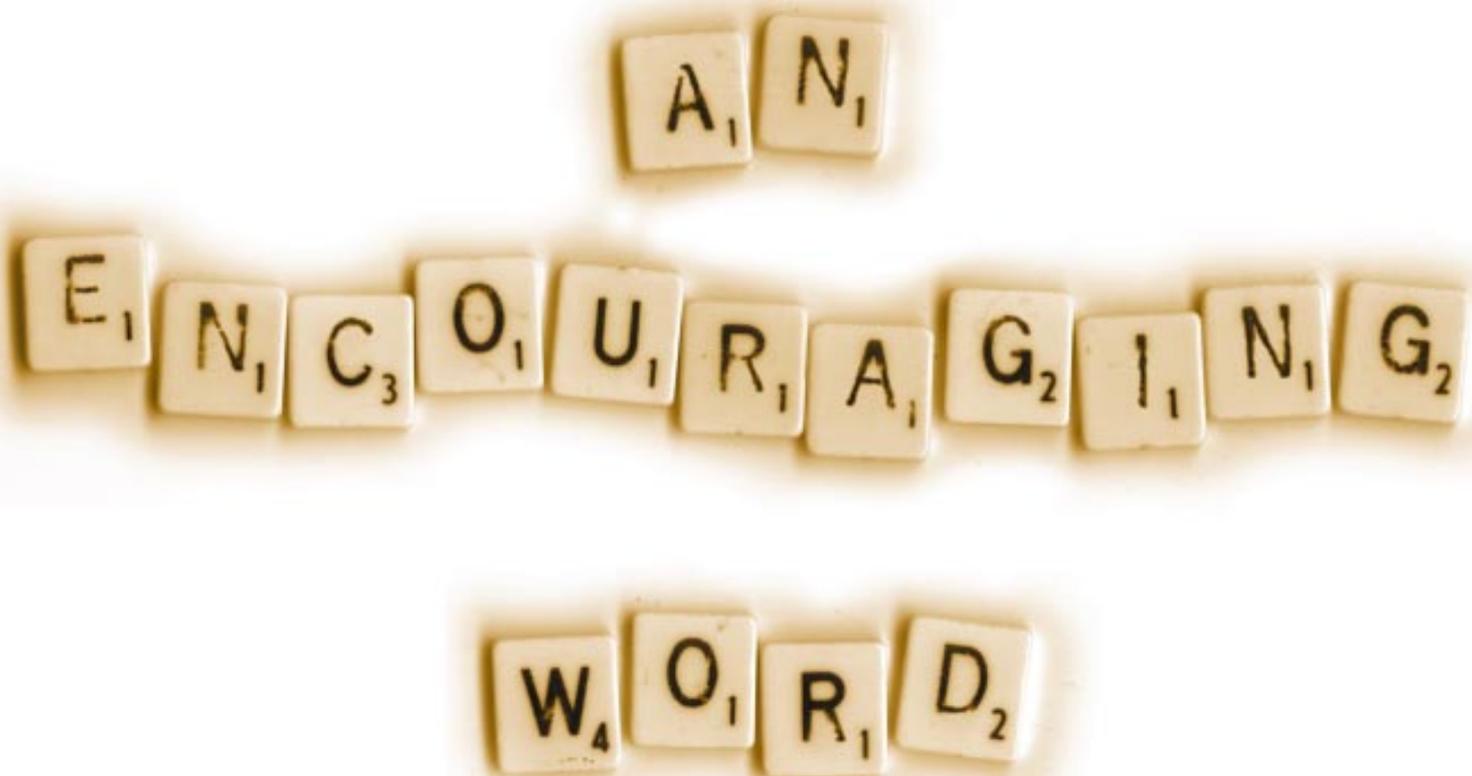


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*editorial*

One of the features of human life that has always perplexed anthropologists has been the phenomenon of speech. Man is an incurable talker. But where did language come from?

According to Darwinist theory, scholars have assumed that human speech is nothing more than a complex form of animal squeals that has evolved into an intricate series of language systems over thousands of years.

But the problem is not quite as simple as it seems. Careful studies of the most primitive societies now reveal that primitive languages actually require more intelligence than do our so-called sophisticated ones. It seems language of a highly abstract nature has been with us from the very beginning.

So how did human speech begin? The Bible tells us that speech began with God. Apparently it was one of the defining aspects of the relationship between the Persons in the Godhead ("Let us make man in our image"). So speech is hallowed because it plays a sacred role within God himself and because it confers on us the gift of fellowship with God.

Tragically, however, people think that words are cheap. But nothing could be further from the truth! We don't understand the importance of speech until we realise that the first words uttered were not human ones; they were the words of God himself. And God's speech is powerful and creative. In Genesis 1 we repeatedly hear that "God said..." and new realities appeared. All through a word! The emphasis is on the fact that God spoke, and not merely that God did. Moreover, God's word is not only creative; when God speaks, he unveils his plans and sets out his will. His word provides us with meaning, identity and direction.

But it does more. The word also redeems and brings hope to fallen humanity. God assures them with a word that their sin will be forgiven and the devil destroyed (Gen 3:15).

Thus we see the power of God's word in action – it creates, sustains, defines, directs and delivers us. Speech was created by God to fulfil his purposes and glorify him. In this issue of *AP* we investigate the importance and use of words to build and encourage the Christian community. We need to treasure words and use them for the purposes for which God ordained them.

Peter Hastie *ap*

# Working words

*Goodness! God actually expects us to impart grace.*



I sat in my family room and I was steaming! I couldn't believe that after all the years of love, all our efforts to understand, and all the investments we had made in building a relationship of mutual trust, he was willing to throw it all away for one night of fun with his friends. I couldn't imagine how this night could be that important to him.

My son had looked me in the face and lied to me. I was so angry! I wanted him to hurt the way I did. I wanted to give him what he deserved. In my mind I rehearsed a toe-to-toe confrontation with him. (All in the name of the Lord, of course!) I contemplated a series of grave punishments that would alter his life indefinitely. I just wished he were home so I could get it over with. I told my wife, "he'll regret the day he ever thought of doing this to me!"

I sat there steaming, but not just because my son had lied and was not home for me to punish. I was also upset because my wife completely disagreed with the way I wanted to handle him. She's just too soft, I reasoned to myself.



**Paul  
Tripp**

It's for times like these that God called me to be the spiritual leader of this family. Somebody needs to stand for the truth! Someone needs to confront the wrong that's taken place here.

However, the more I sat there defending my anger and rehearsing what I would do to my son, the weaker my resolve became. You see, God in his awesome wisdom had ordained that my son would be out of the house at this time. God was the one who sent my wife as an agent of intervention. God had to deal with me before he could use me in my son's life.

It wasn't long before I was no longer thinking about my son, but about myself. I was grieved at what I saw. After all the years of Bible study and ministry, all the years of counselling and teaching, and all the years of personal Bible study and

prayer, how could I be here once again, eaten up by my own anger? Hurt and ready to hurt back?

That afternoon, alone in the family room, I was once again confronted with something we tend to forget or seriously minimise – the presence and power of indwelling sin. I became aware once again that the process of sanctification was not over for me. The great spiritual battle for my heart rages on. But I was also aware that God was powerfully at work, controlling the scene and raising up my wife to give me time to examine my thoughts, motives and behaviour. I saw that I needed the Lord that day just as much as the first day I believed.

By the time my son came home the next night, I was in a different place. Perhaps this is the highest goal for talk within the body of Christ – that our words would be conduits of the life-giving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here we really do focus on being part of what God is doing in the lives of others. Here we die to the hopes, dreams, and desires of self so

that his purposes may reign. Here we view our relationships from the vantage point of ambassadors.

What does this mean? It means recognising that our relationships do not belong to us. People do not exist for our happiness and contentment; rather, God has appointed us to faithfully communicate his powerful love for them. This means that we have to speak redemptively with words of grace.

Let's look at Paul's words as he calls us to talk in a way that gives grace.

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:29-30).

