Korean society and the role played by women of PWMU. Rev Phil Campbell led attendees in insightful prayer. Douglas Lawrence AM and three Donvale musicians provided music for the evening. Medal recipients, along with Korean

dignitaries, were given gifts by PWMU, including PWMU cookbooks and home-made biscuits. In exchange, both Rev Phillips and Mrs Brown received precious replicas of Korean National Treasures from the Korean Embassy. The medal recipients each also received several magnificent bunches of flowers from various Korean groups.

It was meaningful to have the PWMU banner hanging in Assembly Hall, where inter-personal connections were strengthened over a Korean-themed supper by caterers Gherkin Relish. Attendees enjoyed cross-cultural fellowship, sharing their interest in Korea and thankfulness to God for His work. In short, a joyful, inspiring night that honoured the Lord.

*Roslyn Brown and Alison Stanley are President and Secretary of the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union.*



# FROM YOUTH GROUP TO MTS APPRENTICE TO ORDAINED MINISTER

Recently ordained in the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, Brian Luong always knew he had a heart for the gospel. He says, “I’ve always had a desire to serve the church and preach the gospel, but I often felt ill-equipped.” This is his story of coming to faith, growing, being trained and serving in ministry.

From a young age, Brian remembers attending church. As a part of a Chinese family who migrated to Australia from Vietnam, he recalls his grandmother would bring “all the grandchildren along to this little independent Chinese Church in the western suburbs of Melbourne.” This was Melbourne Chinese Bible Church.

In the early years of attending church as a primary student, Brian describes it as lots of fun and games and Bible stories. But a turning point for him was when he was 12 years old. Brian shares, “After Sunday school [one day], we rushed home [to find out]...that my uncle (who was quite young) had passed away.”

It was a devastating experience for Brian’s family and a pivotal personal moment for him. As a part of the Asian culture, mourning plays a big role, but there is no discussion about death. Brian recalls, “from then that made me fear death, [and ask myself], what happens when I die?”

## GROWING IN FAITH

As Brian continued to grow up, he attended a youth group run by one of his cousins, John Huynh (now a Minister at Surrey Hills Presbyterian in Victoria). Through youth group, he experienced reading the Bible for himself, week after week. When reading through Mark at the age of 15, Brian remembers, “I came to realise and see that Jesus has died for my sins and He rose again. It was pretty awesome.”

Over time Brian understood that he didn’t need to fear death, because Jesus had died for him. Jesus had risen to give him eternal life! From there, Brian put his trust in the Lord and began his involvement in ministry.

## THE TAP ON THE SHOULDER

After studying Commerce/Arts at the University of Melbourne, Brian moved into work in the finance industry as a young adult. He worked at IBM for 2 years in Business Operations and then at Telstra as a Business Analyst in Finance and Strategy. While he worked, Brian continued attending and serving at Melbourne Chinese Bible Church in the western suburbs. He was heavily involved at church. However, Brian struggled with not having the headspace to think about his place and path in ministry. Moreover, he felt that navigating church life and leading God’s people in a cross-cultural context wasn’t easy.

One day Brian’s cousin John, who had been so instrumental in the Youth Group that brought Brian to Jesus, sent him an email. Brian shares, “he was studying at Moore College. He says [in the email], ‘Brian, I think you should consider full-time ministry’.” Having seen God work so faithfully in him, Brian took this ‘tap on the shoulder’ seriously.

## THE NEXT STEP

Over time, as he considered ministry, Brian continued to see a great need in Melbourne for the Gospel. However, Brian describes not knowing what his path should be. “I was feeling ill-equipped but also, I wasn’t sure whether I should go straight into full-time ministry.”

Soon it became clear that the perfect next step was an MTS apprenticeship. Brian shares, “I needed a trainer, an older Christian brother to train me. Teach me, walk with me, pray for me. And to help me know if full-time gospel ministry was the right thing for me to do.”

After deciding to do MTS, Brian moved from Melbourne to Sydney to take up his apprenticeship. Having been told about various good training churches in Sydney, he took up an apprenticeship at St Paul’s Carlingford. While there, Brian was trained by Evan McFarlane.



Throughout his two-year apprenticeship, Brian was involved in teaching primary and high school scripture. He taught Prep at Murray Farm Primary School, Grade 2 at Carlingford Public School and Year 7 at James Ruse Agricultural High School. He also ran an inter-school Christian fellowship group at James Ruse, trained leaders, preached at Asian Church, led Bible study, did one-to-ones and more.

Brian says one surprising thing he learnt from was setting up and packing down chairs. He shares, “I remember doing lots of chairs – packing and setting up. That taught me a lot about faithfulness. Every week it was...hundreds of chairs...It was good for my godliness and to build up my character”.

Brian describes doing MTS as tasting full-time ministry in a variety of forms. It whets your appetite to do more and shows you what you need to learn.

## FROM MTS TO MOORE COLLEGE TO ORDAINED MINISTRY

After his experience being trained in both the theological and the practical by Evan McFarlane, Brian was keen to do further study. He recalls one pivotal time after preaching when his trainer gave him difficult feedback.