**P**aul emphasises five elements of grace-full talk.

First, be unshakably committed to wholesome talk. When Paul says, "Forbid any unwholesome talk from entering your conversation," he is not just talking about cursing, swearing, or vulgar, four-letter words. In fact, to think of the passage this way grossly minimises its intent. Paul has something much more redemptively revolutionary in mind. For Paul, unwholesome talk is me-centred talk that has no higher purpose than my own wants, desires, dreams, and demands. Unwholesome words flow from a heart that is controlled by present, personal, earthly desire. They are spoken because they please me and accomplish my goals. They are an attempt to get me what I want, without reference to the lordship of Christ or my call to speak as his ambassador.

I have counseled many husbands and wives in sadly broken marriages who would never have gotten to that point had they simply heeded this principle. If me-centred, my-desire communication had been replaced early with ambassadorial talk (what is important to the Lord here, and how can I speak in a way that promotes it?), their marriages would never have reached the tragic point of disintegration.

What, then, is wholesome talk? It is other-person oriented communication that is rooted in the existence, love, mercy, grace, and calling of the Lord. It submits to his plan, speaks up to his standard, and uses words unselfishly. It finds meaning and joy in being used by God as he works in others. Wholesome talk is also other-person oriented in the way it has the needs of others as its focus.

Only when we entrust ourselves into

the Lord's sovereign care are we free to speak this way.

Second, consider the person to whom you are talking ("only what is helpful for building others up"). Paul is saying something revolutionary here: we should only speak things that consider how our listeners need to be built up.

To whom are we speaking? Is it a man, woman, boy, or girl? Is it someone our own age, younger, or older? Is it a long-time friend, a casual acquaintance, or a virtual stranger? Is it a family member, a distant relative, or a neighbour? Is the person a believer, a seeker, or lost? What is his or her knowledge and experience of the truths of Scripture? How receptive is this person to my ministry? How do the answers to these questions guide me in what to say?

Third, consider the problem you are being called to address ("for building others up according to their needs"). To consider the problem means to ask, What is the need of the moment? What gift of grace is needed? How can I speak as an instrument of that grace?

Is there some specific sin that needs to be lovingly confronted? Is the work of peacemaking needed because there is disunity and division? Is there spiritual blindness? A loss of hope? Are there pockets of doubt about God? Is there the confusion of many counsellors and conflicting advice? Is there fear, anxiety, and dread? Is there anger, malice, bitterness, and vengeance? Is there a lack of biblical knowledge, wisdom, and insight? Are there patterns of direct rebellion against God? Is there selfishness, pride, or self-righteousness that needs to be faced? Is there an unwillingness to accept responsibility? Is there a need for thanksgiving, praise, and worship?

**H**aving the right agenda makes a critical difference in communication. So often parents, for example, enter the rooms of their children with a punitive rather than a ministry agenda. They do little more than point out wrong (usually infected with their own anger and hurt) and announce punishment. They neglect to ask the essential question – that is, what does God want to do in the heart of my child through me? Attention to this principle alone would result in radical changes in our relationships!

Fourth, consider the process ("that it may benefit [give grace to] those who listen"). Paul says it this way in Colossians 4:6: "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you

may know how to answer everyone." God's goal for our communication is grace; that is, that our words would be of specific spiritual benefit to those who hear. This is not just a "don't do" passage, but more powerfully a "do" passage. We are called to exercise the courage of faith, to think and speak decisively as agents of the King.

Often parents lecture their children in an attempt to get them to see the wrong they have done. The problem is that this is the wrong process. As the parents are lecturing, the child is silently defending, excusing, and arguing in his mind, and anxiously waiting for the "conversation" to be over. Perhaps you've even heard your child say at the end of one of your lectures, "Are you done yet?" These are not exactly words of repentance!

If I have prepared myself by considering the best process of communication, I will enter the room knowing that what my teenager needs is the grace of conviction and confession. I want to speak to my child in a way that would lead him to confession. Perhaps this means it is better to ask open-ended questions that enable the child to examine the situation, his thoughts and motives, and his behaviour than it is to tell him what I think. I don't just want him to agree with me; I want him to see himself accurately in the mirror of the Word of God. I do not want him to do business with me, but with God.

Fifth, don't let your speech hinder the Holy Spirit's work ("And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption"). What is the primary work of the Holy Spirit? To make us holy. This progressive, life-long work of sanctification is ongoing in every situation and relationship. He is working in "all things" for our good, so that we would be conformed to the image of the Son (Rom. 8:28-30). It is a terrible thing when our selfish, unwholesome talk gets in the way! This is why Paul reminds us that God sealed us for the day of redemption. A seal is a sign of ownership. From the moment of our new birth, we no longer belong to ourselves. Neither do our words.

*Paul Tripp is author of The War Of Words (Presbyterian and Reformed, 2000).* 

***Unwholesome talk is me-centred talk that has no higher purpose than my own wants, desires, dreams, and demands.***

# Back to basics

*Preaching today, as for Paul, is the minister's main tool.*

Many church leaders fear the apostolic priorities of prayer and preaching have been abandoned as the first step in church growth. Are they right?

Yes, I'm sure they are. Prayer and preaching are of the utmost importance for the life and growth of the church in the New Testament, but sadly they seem to have been given little attention of late in the church growth movement.

It was in the interests of missions that the church growth movement began more than 30 years ago, and the idea was that evangelism was more likely to be effective when people reached out to others of their own race, class and culture, whether overseas or at home. But of late it seems to me that the church growth movement has now developed a broader and more encompassing strategy – one which threatens to include every aspect of the Church's worship and witness within its commercial and therapeutic methods and administrative procedures and so on. Prayer and preaching have therefore been marginalised.

## Why has the priority of preaching fallen away?

Because I think that for many church growth theorists and practitioners, preaching does not deliver the goods; it does not bring in the crowds. It is seen as part of the problem which they seek to remedy. By and large, preaching seems to have had a minimal effect on the unchurched world, and those within the church have lost confidence in it. So we should not be surprised when the church growth movement, which is largely concerned with identifiable goals, monitored programs and quantifiable results, is somewhat dismissive of preaching, which has become an easy whipping-boy to explain many of the Church's problems.

Church growth experts focus on questions like: "What will work? What will influence the greatest number of people? How can we make and measure progress?" And when that kind of pragmatism rules, preaching which concentrates largely on character transformation



Hywel Jones  
talks to  
Peter Hastie

in godliness (which is real church growth) is at a disadvantage. Naturally, it's hard to measure the degree of Christ-likeness in a person in any quantifiable sense. That sort of thing doesn't fit in really with church growth priorities, I'm sad to say. Therefore, preaching usually gets the "heave-ho"!

## Well, why are so many dissatisfied with a lot of preaching?

I think that some preaching leaves a lot to be desired. For example, I once read a memorable description of preaching as a "monologue by a moron to mutes". Now, that pejorative way of referring to preaching indicates something of the depth of feeling which people want to express with regard to some of the preaching that they've had to endure.

Clearly, some preachers do not have an adequate grasp of their material and are unable to engage the attention or interest of their hearers. Further, they are unable to communicate to their audience that they understand them and that they have something immensely important to say to them. Sometimes people leave church wondering whether it was important to the minister that they were there.

However, I can't help feeling that many of those who have a low regard for preaching have not only suffered from bad preaching, but they have also been affected by some of the new communication theories that are popular today. A lot of this has to do with television. An aversion to "Talking heads" is a new media concept that argues that we need to have cooler communication which involves a lot more change, movement, and visual action. Part of this media mantra is that we ought not to have reasoned discourse; instead, we should break up what we have to say into sections and have a spot for this and a spot for that, and use other techniques as well.

## Does it have to be either/or? Can modern preachers learn from empirical communication studies?

Certainly, there are some useful insights that have come from some of these studies but more benefit can be gained from a discerning study of classical rhetoric. Aristotle is therefore more helpful than McLuhan. But what concerns me most is the capitulation of evangelicals to the underlying assumptions that somehow our communication has to entertain or amuse. For example, people today now believe that it's unrealistic to expect a congregation to sit and listen to a sermon for even 20 to 25 minutes, and to think of children being expected to do it is the greatest folly and unkindness.