Brian shares, “I preached the sermon and he just kind of ripped into me. He’s like, ‘really? You said that sort of thing...[He said] the answer is always in the text, that’s in the Bible. So...work harder at the text’.”



After resisting the urge to crawl away and hide, Brian says, “I thought yes, I want to work harder at the text so I can teach God’s word faithfully. That spurred me on to want to do Bible college and want to study God’s word.” So, Brian went to Moore College.

Having completed his study at Moore College, Brian returned to Melbourne. He shares, “I didn’t know where God would lead us, God led us to the Presbyterian Church and that’s where I serve now.” Just a few short weeks ago in February 2022, Brian was inducted into the Presbyterian Church of Victoria to serve as an Associate Minister at Epping Presbyterian Church in Northern Melbourne.

## THE IMPACT OF MTS

For Brian, MTS had a great impact on his work as a minister now. Not only did it lead him on the path to college, but it informed how he thinks about ministry and seeks to work for God. He shares, “MTS really gave me that desire to want to make disciples of Jesus.”

Through his MTS apprenticeship, he was also challenged to see faith as not just ‘doing things’, but being gracious and like Jesus in how we live and work. Brian describes one particular time he approached his trainer in a mess, struggling with some sin in his life. Brian remembers, “I thought he’d come down hard on me. But he was very gracious, showing me that God’s forgiven us of our sins and saved us by grace in Christ alone.”

This was just one of the experiences through MTS that really shaped Brian into the worker for Christ he is today. For others thinking about MTS he says, “I think everyone should do MTS.”

“A lot of people don’t do MTS [because] they worry about finances and stuff rather than trust the Lord. We’re worried about those things rather than stepping out in faith and trusting that God will take care of us.”

For Brian, his MTS apprenticeship really shaped his thinking to be all about the gospel. Worldly things shouldn’t stop us from stepping out and trusting that God will provide what we need as we do his important work.

*This article was originally published by the Ministry Training Scheme and is reprinted with permission.*

## EXIT STUDENT INTERVIEW

# SHADY MEHANNI WARRNAMBOOL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

*Tell us about your background—where you grew up, how you met your wife, and when you became a Christian?*

I was born in Egypt, and migrated here with my family when I was almost 9. I spent time growing up in the Eastern suburbs, and then spent teenage years and early adulthood in Frankston.

I had the wonderful privilege of being discipled to follow the Lord Jesus all my life, thanks to the faithfulness of my parents. My folks also encouraged me to go to PYV camps which were formative and encouraging in my faith to continue trusting in Jesus.

It was in PYV camps that I first met a young girl called Josie (I can't actually remember the first meeting- although she remembers it). It wasn't until another 5 years or so that I asked her out to Maccas for our first date, and to my surprise she said yes... but we went to another cafe!

By God's grace we've been married for 9 years, and God has been gracious in providing us with 4 kids: Evelyn, Jemimah, Georgia and Hudson.

*What did you do before training for the ministry?*

I used to zap people for a living with x-rays and ultrasound, seeing their insides. But God laid a desire in my heart to consider full-time gospel ministry to talk about what's going on on the inside and the one who can fix it eternally!

*Why did you start theological study?*

This came in stages, through various ministry involvement in local congregations such as youth and kids ministry, preaching, growth group leading and men's events.

We moved to Warrnambool to start a METRO traineeship to test out the waters for full-time gospel ministry, and through the involvement of my Trainer Toby, as well as the Session and the church. I was encouraged to keep going down the path of full-time ministry.

We moved back to Box Hill to start theological training at PTC. I was given the opportunity to study and explore God's word and developed relationships with other candidates, seeing the way that God has gifted them for gospel ministry.

*What were some highlights of your preparation for full-time ministry?*

We were amazed at God's provision for us through college in the challenges of full-time study with a family, as well as the way that he provided for us through churches who supported us financially (some weren't even sought), as well as support from the extended family who served us wholeheartedly.



*What are your priorities for your ministry in your exit appointment?*

We are thankful to God for the way that he has placed us in Warrnambool Presbyterian, and the way that the church loves us dearly. We are excited to partner with them to continue to proclaim Christ as Lord, and that only through Jesus there is life to the full!

We are thankful as well that God has placed us in team ministry alongside a servant-hearted Ben Johnson as senior pastor, humble Jake Martin as METRO trainee, and faithful admin worker Jeanie Sheely.

*How can we pray for you and the congregation you are serving?*

Pray that I would be able to serve and love my family well, to trust in God's provision in ministry (not by might but by my Spirit!), to recognise that I am not the saviour, be reminded of God's grace and kindness, to love the saints well at Warrnambool and to passionately call the sheep who are not yet of the fold to faith and obedience in the great shepherd.

On a congregational level it would be great to pray that we stay focussed on the gospel wheel which we launched earlier this year where everything that we do centers on what God has done for us in Christ. We talk about Connect with God and his family, Growing to be more like Jesus, Serving God's family and the world, and Going with the great news about Jesus.