## What should a preacher aim to do?

First and foremost, he must realise that he is the spokesman and representative of God in Christ. Second, he must speak the truth of God's Word in such a way that people not only realise that God has something to say to them, but also realise something of his concern, authority and love. The preacher is not to be content merely with declaration. Some kind of incarnation of the message has to characterise him.

I could go on from that, of course, and talk about instruction, the need to convict people of sin, repentance and faith, but these are the two major areas that I'd want to emphasise. Preachers must remember whom they are representing. Our duty is to say only what God has said in his Word and to say it in such a way that something of the character of God himself is represented.

## How much should preachers focus on human needs?

Obviously, they have to treat them seriously. As preaching is an address to hearers, people are crucial in the communication equation. Of course, it's not enough for the preacher simply to acknowledge their presence. He must also take account of their stage in life and special interests. Naturally, preaching to adults will have some different emphases to preaching to teens and children. So for

a preacher merely to think of what he says and how he ought to say it is not sufficient. He must think of ways and means to address individuals: that means using appropriate vocabulary, imagery, and thought patterns to speak to people's needs. But he must never lose sight of the fact that many of our 'felt needs' are merely symptoms of a far deeper need that we have. When we experience significant problems in our lives such as alienation, misunderstanding, loneliness, emptiness, fear, shame and guilt, we need to remember that all these are the results of the Fall and the consequences of sin.

The preacher's task is to place all human need within the context of our relationship to God. It's only in that context that we can differentiate our true needs from our felt ones. When we look at ourselves in that light, we discover that some of the things that we thought were pressing needs were not so important after all.

### Should preachers aim to influence people's emotions?

That shouldn't be their primary aim, but it's inevitable if preaching really engages people. Of course, the primary aim of preaching is to reach the understanding and conscience. That's why one essential of preaching must be the communication of information. The preacher's task is to explain to people what God has communicated about himself infallibly in Scripture. And that truth should not be related to the emotions directly but to the conscience. The aim is to expose the gap that exists between the person's life and the truth taught. This is the area where conscience operates and does its work one way or another. So the preacher should aim first at the understanding, then the conscience, and then the emotions will be properly affected.

One further thing. We need to remember that emotions are more than feelings. They relate to our moral condition. And they are not only positive or self-affirming like euphoria or exhilaration. There are other emotions such as shame, fear, joy, and gratitude to mention just a few. The aim of biblical preaching is not to make people feel a buzz, or experience a glow or whatever. It is to help them to love God with all their mind and with *all* their emotions.

### What does it take to preach well?

Let me begin by saying that only God can make a preacher; no seminary can.

Good preaching begins with the Spirit-wrought conviction that the Scripture is God's infallible truth and that it bears witness to the lordship and saving work of Jesus Christ. Further, a good preacher is conscious that while he is inadequate for such a great task, he knows that there is nothing else in the world that he would rather do. God has called him to it. And therefore he lives, toils and prays in the hope of becoming better.

The seminary helps because good preaching grows out of the possession of a strong theology. By this I mean more than a theology that is contained in a book that the preacher consults time and time



***More benefit can be gained from a discerning study of classical rhetoric. Aristotle is therefore more helpful than McLuhan.***

again, but one that exists in our minds with which we interact as we are explaining Scripture.

So preachers need a theology but they also need to be able to expound Scripture; making it live to people. They also need to structure their material in terms of sermon presentation so that it is clear. A sermon should have one main theme and a number of subordinate points that relate to this central idea – all emerging from the text. I think it's important that the sermon should be ordered well so that there's a logical connection between the points. This gives a sermon momentum so that those who hear it feel that they're "taken along" with the preacher. People need to know that they are moving from "A" to "B", "B" to "C", and yet all in connection with this single theme. It's in this area that most preachers can achieve significant improvement.

Another important area is application. When a preacher makes a point, he needs to make sure that he applies it. He needs to ask the question: "Now how does all this relate to us?" It's better, I think, to use the old blacksmith's rule, "*Strike while the iron's hot,*" rather than wait to the very end of the sermon. The preacher needs to be explaining and applying the Scriptures as he goes along.

### What is preaching? Does it just happen in church on a Sunday?

No, I don't think a typical Sunday situation is a satisfactory description of all the New Testament means by the term. For example in Acts 8:4 it is said that the first Christians preached the gospel wherever they went when they were forced out of Jerusalem. Presumably, this was not in church settings. However, it's not wrong to think of a typical Sunday situation because it's the church to which the Word is primarily directed.

There are also other occasions where gospel preaching took place in one-to-one situations outside the church context. For instance, Paul preached to the Philippian jailer. So preaching includes any verbal communication of the gospel. Time, place and even people are not the major factors in determining whether a particular action constitutes preaching. In this sense, we should be encouraging every believer to 'preach' the gospel.

I also think that ministers should seize opportunities to preach when the whole community is focused on some great event or crisis. C.H. Spurgeon and J.C. Ryle did it quite effectively. For instance, the United Kingdom has just had a foot and mouth epidemic. J.C. Ryle preached on the same thing at the end of the 19th century. He saw it as a judgment from God. However, preachers need to be careful when they do this. They need to remember that there is a line of distinction between doing that, which is bringing the truth of God to bear upon a particular kind of incident, and trying to relate Christianity to politics. It is the members of our churches who should be speaking on political issues, as distinct from ministers.

### What part does prayer play in the success of the ministry of the Word?

We must not forget that the ministry of the gospel will never be successful without the work of the Holy Spirit. It is

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God's will to work through preaching, and those who proclaim the Word must be empowered by the Spirit as he works through the truth.

Remember the words of Jesus: "Without me you can do nothing." Preachers can be filled with the Spirit or they can hinder it. The Spirit also helps the preacher to interpret the Word and to express it wisely and powerfully. Regeneration is also the work of the Spirit. God gives the increase. I don't think it's possible to overestimate the importance of prayer when preparing to preach. We cannot 'grow the church'. It is Jesus Christ who does that by his Spirit.

**Does the Bible give us any indication of the sort of content that powerful preaching should contain?**

As I read the Book of Acts, I notice certain emphases in the recorded sermons there which indicate what are the main things that constitute authoritative preaching. I notice the same thing when Paul discusses the nature of the gospel in his letters.

For instance, in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians he emphasises the transcendence and holiness of God. He is the "living and true God" who will rain down his wrath upon those who heap up their sins. Likewise in Romans, Paul has a very strong doctrine of God. He also focuses a lot on the Law in that letter. I often wonder whether we preach the Law enough. After all, without the Law no true know-

ledge of sin is possible.

I am worried when I hear preachers question the relevance of the Ten Commandments. The Law summarises the moral nature of God. According to Paul, the Law is relevant to Jews and Gentiles (Rom. 2:14-16). When you have someone like the Apostle Paul saying, "I had not known sin but by the law", and then going on to say, that it was the tenth commandment, "Thou shall not covet", which convicted him of sin, you realise how important the Law is.

*The preacher should aim first at the understanding, then the conscience, and then the emotions will be properly affected.*



**How important is a preacher's personal life and godliness in his effectiveness as a teacher?**

Well, I believe that God can use anyone, and he has used the unlikeliest. But when there's a significant contradiction between the life of the preacher and what is expected of him in his ministry, then I think a huge obstacle is created to the reception of the Word.

**To what extent is a minister a pace-setter in his congregation? Will a congregation ever rise above the personal standards that he sets for himself for holiness and devotional practice?**

The answer to that question is yes and no. Of course, there can be more godly people in the congregation than the minister. Some may have been Christians for many more years than he. But he ought never to be a glaring contradiction of what he preaches. His life and example must encourage other believers. They should look up to him. If the kind of holiness which the gospel requires is not exemplified to some degree in him, it does raise a big question about his standing. However, the "pace-setter" term which you used does have validity to it. The preacher/minister is to be a pattern for other believers to follow. While we may be reluctant to say, "Follow me as I follow Christ", as the Apostle Paul did – there is something of that principle which ought to characterise us.