## EXIT STUDENT INTERVIEW

# MARCUS CAMPBELL MALVERN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



*Tell us about your background, including where you grew up, how you met your wife, and what you did before training for the ministry*

I grew up in Melbourne's north-eastern suburbs, but I began attending Canterbury Presbyterian Church after I finished secondary school. Canterbury is also where I met my wife Yunmi. We were involved together in ESL outreach to working holiday makers. That's how we met. We've been married for 6 years, and we have a 2-year-old son, Sean. Before training for the ministry, I worked as a sales representative for a textbook distributor. Exciting!

*At what stage of your life did you become a Christian? How did that happen?*

Growing up, I attended church with my mother and sister. It wasn't until I was 15 that I decided to follow Jesus for myself, a decision I marked by being baptised. While I was very keen to follow Jesus, the truth of the gospel hadn't hit home for me yet. This was something I wouldn't understand until my first years of university, which was when I listened to a series of gospel-centred sermons in my car as I travelled to and from the campus. From that point on, my life was turned around. I had a new love for God and his people, and I had a deeper appreciation for all that God had done for me in Christ.

*Why did you start theological study?*

My reasons for undertaking theological education were personal. I wanted to be in a position that better allowed me to devote all my time, energy, and resources to sharing with people the gospel that'd changed my life. At first, I thought this would take me overseas. But I later realised that God had other plans for me here in Australia. When I became an elder at Canterbury, I was able to see firsthand what pastoral ministry looks like in a local church. It was something that I grew passionate about, and I was encouraged by a couple of people to consider whether I should apply to be a candidate for the ministry. Suffice to say that I did.

*What were some highlights of your preparation for full-time ministry?*

My preparation for the ministry took a long time. I completed my degree over 5 years, with a 7-year gap in between my 3rd and 4th year. As much as I enjoyed my initial 3 years of study, the 2 that followed later were by far the most enjoyable. I had a clear purpose for why I was studying that I didn't have before. I knew exactly why I was there. And I think that all contributed to a real sense of comradery between myself and the other candidates in my cohort. I had lived on campus at the college before, but it was different this time. All the friends I made, all the chats I had, and all the footies I kicked—they were the real highlights of my preparation for ministry. (Sorry college faculty.) Honestly, I can't put it down to anything other than God's perfect timing that I went back to theological college when I did.

*What are your priorities for your ministry in your exit appointment?*

When I started out my theological training, I wanted to be in a position that would better enable me to share the gospel with people. Now that I'm in the thick of it, my priority is no different. If anything, all I keep learning is how important it is to keep the gospel at the centre of all my ministry. But this isn't an easy task. It's a real challenge, and it comes with a real cost. My only hope is that God would give me the strength to complete the work He's given me.

*How can we pray for you and your family and the congregation you are serving?*

- Praise God for our appointment to Malvern Presbyterian Church.
- Praise God that we've had plenty of time to get to know the congregation.
- Pray that the gospel would take root and transform lives at Malvern.
- Pray that God would give us a heart for the lost and passion to make disciples.

## EXIT STUDENT INTERVIEW

# KALPAN VASA TATURA-RUSHWORTH PRESBYTERIAN

*Tell us about your background, including where you grew up and what you did before training for the ministry.*

I was born into an upper, middle-class Jain (Hindu) family, in a small city situated in the West part of India. Growing up in a large joint family, and actively involved in a vibrant religious community, was something of a great exciting experience. Life was full of fun, food, and festivity. I came to Australia in 2007 as an international student to do a Master of Accounting. I was still happily following my Jain-Hindu religion and had no desire to find a new religion or to add any more gods to my list.

I worked for MYOB in client support for about six years before I started training for the ministry. I also worked in door-to-door and business-to-business sales/marketing jobs, which I thoroughly enjoyed, as it helped me to learn more about Australian life and culture.

*At what stage of your life did you become a Christian? How did that happen?*

After arriving in Australia, through a friend I was introduced to an Indian man, Alex Christian (An Elder from St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Clayton). Through him, I became friends with some more Indian Christian families. I used to argue and question their belief in Jesus being the only God.

One day in 2009, brother Alex offered me a Bible and encouraged me to read it for myself. I took it saying, "Yes, I will take it and read, it's not going to change anything!"

Well, I started reading the gospel of John and eventually came to Ch 14. There I read Thomas saying "Lord, how can we know the way?" to which

Jesus answered "I am the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." I realised that brother Alex and other Indian Christian friends were telling the truth. Jesus claimed here that he is the only way to God. I don't know why but I was drawn to read the Bible more.

I read all four gospels multiple times in the next few months. I was gripped by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. I had never read or heard about anyone like Jesus. I saw that Jesus was so powerful that he could calm the raging sea by his word, yet he was so gentle that even little children came to play with him. He rebuked and silenced a demonic unclean spirit, yet he was full of grace and mercy towards an outcast broken Samaritan woman.

I continued reading the Bible and then one day it hit me when I was reading Matthew. In ch 15, Jesus said, "It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person. . . what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person." In these verses, on the one hand, Jesus literally shattered my core Hindu religious belief of Vegetarianism. And on the other hand, he exposed the sinfulness of my heart and convicted me of my lifelong religious hypocrisy. From then on, I started reading the Bible with more zeal and seriousness. For the first time I started praying to Jesus and I literally threw away all Hindu idols I used to worship.

I don't remember the exact day and time but in early 2011, I surrendered myself to Lord Jesus Christ, repented of my sins, and believed in Him as my only Lord and God.



*Why did you start theological study?*

After I was baptised (November 2011), I became an active member of the Clayton Presbyterian Church. Christian fellowship in that local congregation helped me to grow in my Christian faith and love. I also felt within me a growing desire to start theological study. In 2014, with Session's prayerful support and blessings, I started the theological study as a means of preparation for future ministry.

At the same time, in my church, I was involved in various ministries like Sunday School, discipleship, street outreach, and preaching. It was not only great joy and privilege to serve in these ministries, but it was also great training and experience for me.

It was the Session, ministry team, and various congregant members at Clayton Church who encouraged me to pursue my desire of entering into full-time ministry.

*What were some highlights of your preparation for full-time ministry?*

One of the highlights of my preparation for full-time ministry was to see and experience God's faithfulness and providential care for me throughout my study and training. Another highlight was that the Lord graciously provided me with some good Christian friends along the way and I believe that they are going to be my strong lifelong prayer support.

*What are your priorities for your ministry in your exit appointment?*

I am convinced that it is only when the Spirit of God speaks through the Word of God that the people of God become what they are meant to be for the glory of God. So, here in my Exit appointment, Tatura and Rushworth, I have firmly resolved to concentrate on faithfully preaching the Word and maintaining a healthy pastoral visitation schedule.



*How can we pray for you and the congregations you are serving?*

Please pray that:

- I may continue to grow in the grace and knowledge and love of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- God would continue to open my eyes so I can see wondrous things from His Word and that I may never lose the awe of God.
- The Lord may help me to watch my life and doctrine closely and to persevere in them.
- Both congregations at Tatura and Rushworth would grow in their work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 1:3)
- God may grant them to be strengthened through his Spirit in their inner being, so that Christ may dwell in their hearts through faith.
- God would help them to faithfully proclaim the gospel, in words and deeds, to their friends, family members, and neighbours.

## EXIT STUDENT INTERVIEW

# ROB KOH HAMILTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

*Tell us about your background, including where you grew up and what you did before training for the ministry.*

I am a follower of Jesus, husband of Rebecca, and father of Samuel (4) and Joseph (3 months). I am also the Assistant Pastor at Hamilton Presbyterian Church in South-Western Victoria.

I grew up in a Christian family in the Northern and Eastern suburbs of Melbourne. When I was still in primary school, my family moved to Donvale Presbyterian Church. My parents, church family and para-church Christian organisations faithfully instructed me in the Bible from my childhood.

*At what stage of your life did you become a Christian? How did that happen?*

When I was about seven years old, my mum sat me down and explained to me that Jesus died on the cross to pay for sin, and that if I believe in Him, I will live in heaven for ever with God. I believed it then, and I still believe it now. But as a seven-year-old, I had a limited understanding of the depth of my sin, and I wasn't really making any significant decisions independently of my parents. From there, my faith journey was a gradual process of realising experientially that Christianity stands up to scrutiny, that it's really true, and that Jesus really is worth following.

I did pretty well at school. If you asked me about the purpose of life and the centre of my identity back then, I would have given you the correct answers about being in Christ and living to glorify God. I sincerely believed this, but my real attitudes and priorities were somewhere else. I was proud of my achievements and was driven to a large extent by a desire for a comfortable lifestyle. Adjusting to uni was a struggle for me, not just academically,

but socially, too. It was through these difficulties that God showed me what it really means that our standing before God is based not on my merit, but on Jesus, his perfect love, his death on the cross, and his resurrection from the dead. Missionaries from the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students taught me from the Bible and showed me by their example that Jesus really is worth following, and challenged me to be real with God and myself about the purpose and direction of my life.

While I was at uni, I met Rebecca. We got to know each other through Christian Union at Monash University. As we spent more time together, we both began to realise that we were helping each other to grow in godliness. I'm a socially awkward introvert, and she has helped me to realise that loving people means reaching out to them, even if it's outside my comfort zone. Eventually, it dawned on me that this relationship was helping both of us to follow Jesus, so we got married in 2014.

In between finishing uni and getting married, my mum got terminally ill. It was a hard time, but she knew Jesus as Lord and Saviour, so she was able to pass through suffering and death with hope. Through this time, my family, Rebecca, and my church family at Donvale Presbyterian showed me the love of Jesus in a very real way. This, together with my personal disillusionment with the field that I studied, were powerful inputs as I re-assessed what I should be doing with my life.