*Dr Hywel Jones is Professor of Practical Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, Escondido, California.*

*Rev. Peter Hastie is the Minister of Ashfield Presbyterian Church, Sydney, and the issues editor of Australian Presbyterian.* 

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# Acts speaks louder

*Faithful planting of the word always produces reaping, somewhere, sometime.*

**T**he Acts of the Apostles is perhaps the most exciting book in the whole Bible. This is because it records the progress of the Word of God as the apostles and early Christians preached it throughout the first-century world (Acts 6:7; 8:4; 12:24; 13:49; 19:20). Luke's theology in Acts has rightly been called *Missionsgeschichte* or missions-history.

Biblical Christianity has become a minority movement in the West today, struggling to survive against the resurgent world religions as well as against the popular gods of relativism, materialism, hedonism, and selfism. Many of our congregations are struggling and our ministers dismayed. How can Acts help us to regain confidence in the Word of the Lord, along with expectations for its growth?

First, the word will progress because it is the Lord's own Word (Acts 6:7; 12:24; 13:49). It is uniquely the word of his grace (Acts 14:3; 20:32). God's own presence and power accompany his word when and where it is faithfully proclaimed and lived. In the parable of the sower Jesus spoke of the progress of the word of God (Luke 8:11-15). As well as producing a great harvest, the seed of the kingdom of God encountered the setbacks of humans, birds, and a harsh environment. In spite of this it took root and grew.

In the same way we may be assured that the spiritual forces of the world, the flesh and the devil will oppose our work but that God's word will triumph against all its enemies. But the lesson of the parable is that faithful planting of God's word will result in reaping, perhaps by others in another time and place (John 4:35-38).

**T**he word, says Jesus, contains the principle of its own dynamic life and growth. It will make its own progress, through our efforts and apart from our efforts, and certainly without our understanding how it happens (Mark 4:26-28).

Second, the word will progress to the ends of the earth. Jesus promised this at the beginning of the Christian era and his promise remains in place today (Is. 49:6; Mark 13:10; Acts 1:8, 13:47). Although Acts records the spread of the Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome in the first cen-



**Douglas Milne**

tury CE this is meant to be read symbolically, as only the first instalment of the spread of God's word around the world, generation after generation, from one people-group and culture to another, until Jesus returns. A multicultural Australia has surely come about in the plan of God, to offer us the rare opportunity and the immense challenge of implementing Jesus' commission to be his witnesses among all the nations of the world.

Third, the progress of the word can only be explained by the enthronement of the Son and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33). Once he had accomplished the work of sacrificial atonement through suffering and death for us, Jesus was exalted into God's own presence. As the promised reward for his earthly mission Jesus received the Spirit as his possession and poured him out upon all flesh

in the last days.

This marked the beginning of the progress of his word (Acts 2:29-41). Among other things, this has meant that behind every successful missionary outreach in the later history of the church there has always been at work the Christ of the cross, the empty tomb, and the heavenly throne through the agency of his outpoured Spirit. Nothing less is the theology of local and global evangelism.

Often in the background and sometimes in the foreground, the action of God is unmistakable throughout Acts. This has been called "the hidden or spiritual plot in the story of Acts" (Leland Ryken). Thus God liberates Peter (Acts 12) and commissions Paul (Acts 26:15-18). God is the one who opens a door to the Gentiles and guides his witnesses on to the mainland of Europe (Acts 16:6-10). God it is who opens Lydia's heart to respond to the Christian message (Acts 16:14), and as many as are ordained by God to eternal life believe (Acts 13:48). God uses human witnesses but he is the one who produces a lasting harvest through their efforts (1 Cor. 3:5-9).

## **CHRISTIAN HERITAGE THANKSGIVING CENTENARY PARADE**

### **and HYDE PARK CELEBRATION**

*All Christians and local Churches are invited to give thanks to Almighty God in our **Christian Heritage Centenary Parade** on Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2001 (public holiday) at 1 pm through the streets of Sydney with marching bands, groups and Church floats. The Parade will conclude with a **Christian Heritage Celebration** in Hyde Park from 2 pm to 4 pm with **Christian Choirs and Church leaders, etc.***

*Bulk supplies of the an A5 **Christian Heritage** leaflet are available from the **FOL-CSO Office** for distribution at the door of your Church Services – call **02 9745 5111***

*Christians in other States are requested to organise a **Christian Heritage Parade** and Celebrations in their city on a convenient public holiday, Saturday or Sunday*

In particular we should notice the presence, activity and freedom of the Holy Spirit in giving impetus to the word. "To trace the activity of the Spirit in Acts is to observe the progress of the word" (Brian Rosner). The Spirit's main initiative in Acts is not in prophecy or tongues-speaking or even doing miracles – it is rather in guiding the Christian mission, appointing and anointing its missionaries, and giving success to their spoken witness (Acts 13:1-3, 49-52; 14:26-28; 20:28).

Fourth, the progress of the word is the responsibility and privilege of all the people of God. After the persecution surrounding the martyrdom of Stephen the apostles remained in Jerusalem but the other believers were scattered everywhere "proclaiming the word" (Acts 8:4).

Spreading the word is a people's movement, as the phenomenal current growth of Christianity in China illustrates. The theme of the Lausanne world conference on evangelism in 1972 was "the preaching of the whole Christ by the whole people of God to the whole world". Chosen and gifted evangelists and teachers spearhead the Gospel in new and established areas but the follow-up remains the ongoing work of the members of the churches.

Fifth, the progress of the word is the special province of the leaders of the churches. In the early days of the church the apostles were faced with a choice between spending their time and energy serving tables in humanitarian and social action or serving God's word through

preaching and prayer (Acts 6:1-4). They chose the latter, and as a direct result of their concentration on private prayer and public instruction the word spread, the numbers of believers in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and even a large number of the priests were obedient to the faith (Acts 6:7).

The great work of ministers is to make the word of God their priority in their preaching and pastoral programmes. "We must get beyond growth through tech-

*The progress of the word can only be explained by the enthronement of the Son and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.*



nology and realise that the gospel doesn't need to be marketed; it needs to be preached from the pulpit and brought personally to non-Christians in their own environment" (Bill Hull).

Sixth, we will learn about the progress of the word primarily from the book of Acts. This whole document is a progress report on the advance of Christianity in the first-century world. From slow beginnings in Jerusalem (chapters 1 to 5), the word progresses from a Jewish to a Hellenistic context (chapters 6 to 15), mainly through the apostolic missionary

work of Paul who pursues a vigorous outreach to Jews and Gentiles, until the word reaches even to Rome, symbolically the heart of the pagan world.

Acts is where we should mine for strategies and methodologies for church growth in the modern world. A biblical and apostolic message demands biblical and apostolic methods to communicate it. Not any method will do but only those methods that harmonise with the apostolic pattern in Acts, that is methods that honour prayer, faith, suffering, the Holy Spirit, fellowship, Christ, holiness and the Scriptures (2 Cor 6:3-10). Entertainment forms of evangelism find no support in the book of Acts.

Seventh, the progress of the word will go on. The open ending to the book of Acts has often been noted (Acts 28:30-31). It leaves unfinished the story of the word's progress from the times of the apostles to our own day and beyond.

Sometimes that progress has been rapid and spectacular, as in times and places of spiritual revival; sometimes it has been slow and almost imperceptible. But the final report is still being written, and that is where we come in as Australians and Presbyterians. The Lord Jesus is inviting us to commit ourselves to his word, trust in its integrity and power, and write its final chapters of actual progress where we live and work, or wherever he sends us.

*Douglas Milne is professor of systematic theology at the Presbyterian Theological College, Melbourne.* 



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Field Director, Christian Blind Mission International (Aust)  
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Fax: (03) 9817 1860  
Email: [cbmiaus@cbmi.org.au](mailto:cbmiaus@cbmi.org.au)  
Website: [www.cbmi.org.au](http://www.cbmi.org.au)

**Assistant minister**

Charlestown Eastlakes  
Presbyterian Church  
(Newcastle-Lake Macquarie)  
is seeking applications from evangelicals for the position of full-time assistant to our minister in 2002.

We are looking for a man with theological training, proven preaching and people skills and the ability to develop youth ministry and evangelism.