*Why did you start theological study?*

Around that time, my mentor at Christian Union was encouraging me to consider doing a ministry traineeship. But prayerful reflection and conversations with mature Christian friends indicated that church ministry would be a better fit for me than campus ministry. So, I spoke with the pastors at Donvale, stopped looking for work as a lawyer, and started a METRO traineeship at the start of 2016.

Through my METRO traineeship, I preached, prayed, led services, disciples some people from church one to one, visited church members in their homes and in hospital, led Bible studies, participated in the youth team, ran a course on conversational evangelism, door-knocked and letterbox dropped the area around church, and read a bunch of helpful books. A lot of Christian ministry is caught rather than taught, and it was great to be able to learn from my trainer, Rev Clinton Le Page. Prayerful reflection and feedback from mature Christians confirmed in me a conviction to continue pursuing church ministry by becoming a candidate at the Presbyterian Theological College at the start of 2018.

My studies at PTC were not easy, but it was also a time of great blessing. I got increasingly frustrated at things like having to quote and refute authors who, despite their cleverness, do not believe that the Bible is true, and the academic pressure to waste time interacting with intertestamental literature. I don't think it would have been possible without the love and support of the college community, my churches, and my own family, especially Rebecca. But it was a great blessing to sit under the wisdom and pastoral experience of the faculty and other staff at PTC.

*What were some highlights of your preparation for full-time ministry?*

The outstanding highlight of PTC was the first time that I preached from the New Testament after a year of Greek. I preached from John's account of Jesus' trial before Pilate. Having access to the original language confirmed the nuance and tone



of the exchange between Jesus and Pilate. I am sure that studying the original languages will be a valuable asset for my ministry going forward.

*What are your priorities for your ministry in your exit appointment?*

At the beginning of this year, I was sent to Hamilton Presbyterian Church. We have been welcomed warmly by the congregation. I am blessed to be under the leadership of Rev David Schulz, a godly man who exemplifies pastoral love for God's people and demonstrates deep theological reflection in preaching. We also have people of all ages in our congregation, including quite a few young families.

*How can we pray for you and your family and the congregation you are serving?*

Please pray for us, that God would give us wisdom as we try to help our congregation to work through how to bring up our children to know and love Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, and to reach out to our community with His Gospel.

## EXIT STUDENT INTERVIEW

# RAY PATCHETT WARRAGUL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

I grew up in a farming family in Gippsland, which basically had a Judeo-Christian ethic but the Gospel was not taught. Thankfully, my parents sent me to a Christ-honouring youth group where I was able to hear the Bible taught and was exposed to the need for repentance. My conversion in early teens was characterized by a strong sense of the burden of sin.

As I grew in Christ it started shaping my vocational decisions towards development work in the 'third world'. After training as an Engineer and working in irrigation for a few years I completed one year of water projects for refugees in northern Kenya. This highlighted how under-equipped I was theologically. This experience of development projects was also the context in which I met my wife, who was looking at using her nursing qualifications in 'medical mission.'

Together we sought theological training, partially at PTC, where we were attracted to Presbyterian ministry because of the strong emphasis on expository preaching and sound theology. However, due to our plans to return overseas we did not consider ordination at that stage.

Subsequently, because various issues arose preventing a return to East Africa, we ministered in a Baptist Church in East Gippsland for ten years while raising three children. Our whole family then went to Ethiopia to take on some Word-based ministries before returning to Warragul with two extra (adopted) girls.

During this time circumstances developed under God's sovereign hand, whereby we became more involved in the Warragul Presbyterian Church-plant to the point of completing the requirements for ordination. We are now praying towards seeking to build up that ministry and partnering with Word ministries in various places.





## MINISTRY MOVES

On the evening of 5 June 2022, the Presbytery of Melbourne West inducted Rev **Bill Medley** as Associate Minister in the Clifton Hill-Essendon Linked Charge.

Rev **Peter Owen** of Point Cook Presbyterian Church passed into the presence of the Lord Jesus on Monday 25 July at the Gabrielle Jennings Palliative Care Centre. His funeral was held at Scots' Church on Wednesday 3rd August. Pray for Ruth and the Owen family.

**Ian Atkinson** has retired as the Safe Church Compliance & Administration Officer and **Ashley Manly** has been appointed to this role.



MOPS.ORG.AU



### Want to reach young families?

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

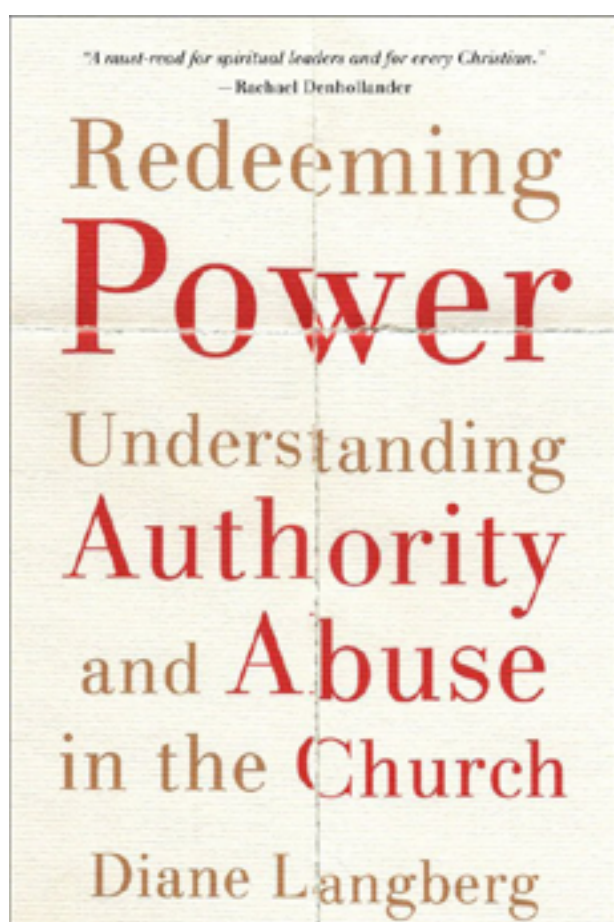
To find out more, email [info@mops.org.au](mailto:info@mops.org.au) to get an info pack

*#thisismotherhood*

## BOOK REVIEW:

# REVIEW: REDEEMING POWER

REVIEWED BY TARYN HAYES



*Redeeming Power: Understanding Authority and Abuse in the Church*

Diane Langberg (Brazos Press: 2020)

ISBN: 978 158 743 438 9

Shocked, but not surprised.

In the last few years, it has become commonplace for Christians to hear yet another Christian leader exposed for his abusive behaviour. We respond with shock but, sadly, little surprise.

Devastatingly, abuse isn't limited to stories that make the headlines. Horrors quietly unfold in churches and Christian communities around the world—destroying people, families, and churches. It is in light of this Dr. Diane Langberg penned *Redeeming Power: Understanding Authority and Abuse in the Church*.

### UNCOVERING THE HORRORS OF ABUSE

Langberg's lifelong career in psychological care for abuse victims began accidentally, and at a time when abuse and trauma were not well understood. By making herself the student of her patients, Langberg learned to recognise the destructive effects of power abuse—discovering that PTSD is as evident in victims of sexual or physical abuse as it is in victims of war.

In time, her patients came to largely comprise people who had experienced abuse within churches where power structures protected the perpetrators and sacrificed the victims. Surprisingly, clergy members were often victims too: Husks of their former selves, they were broken by those who had weaponised their power and authority against them—like wolves in sheep's clothing.

Abuse within the church? How can this be?

Langberg explains:



*Some corners of Christendom today have, I fear, become less interested in truth and more interested in power. We have acquired fame, money, status, reputation, and little kingdoms. Yet at the same time, we are steeped in pornography, marriages are failing in large numbers, abuse is covered up, the next generation is turning away, and we tolerate leaders in our organisations and pulpits who feed off their sheep. (146)*

## FAILING TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM

In *Redeeming Power*, Langberg carefully unpacks how it is that the Church could be riddled with abuse. She explains that most perpetrators do not set out in life to become an abuser. The journey to habitual abuse is surprisingly well greased with small lies and self-deception. All too often, deception is layered upon deception in an attempt to save face. Perhaps more alarming, we fail to recognise the abuse of others because we have excused our own wolf-like tendencies.

When abuse becomes tangled up in the reputation of the church or its leaders, truth and godliness seldom trump hypocrisy and sin. We claim righteous reasons. If this gets out, it will damage the gospel! It will cause people to dismiss the church and reject Jesus! People will leave! It will split the church! Board meetings of elders, council members, or pastoral staff are often long, anguished affairs with unsatisfactory conclusions that favour expediency over transparency. Abuse is downgraded to “poor management” with hollow promises of doing better.

Everyone loses. Victims are re-victimised—often left without support or care—and abusers lose the opportunity for a redemptive chance for change.

## REDEEMING POWER IN AND THROUGH JESUS

In *Redeeming Power*, Langberg walks the reader through not only what it takes for churches to fall prey to abusive structures and behaviours, but also what it takes to redeem power structures for the good of the gospel and of the sheep.

Divided into three parts, *Redeeming Power* focuses first on defining power. In part two, Langberg unpacks the many ways power is abused within the church context. Finally, part three directs the

reader to the redemptive power of the cross. In this section, Langberg explores the redemptive power and person of Christ and the healing power and body of Christ. It is a clarion call to all Christians to examine their hearts and seek to live like Jesus. Langberg notes that:

*Jesus uses his power to protect, to expose, and to restore dignity. He calls his people to be in the world using our power under his authority, displaying his character by speaking truth, shedding light, and tending and protecting the vulnerable. (173)*

While the process is not easy and requires a firm commitment to truth, transparency, and the gospel, it is not surprising that the key to redeeming power within churches is found in Christ himself. We are to love Christ more than we love our systems. And in so doing, we are to emulate him and use the power he has given us—of authority, humility, love—to bless and not to curse.