**Please contact**  
**Rev John Seaton on**  
**02 4947 8008**

# Billy Graham

*Billy Graham is indisputably the best-known religious figure of the 20th century. His evangelistic crusades have reached more than 200 million people in person, and millions more have heard him on radio, television and film. Widely regarded as the greatest preacher in recent history, his calling as an evangelist has taken him across the globe, from Europe to Asia, from major capitals to the remote outposts. His Crusades have spanned more than 50 years, and he has been part of history in the making, counsellor to every US President since Eisenhower. At a time when many public figures seem scandal-prone, Dr Graham has maintained an unblemished reputation for integrity and personal transparency. The spiritual power and authority of his public ministry is rooted in his deep personal experience of Jesus Christ, which began with his conversion in 1934.*



**W**e all sat in the rear of the auditorium to see the show, with a few thousand other people – one of the largest crowds I had ever been in.

As soon as the evangelist started his sermon, he opened his Bible and talked straight from his text. He talked loudly, even though there was an amplifying system. I have no recollection of what he preached about, but I was spellbound. In some indefinable way, he was getting through to me. I was hearing another voice, as was often said of Dwight L. Moody when he preached: the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Bumping along in the truck on the way home, I was deep in thought. Later, after I stretched out on my back in bed, I stared out the window at a Carolina moon for a long time.

The next night, all my father's mules and horses could not have kept me from getting to that meeting. From then on, I was a faithful attendant, night after night, week after week.

I became deeply convicted about my sinfulness and rebellion. And confused. How could this evangelist be talking to

me, of all people? I had been baptised as a baby, had learned the Shorter Catechism word perfect, and had been confirmed in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church with the full approval of the pastor and elders. I had gotten into mischief once in a while, but I could hardly be called wicked. I resisted temptations to break the moral code my parents had so strictly instilled in me. I was a good milker in the dairy barn and never complained about any of the nasty work, such as shovelling manure. I was even the vice president of my youth group in our church (although, granted, it wasn't a particularly vital organisation).

So why would the evangelist always be pointing his bony finger at me?

One thing that echoed in my mind was Dr Ham's singing, right in the middle of his sermon, "The toils of the road will seem nothing, when I get to the end of the way".

He had an almost embarrassing way of describing sins and shortcomings, and of demanding, on pain of divine judgment, that we mend our ways. I was so sure he had singled me out one night that I actually ducked behind the wide-brimmed hat of the lady sitting in front of me. Yet, as uncomfortable as I was getting to be, I simply could not stay away.

At the meetings, I struck up an

acquaintance with a likable student from the notorious Central High School, Grady Wilson. He was already a Christian, but he was having some problems of his own under Dr Ham's preaching. He had an older, unconverted brother, Thomas Walter, called T.W. by everybody, a big fellow who could be pretty rough. I would not call him a bully, at least not to his face, but I could safely describe him as burly. T.W. could certainly have had a job as a bouncer!

Grady and I had both decided on a strategy to avoid the frontal attack by Dr Ham. We had signed up for the choir, which sat on the platform behind the preacher. Neither of us could sing, but we could move our mouths or hold a hymnbook in front of our faces for camouflage. As choir members, we were safe from Dr Ham's accusatory stare. What was slowly dawning on me during those weeks was the miserable realisation that I did not know Jesus Christ for myself. I could not depend on my parents' faith. Christian influence in the home could have a lasting impact on a child's life, but faith could not be passed on as an inheritance, like the family silver. It had to be exercised by each individual.

I could not depend on my church membership either. Saying "I believe" in the Apostles' Creed every Sunday, or taking the bread and wine of Communion, could so easily become nothing but rote and ritual, without power in themselves to make me any different.

Nor could I depend on my own resolution to do better. I constantly failed in my efforts at self-improvement. Nobody needed to tell me that.

**A**s a teenager, what I needed to know for certain was that I was right with God. I could not help but admit to myself that I was purposeless and empty-hearted. Our family Bible reading, praying, psalm-singing, and churchgoing – all these had left me restless and resentful. I had even tried, guiltily, to think up ways of getting out of all those activities as much as I could. In a word, I was spiritually dead.

And then it happened, sometime around my 16th birthday. On that night, Dr Ham finished preaching and gave the

Invitation to accept Christ. After all his tirades against sin, he gave us a gentle reminder: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8, KJV). His song leader, Mr Ramsay, led us all in *Just As I Am* – four verses. Then we started another song: *Almost Persuaded, Now to Believe*.

On the last verse of that second song, I responded. I walked down to the front, feeling as if I had lead weights attached to my feet, and stood in the space before the

***My heart sank when I looked over at the lady standing next to me with tears running down her cheeks. I was not crying.***



platform. That same night, perhaps 300 or 400 other people were there at the front making spiritual commitments. The next night, my cousin Crook Stafford made his decision for Christ.

My heart sank when I looked over at the lady standing next to me with tears running down her cheeks. I was not crying. I did not feel any special emotion of any kind just then. Maybe, I thought, I was not supposed to be there. Maybe my good intentions to be a real Christian wouldn't last. Wondering if I

was just making a fool of myself, I almost turned around and went back to my seat.

As I stood in front of the platform, a tailor named J. D. Prevatt, who was a friend of our family with a deep love for souls, stepped up beside me, weeping. Putting his arms around me, he urged me to make my decision. At the same time, in his heavy European accent, he explained God's plan for my salvation in a simple way. That explanation was addressed to my own mental understanding. It did not necessarily answer every question I had at the moment – and it certainly did not anticipate every question that would come to me in the months and years ahead – but it set forth simply the facts I needed to know in order to become God's child.

My tailor friend helped me to understand what I had to do to become a genuine Christian. The key word was do. Those of us standing up front had to decide to do something about what we knew before it could take effect.

He prayed for me and guided me to pray. I had heard the message, and I had felt the inner compulsion to go forward. Now came the moment to commit myself to Christ. Intellectually, I accepted Christ to the extent that I acknowledged what I knew about him to be true. That was mental assent. Emotionally, I felt that I wanted to love him in return for his loving me. But the final issue was whether I would turn myself over to his rule in my life.

I checked "Recommitment" on the card I filled out. After all, I had been

brought up to regard my baptism and confirmation as professions of faith too. The difference was that this time I was doing it on purpose, doing it with intention. For all my previous religious upbringing and church activity, I believe that that was the moment I made my real commitment to Jesus Christ.

No bells went off inside me. No signs flashed across the tabernacle ceiling. No physical palpitations made me tremble. I wondered again if I was a hypocrite, not to be weeping or something. I simply felt at peace. Quiet, not delirious. Happy and peaceful.

**M**Y father came to the front and put his arm around my shoulders, telling me how thankful he was. Later, back home, when we went to the kitchen, my mother put her arm around me and said, "Billy Frank, I'm so glad you took the stand you did tonight."

That was all.

I went upstairs to my room. Standing at the window, I looked out across one of the fields that was glowing in the moonlight.

Then I went over to my bed and for the first time in my life got down on my knees without being told to do so. I really wanted to talk to God. "Lord, I don't know what happened to me tonight," I prayed. "You know. And I thank you for the privilege I've had tonight."

*This extract is taken from Just As I Am, the Autobiography of Billy Graham (Harper Collins, 1997).*

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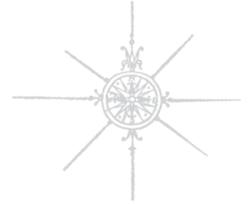
Or ask for our application form from (or phone):

Del Rapley – The Administrator,  
St. Mark's Pre School & Long Day Care Centre,  
15 Heugh Street,  
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

Ph: (02)6765 8250 Fax: (02) 6762 6897

APPLICATIONS CLOSE 15TH SEPTEMBER 2001

*(While we would like someone who could start immediately, we also realise the awkwardness at this time of the year, and would be very delighted to receive interest from anyone who could begin in 2002.)*



# Come worship with us!

*If you are passing through or moving nearby, feel free to ring the Minister, Clerk or Elder.*

## australian capital territory

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Cnr Gatty St. & Ross Smith Cres, Scullin.  
Sunday Service 10:00 am

Elder: Mr R Howe (02) 6247 9586

### CANBERRA, FORREST (St Andrew's)

1 State Circle (opp Parliament House).

Service Times: 9.30am. & 7.00pm.