## NEEDING THIS BOOK

In the words of the former USA gymnast, renowned speaker, victim advocate, author, and attorney, Rachel Denhollander:

*This book is one of the most important works for a pastor, or anyone in a position of authority, to dwell on. Langberg’s work laying out the relationship between power and abuse and contrasting it with how power is exercised in the person and work of Christ is foundational for any leader or ministry desiring to reflect the gospel. This book is a must-read for spiritual leaders and for every Christian as we seek to exhort each other to righteousness and use redemptively whatever authority we have in our own spheres.*

The subject of church abuse is often very difficult to understand fully. For many it takes further reading and reflection to come to a place where nagging concerns can be recognised as significant indicators of potential abuse. *Redeeming Power* is a good place to start.

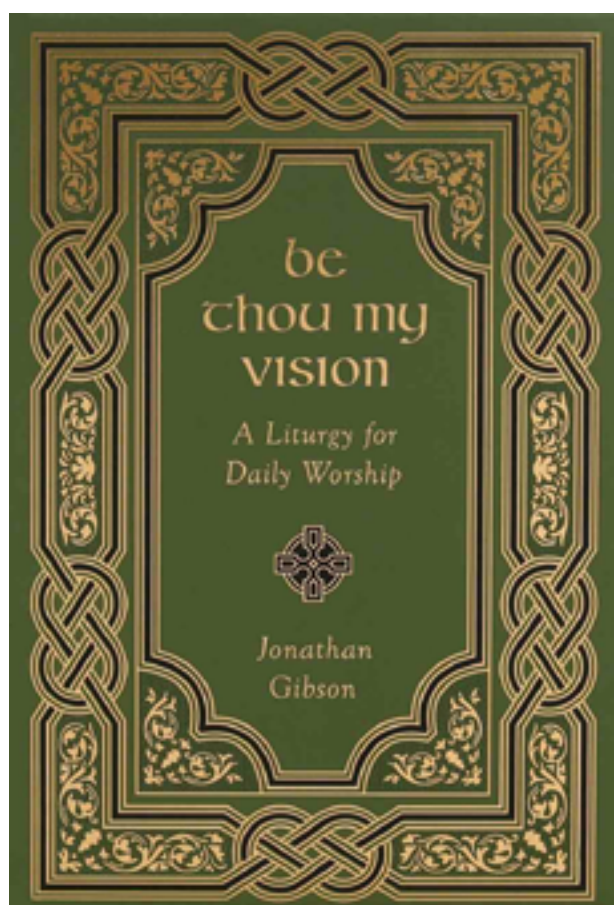
Taryn Hayes co-hosts *The Lydia Project: Conversations with Christian Women* podcast with Tori Walker.

*This book review was originally published by The Gospel Coalition Australia and is reprinted with permission.*

## BOOK REVIEW:

# REVIEW: BE THOU MY VISION

REVIEWED BY JOY ARUNDELL



*Be Thou My Vision: A Liturgy for Daily Worship*  
Jonathan Gibson (Crossway: 2022)  
ISBN: 978 143 357 81 99

If you've ever found your personal devotions feeling repetitive and dull, you're in a similar situation to Jonathan Gibson during the 2020 lockdowns. In an effort to refresh his devotional time, he put together a daily liturgy to follow for 31 days, and then to repeat as you like. *Be Thou My Vision* has been a wonderful aid in stimulating our morning devotional time as a family.

We spent fifteen minutes each day through the month of March. The liturgy follows a gospel arc as you begin with a call to worship and adoration, followed by a reading of the law (swapping between Old and New Testament passages), confession, and assurance of pardon. You read a creed, sing a song, and do a catechism question. After praying for illumination you read the next passage in your daily Bible reading plan, and finish with prayers of petition and the Lord's Prayer. All designed for fifteen to twenty minutes.

By far the most wonderful segment of the liturgy has been hearing how God forgives us. Each day we read a passage that assured us God hears our confession and our sins are fully pardoned because of God's grace toward us in Christ. This reminder of God's pardon then allows us to boldly approach him through his Word and with our cries for help. Meditate on this passage, for example:

*The LORD, the LORD, [is] a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. (Exod 34:6-7)*

It is a truly wonderful way to start the day—assured afresh of my status before God. Although I encountered sin, sadness, criticism, and frustrations within myself, I could lean on these words of comfort from God.

The liturgy is very structured. This suits me well, as I thrive within order and routine. It also helps for memorisation—by day 14, our four-year-old had memorised the Lord’s Prayer and significant portions of the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds. While the daily repetition may not suit everyone, if you find it stifling, there are plenty of spaces to fill things in with your own prayers and readings.

The liturgy uses prayers from church history. There are a lot of moments for prayer, including adoration, confession, illumination and petitions. All of these prayers are stimulating and most of them are helpful. That being said, they usually include difficult old English language and concepts. This would be my number one quibble with the book.

Although much of the liturgy and Scripture references are in modern English, the prayers are hard work. They are not impossible, but they would be really difficult for someone not familiar with the old language. My husband and I are both native English speakers with theology degrees, and we still had to pause during some of the prayers to ask, “what does that mean?” Gibson would have done an incredible service to the wider Christian church had he modernised or even adapted the archaic language.

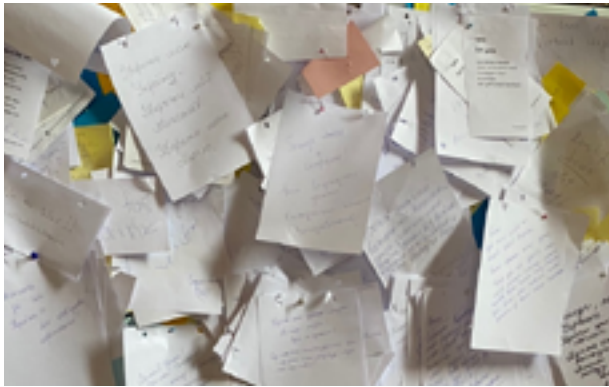
For those that appreciate beautiful books, the format and design of *Be Thou My Vision* is simply stunning. The structure and format are very readable too. The book begins with an introduction to the place of private worship and an explanation of the segments. Then it has the 31 days of liturgy. At the back are the catechisms, Bible reading plan, and other resources. They have cleverly included three ribbon bookmarks so you can keep your place in all three segments without flicking around. Well done, Crossway! A book commendable in substance and form.

*Joy Arundell serves alongside her husband Nick at Chalmers Presbyterian Church in Hawthorn East.*

*This book review was originally published by The Gospel Coalition Australia and is reprinted with permission.*



## UKRAINE: PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION



We continue to praise God for the many gifts that have been received to ease the suffering caused by the war in Ukraine. At the time of writing the total is just over \$511,000. To hear first-hand from some of our partners and how the funds have been distributed, please go to [vimeo.com/722412223](https://vimeo.com/722412223)

Photo: Written prayers for people impacted by the war in the Ukraine, pinned to a gate outside a church in Vienna.

## WANT TO BE ENCOURAGED?

Each fortnight APWM produces 'APWM Partnership News' which is an email newsletter. It looks at what God has been doing through APWM's missionaries, emerging opportunities and trends, and attempts to look at God's worldwide work through the broader lens of history.

It's free and if you'd like to subscribe use this link [shrtm.nu/NSAb](https://shrtm.nu/NSAb) or email [office@apwm.org.au](mailto:office@apwm.org.au) and ask to be put on the APWM Partnership News list.



## WHAT'S YOUR NEXT STEP IN MISSION?



Mission Steps is a website recently developed by Sarah Paterson, the OMF NSW leader. OMF is an APWM Partner Agency.

The website is "designed to help you with decision making as you think and pray about how God might be leading you to get involved in missions. Learn more: [missionsteps.com](https://missionsteps.com)



## APWM NATIONAL FINANCIAL UPDATE

This graphic provides a brief snapshot of the APWM National Committee's financial position for 2021. The gap between income and expenditure is met from our accumulated general funds, including gifts from bequests. We are very grateful to the individuals, congregations and Trust organisations who support this ministry.

### PROJECTS

In any year all the money received for various projects isn't fully spent because often the particular project doesn't need all the funds until the following reporting period. Income for projects is from donations. APWM does not have Tax-Deductible Gift Recipient status because that would limit the scope of our ministry overseas.

### MISSIONARIES

APWM manages the ministry finances for Partner Church missionaries and Aboriginal ministry in Australia. Some limited financial services are provided for APWM Associate Missionaries.

### ADMINISTRATION

The APWM National Office provides liaison with overseas Partner Churches and Partner Agencies, pastoral care of missionaries, managing compliance with internal policy and external governance, promotion of the PCA's mission work and financial administration and reporting.

Administrative support is funded by donations from State Assemblies through their State APWM Committees, donations from individuals and congregations, bequests, and earnings from investments. The National office staff has the equivalent of 2.2 full-time employees.

## WHAT'S YOUR NEXT STEP IN MISSION?

Western Australia's Mount Magnet was once a thriving outback mining town. Today it has 350 residents, most of whom are Indigenous. There are only two churches — Presbyterian and Roman Catholic.

It's here that Presbyterian Inland Mission workers Alvin and Narelle Chai serve. They hail from the Bundoora Presbyterian Church and had only just concluded service in South East Asia when God led them to Mount Magnet. They carry out their main shopping every 6-8 weeks with a 6-hour round trip to Geraldton.

It's a tough ministry and there have been plenty of discouragements. But in His mercy, they have seen God at work as believers in the town have continued

to follow Jesus and others have placed their trust in Christ. Since the town has such a high percentage of Indigenous residents APWM has a partnership with PIM in this ministry. To watch a video about this please go to [vimeo.com/718221337](https://vimeo.com/718221337)