Church Office: (02) 6295 3457

### CANBERRA, TUGGERANONG

Isabella Plains: Isabella Plains Primary School,  
Ellerstone Ave. Worship Service & Sunday  
School 10.00am.

Rev Tim Abbey (02) 6292 6772

### GUNGAHLIN-NORTH BELCONNEN

Ngunnawal Primary School 10.00am. I.M:

Rev. Keith King Enquiries: (02) 6253 8257.

## new south wales

### ANNANDALE

Hunter Baillie, Johnston & Collins Sts.

10.00am, Rev Colin Alston (02) 9969 8071.

Welsh Church: Chalmers St, Surry Hills.

3.00pm. each Sunday.

### ARMIDALE

Faulkner St, 9.30am. & 7.00pm.

Rev. Richard O'Brien (02) 6772 3093

### ASHFIELD

Liverpool Rd. & Knox St.

Rev Peter Hastie (02) 9798 6572.

### BEACON HILL-NARRAWEENA

244 Warringah Rd. 9.30am. & 7.00pm.

Rev. Andrew Clausen (02) 9451 5076.

### BECROFT

Mary St., 8.45am. 10.30am. & 6.30pm.

Rev Martin Levine (02) 9876 2478.

Session Clerk: Ray Dunlop (02) 9876 2478.

### BEGA — EDEN

Bega -Upper St; Eden — CWA Rooms,

Imlay St. Clerk: Mrs J Gill (02) 6495 6062

### BLACKTOWN (EAST)

Gallop Grv. & Heffron Rd. Lalor Park,

Service Times: 10.30am. & 6.00pm.

Rev Stuart Coulton (02) 9626 0866.

### BONDI

Cnr. Castlefield & Miller Sts. 10.00am &

7.00pm. Rev John Graham: (02) 9365 5388 /

(02) 9597 5214

### BONNYRIGG

Western Regions Chinese Church

14-16 Bibbys Place. 9.30 am. (English) &  
11.00 am. (Mandarin)

S.Clerk: Stanley Chen (02) 9753 2073

### BOWRAL — MITTAGONG

**Bowral:** 20 Bendooley St. 10.30am.

Kid's Church: 9.30 am. 1st & 3rd Sunday

**Mittagong:** Cr Alice & Edwards Sts. 9.00am.

Rev. Doug McPherson: (02) 4872 4052.

### BURWOOD

48 Belmore St. 9.15am (English)

**Burwood:** 11.00 am (Cantonese)

5.00 pm (English).

Rev Jim Elliott (02) 9745 3935.

Rev. Dennis Law (02) 9715 3889

### CAMPBELLTOWN

34 Lithgow St. 8.30 am. 10.00 am. 6.30 pm.

Rev. Greg Goswell (02)4625 1037

### CANTERBURY CITY

**Earlwood:** 40Collingwood Ave. 5.00 pm.

**Lakemba:** 1005 Canterbury Rd, 9.00am.

Sunday School (Lakemba) 10.30am.

Rev Colin Dubi (02) 9558 3284.

### CARINGBAH

393 Port Hacking Rd.

Rev Graham Flick (02) 9524 6406 (O).

### CASTLE HILL

247 Old Northern Rd. 9.30am. & 6.00pm.

Rev Dr Ron Keith (02) 9634 2911.

### CHATSWOOD

St Andrew's, Anderson St.

9.00am.& 7.00 pm.

**Lane Cove,** St James, Farran St. 11.00am.

Rev. Jeff Read (02) 9419 5932 (W) 2077 (H)

### CHERRYBROOK

John Purchase Public School Hall, Purchase

Road, Cherrybrook 9.30 am

Rev John Irvin (Minister) (02) 9875 4894

### CHINESE CHURCH

Cnr Crown & Albion Sts. Surry Hills.

English/Cantonese/Mandarin/Bi lingual  
Services.

Rev John Ting (02) 9331 4459(O).

Rev Joe Mock (02) 9642 8861(H).

### COFFS HARBOUR (St Andrew's)

187 High St. 8.00am. 9.45am. & 6.30pm.

Rev Peter Moore (02) 6652 3183(O).

### CONCORD

Cornerstone Community Presbyterian Church

Meets Concord Public School 9.30 am.

Cnr Burwood Rd. & Stanley St. Concord

Rev. C S Tang (02) 9688 7880 (H)

### COOTAMUNDRA (Scots)

Cnr Parker & Francis Sts 11.00 am.

I.M. Rev F. Monckton (02) 6977 1642

### COWRA

46 Macquarie St. Also Gooloogong,

Morongla.

Rev John McClean Ph (02) 6342 1467.

### CRONULLA

13 Croydon St. 9.30am.

Rev. Russell Stark (02) 9523 5875.

### EAST MAITLAND

George St. Beresford Ave.

**Raymond Terrace:** Irrawang St.

Rev Donald Smith (02) 4933 7443.

### EPPING

Bridge & Rawson Sts.

Rev David Tsai (02) 9876 1188.

### FORSTER/TUNCURRY

Bruce St. Forster, 9.30am.

Pastor Peter Flower (02) 6557 5047

### GILGANDRA (St Stephens)

14 Myrtle St. 11.00am. & 9.00am. (4th Sun).

Also at Gulargambone, Tooraweenah.

### GOSFORD

17 Mann St. Church, 8.00am 9.45am 6.30 pm.

**Gosford:** Office: Ph/Fx (02) 4323 2490.

Rev Rod Mallinson (02) 4385 5231.

Yth Pst. Steven Soldatos (02) 4368 6415

### GRIFFITH

Opp. Collina Oval, Blumer Ave. 9.30 am.

Rev. Peter Gobbo (02) 6962 4827.

Dr L. Thorpe (02) 6962 1934

### GUNNEDAH

Marquis & Barber Sts.

**Boggabri:** Court House

### HURSTVILLE

Cnr. Park Rd. & McMahan St. English:

9.30am. & 6.30pm. Indonesian: 4.00pm.

Rev Kevin Murray (02) 9153 8176.

### KIAMA

Terralong St. 9.00am.

Pastor: Noel Creighton (02) 4233 1554

### KOGARAH

Cnr Kensington & Derby Sts.

9.30am. & 7.00pm.

Rev Ray Osborn (02) 9587 5577.

### KOREAN, SYDNEY (Young Nak)

7-9 Manson St, Telopea. 9.30am. 11.00am.

3.00pm. Rev Charles Kim (02) 9684 2090(C),

(02) 9150 7939(H), (02) 9816 3807 (S.Cl.).

### LEETON

Cnr. Sycamore & Cypress Sts. 10.00 am.

Rev. Phillip Strong (02) 6953 3579

### LISMORE (St Paul's)

188 Keen St. 9.00 am. & 7.00 pm.

Rev Peter Playsted (02) 6624 7050

### MACQUARIE

Herring & Abuklea Rds, Marsfield

Rev. Rex Swavley (02) 9878 4202

### MANLY (St Andrew's)

Raglan St. & Augusta Lane. 9.45am. 5.30pm.

May/Sept; 7.00pm Oct/April.

Rev Tony Lang (02) 9976 2801

### MAROUBRA, Kingsford

8 Robey St, **Maroubra.** 9.30 am. 7.15 pm.

94 Houston Rd, **Kingsford** 11.15am

Chinese Service, **Maroubra** 4 pm.  
 Rev Johnnie Li (02) 9349 1312  
**MOREE** (St Andrew's)  
 Cnr Albert & Auburn Sts, 10.00am.  
 Rev. L. Fowler (02) 6752 1083  
**MOSMAN** (Scots Kirk)  
 Belmont Rd. (nr Military Rd), 9.00am.  
 Rev R J McCracken (02) 9969 6101.  
**MURWILLUMBAH** (St Andrew's)  
 Wollumbin St. 9.00am. & 7.00pm.  
**Tyalgum:** 11.00am. (3rd Sun).  
 Rev. Philip Strong (02) 6672 1088  
**NEWCASTLE** (St Andrews)  
 Cnr. Laman & Auckland Sts 9.15am & 7.00pm.  
 Office: (02) 4929 2857  
**NORTH SYDNEY-GREENWICH**  
 (St Peter's) 234 Blues Point Rd. 10.00am.  
 & 6.45pm. Wednesday 1.15pm.  
**Greenwich:** (Taylor's Memorial)  
 86A Greenwich Rd. 10.00am.  
 Rev Dr Paul Logan (02) 9955 1662.  
 Assistant Rev A B Clark (02) 9638 7471  
**ORANGE (St James)**  
 Cnr Anson St. & Matthews Ave. 10.00am.  
 Rev. William Stewart (02) 6362 6304  
**PARRAMATTA CITY**  
 Cumberland High School, Dunmore Ave.  
 Carlingford. Rev. Luke Tattersall.  
 S. Clerk: Mike Whiteman (02) 9484 1240.  
**PENRITH** (St Andrew's)  
 Doonmore St. near High St, 9.00am. &  
 7.00pm. Rev William Morrow (02) 4721 2440.  
**PORT MACQUARIE** (St Andrew's)  
 Cnr William/Munster Sts, 9.00am., 10.30am  
 Rev S Donnellan (02) 6582 2505  
**RANDWICK**  
 Alison Rd. & Cook St. 10.00am. & 5.00pm.  
 (02) 9399 3183.  
**ROSE BAY** (St Andrew's)  
 Cnr Dover Rd. & Carlisle St. 10.00am & 6.00pm.  
 Rev Bruce Christian (02) 9388 1206(O).  
**RYDE**  
 Bowden & Squire Sts. **Putney:** Douglas St.  
 Rev Andrew Unwin (02) 9809 3197.  
**SOUTHERN CROSS**  
 Park Ave. East Lismore  
 Rev. Stephen Cree (02) 6621 3655  
**SPRINGWOOD**  
 160 Macquarie Rd. 10.30am. & 6.00pm.  
**Winmalee:** 481 Hawkesbury Rd. 9.00am.  
 (02) 4751 1188(O).  
 Rev. Robert Benn (02) 4751 9968  
**STRATHFIELD** (St David's)  
 Barker Rd. & Marion St. 10.00am. & 6.30pm.  
 Rev Robert McKean (02) 9746 8123.  
**SUTHERLAND**  
 Cnr Flora & Glencoe Sts. 9.30am & 5.30pm  
 Rev Adrian Clausen (02) 9521 2361  
**SYDNEY (Scots Church)**  
 142 Chalmers Str., Surry Hills (temporary)  
 Service Time: 10.30 am.  
 Rev. Adrian Van Ash (02) 9817 0587.  
**TAMWORTH** (St Stephen's)  
 23 Matthews St, also at **Moonbi.**  
 9.00am. & 6.30pm  
 Rev Stuart Andrews (02) 6765 8754.  
**Tamworth Community Presb Church,**  
 Oxley High School Piper St Nth T'worth  
 10 am. Rev Keith Walker (02) 6762 5759  
**Manilla:** Court St.  
 Rev. Vic Johnson (02) 6785 1627.

**TAREE**  
 Albert St. 9.00am.  
 Rev John Thompson (02) 6552 1082(O).  
**TENTERFIELD**  
 117 Logan St.  
**TERRIGAL** (Scots Kirk)  
 2 Willoughby Rd.  
 Rev Phillip Paul (02) 4385 2240.  
**WAHROONGA**  
 Wahroonga Presbyterian Church,  
 Cnr. Illoura Ave. & Stuart St. 9.30am.  
 Rev. Murray Fraser (02) 9489 3690  
**WEE WAA**  
 Mitchell St.  
 Mr Mark Powell (02) 6795 4259  
**WENTWORTH FALLS** (St Andrew's)  
 Falls Rd. 9.00 am. Session Clerk: Mr Bernie  
 Tucker (02) 4757 3518  
**WENTWORTHVILLE**  
 7 McKem St. **Girraween:** 15 Tungarra Rd.  
 Rev. David Griffin Phone: (02) 9896 3297.  
**WESTLAKES**  
 Warnervale Community Hall, Warnervale Rd  
 S.School 8.30 am. Service 9.30 am.  
 Rev. Esa Hukkinen (02) 4393 5530  
**WEST WYALONG**  
 Pioneer Memorial, Court St. 9.00am. &  
 11.00am. Also at **Barmedman, Mahda,**  
**Talimba & Weethalle.**  
 Mr. Lance Jackson (02) 6972 2143.  
**WOLLONGONG** (St Andrew's)  
 Cnr Kembla & Burelli Sts. 9.45am. &  
 6.00pm. Rev Bruce Hammonds (02) 4226  
 1458(H) (02) 4226 1725(O).  
**WOOLGOOLGA**  
 Cnr Scarborough St. & Landrigan Cl.  
 9.00am. Rev. Peter Moore (02) 6651 2301.  
**WOONONA**  
 7 Gray St. Rev Peter Currie (02) 4284 4057.  
**WOY WOY**  
 120 Blackwall Rd. 9.00 & 10.30 am.  
 Rev. Jamie Newans (02) 4342 2856

*queensland*

**ACACIA RIDGE**  
 Cnr. Mortimer & Beaudesert Rds.  
 8.45am. & 6.00pm. Pastor Stephen Teale,  
 (07) 3277 0010, (07) 3344 5022 (H).  
**ASCOT**  
 68 Charlton St. (Near Airport).  
**Nundah:** 14 Rode Rd  
 Rev Guido Kettniss (07) 3216 4151.  
 Rev Les Hall (07) 3267 0558  
**BALD HILLS**  
 58 Strathpine Rd. 8.30am. & 7.00pm.  
 Rev Peter Bloomfield (07) 3261 4305.  
**BRISBANE KOREAN**  
 145 Ann St. 8.00am. 12.00 noon, 7.30pm.  
 Rev Dr M. M. Y. Kim (07) 3300 3132  
**BRISBANE** (St Paul's)  
 53 St Pauls Tce. Spring Hill.  
 Rev A. Gardiner (07) 3831 7458(O).  
**BUNDABERG** (Scots')  
 Cnr. Water & Alice Sts. 9.00am & 7.00pm.  
 Rev David Newman (07) 4153 2954  
**PEACE PRESBYTERIAN**  
 Student Centre, Deception Bay State High

School 9.30am.  
 Pastor Bob Whiting (07) 3886 7367.  
**CABOOLTURE**  
 24 Cottrill Road. 9.00am & 6.00pm.  
 Rev. G. Watt (07) 5494 1181  
**CAIRNS**  
 85 Sheridan St. 9.15 am. & 6.30 pm.  
 Rev Donald Broadwater, (07) 4036 0421 (H).  
 Rev Russell van Delden, (07) 4054 3241 (H).  
 Pastor Ron Lyons. (07) 4055 1769 (H).  
**CALLIDE VALLEY**  
**Biloela:** Cnr. Kariboe & Melton Sts.  
 10.00am. & 6.00pm.  
**Jambin:** Three Ways 8.30am.  
 Pastor Walter Posthuma (07) 4992 1441  
**CALOUNDRA**  
 Cnr Kalinga & Ormutz Sts. 9.30am. &  
 7.00pm. Rev N. Thomason (07) 5493 3594  
**CAPALABA**  
 74 Lyndon Rd. 8.30am  
 Rev B Enchelmaier (07) 3824 0958  
**CHARLEVILLE**  
 Galatea St. Rev Terry Sadler, (07) 4654 3188.  
**CHARTERSTOWERS**  
 Blackthorn Hall, Thornburgh College,  
 King St. Mr. S. Mcdonald (07) 4787 3395  
**CLAYFIELD** (Scots Memorial)  
 29 Bellevue Terrace, 9.30am.  
 Rev W. Savage (07) 3262 1230 (O).  
**CLEVELAND**  
 Cnr Bloomfield & Ocean Sts.  
 10.15am & 6.30pm.  
 Rev Brian Enchelmaier (07) 3824 0958  
**COORPAROO**  
 Emlyn St. 10.00am. & 7.00pm.  
 I.M. Rev. Dan Mihailovic (07) 3800 3799  
**CREEK ROAD**  
 PCYC Centre, 27 Narracott St., Carina  
 9.00 am & 5.30 pm.  
 Rev Peter Barson (07) 3398 3607.  
 Rev D. McDougall (07) 3397 5244.  
**DALBY**  
 Condamine St. (cnr. Patrick St).  
 Rev Roland Lowther (07) 4669 7074  
**EUMUNDI**  
 Memorial Drive, 10.45am. (weekly) &  
 6.30pm. (2nd & 4th Sunday).  
 Rev Desmond Morris (07) 5441 3053  
**GAYNDAH**  
 Warton St. 10.00am.  
 Pastor Errol Shepherd (07) 4161 1916.  
**GLADSTONE** (St Andrew's)  
 149 Goonoon St. 10.00am. & 7.00pm.  
 Rev. David Secomb (07) 4972 1058  
**Tannum Sands:**  
 Cnr Pacific Drive & Ocean St. 8.00am.  
 I.M. Rev. J. Chandler (07) 4922 1825  
**GOLD COAST**  
**Arundel:** 132 Allied Drive 9.15am.  
 Rev Bob Carner (07) 5545 0947  
**Robina:** Cnr University & Cottesloe Drives  
 10.00 am. & 6.30 pm.  
 Rev. Kevin Ridley (07) 5571 1416  
**GYMPIE**  
 11 Crown St. 9.30am. Woolooga 11.00am.  
 Rev. D Cranney (07) 5482 7629(O).  
**HERVEY BAY** (St David's)  
 Denmans Rd, Scarness, 9.30am. & 7.00pm.  
 Rev. John T Roth (07) 4124 7018.  
**IPSWICH**  
 Cnr Limestone & Gordon Sts. 8.20am.

10.00am. 6.30pm. **Coominya:** 8.00am.  
**Forest Hill:** Church St, 9.00am.  
 Rev John Langbridge (07) 3294 7999.  
 Rev Wesley Redgen (07) 3282 9829.

**ITHACA**

100 Enogerra Tce, Paddington.  
 Service: 9.30 am. 6.30pm.  
 Rev. Robert Herrgott (07) 3300 6158

**MACGREGOR**

268 Padstow Rd. Eight Mile Plains 8.30am.  
 I.M. Rev. Dan Mihailovic (07) 3800 3799

**MACKAY**

Cnr Harvey St. & Evans Ave. Nth Mackay.  
 7.30am; 9.30am & 7pm.

**Sarina:** Sarina Beach Rd. 9.00am.

**Pinnacle:** Red Cross Hall, 4.00pm  
 (1st & 3rd Sunday).

Rev. Jim Brown (07) 4955 3829.

**MALENY**

Cedar St. 9.00am.  
 Rev. Des Morris (07) 5441 3053

**MAROOCHYDORE**

Okinja Rd. Alexandra Headland.  
 9.00am. & 7.00pm.

Rev Keith Mayers (07) 5445 9209.

**MARYBOROUGH**

523 Alice St. 9.00am.  
 Pastor John Tucker (07) 4123 5920.

**MILES**

Miles 80 Murilla St., 9.00am.

**Dulacca** Temple St., 2nd & 4th Sunday  
**Condamine** 1st & 3rd Sunday S'time 7 am  
 W'time 11am Manse: (07) 4627 1180

**MONTO**

Bell St. 10.00am. & 7.00pm. (2nd & 4th  
 Sunday). **Abercorn** 11.45am. (1st Sunday).

**Kalpowar:** 7.30pm. (3rd Sunday).

Pastor Brian Hoy (07) 4166 1441.

**NAMBOUR**

21 Solanda St. 8.45am  
 Rev Des Morris (07) 5441 3053.

**NORTH PINE**

57 Old Dayboro Rd. Petrie. 10.00am. &  
 6.30pm. Rev Neil McKinlay (07) 3285 2104.

**PEACE PRESBYTERIAN**

Student Center, Deception Bay State High  
 School 9.30am.

Mod. Rev. J Gilmour (07) 3261 7804

**REDCLIFFE PENINSULA**

WoodyPoint, Cnr. Ellen & Hawthorne Sts.  
 9.30am. & 6.00pm.

**Scarborough:** Jeays St. 8.00am.

Rev. Peter Whitney (07) 3284 2578.

**ROCKHAMPTON** (St Andrew's)

Cnr. Bolsover & Derby Sts. 10.00am. &  
 6.00pm. St John's: Parnell St. 8.30am.

Rev Charlie Kennedy (07) 4922 8241.

**ROCKHAMPTON** (John Knox)

Rundle St. 10.00 am. & 7.30 pm.

Rev. Jon Chandler (07) 4922 1825

**ROCKHAMPTON** (St Stephen's)

Burnett St. Nth Rockhampton, 8.30am.

Rev Jon Chandler (07) 4922 1825

**Mt Morgan:** St Enoch's, East St. 9.00am.

Rev Gilbert Jansen (07) 4938 2485.

**SANDGATE**

Loudon St. 9.00am. & 6.00pm.  
 Rev John Gilmour (07) 3261 7804.

**SPRINGSURE**

Charles St. 10.30am.

**Emerald:** High School Frazer St., 8.30am.

Rev B J Harrison Phone (07) 4984 1550.

**TEWANTIN**

Anglican Church, William St. 11.45am.

Rev Keith L. Mayers (07) 5445 9209.

**THE GAP**

1195 Waterworks Rd., 9.00am.

Rev David Niven (07) 3300 2987.

**THURINGOWA -TOWNSVILLE**

John Calvin, Carthew St. Kirwan.

**Condon:** Rev Bill Lutton (07) 4723 8022.

**TOOWOOMBA NORTH** (St David's)

Mary St. Also at **Geham**

**TOOWOOMBA WEST**

**St Andrews:** 57 West St. 9.00am. & 5.00pm.

**Glenvale Rd:** 35A Glenvale Rd. 8.00am.

Rev R. Sondergeld (07) 4633 4188.

Mr Ross Turner (07) 4634 6053

Mr Mike Stone (07) 4635 0651

Mr Wayne Harrison (07) 4634 9066

**TOWNSVILLE** (St Andrew's)

113 Wills St. City. 9.30am. & 6.30pm.

Ass. Min. Rev. Walter Jones (07) 4778 3823

**VICTORIA POINT**

164 Colburn Ave. 8.30am.

Rev Brian Enchelmaier (07) 3824 0958

**WYNNUM**

Cnr Bay Tce & Cedar St. 9.00 am & 6.00 pm.

Rev Dr George Logan (07) 3893 1712

*south australia*

**ADELAIDE** (St Andrew's)

92-98 Archer St. North Adelaide. 10.30 am.

Session Clerk: Mr. Jim Petrie (08) 8395 6252

**Largs North,** Brenda Terrace. 11.00 am.

Rev R. Burns (08) 8267 1056.

**ELIZABETH**

106 Goodman Rd, Elizabeth South. 9.30 am

Session Clerk: Mr Bob Arstall (08) 8825 5226.

**MILLICENT**

Cnr Fifth & Sixth Sts. 10.30 am.

Rev Andrew Slater (08) 8733 2062.

**MT BARKER**

Hutchison St. 10.30 am.

Pastor Rupert Hanna (08) 8391 3151.

**MT GAMBIER**

Allison St. 10.00 am. 6.30 pm. Also **Allendale,**

**Glenburnie, Nelson** (Vic), OB Flat.

Rev R. Waterhouse Ph/Fx (08) 8723 9028

**MURRAY BRIDGE**

Masonic Hall 5.00pm. (1st, 3rd & 5th S'day)

Rev Wally Zurrer (08) 8296 0801.

**NARACOORTE**

Church St. 10.00am.

Rev Rudi Schwartz (08) 8762 1035

**NORWOOD** (St Giles)

79 The Parade. 9.15am & 7.00pm.

Rev Dr Reg Mathews (08) 8395 7841

**PARA HILLS**

174 Maxwell Rd. 10.45 am.

Rev Dr Reg Mathews (08) 8395 7841

**PENOLA**

Portland St. 10.45 am. Rev. Alan Clarkson

(08) 8737 2984 Also **Dergholm, Kalangadoo**

**PORT AUGUSTA**

Jervois St. 11.00 am.

Rev Laurie Peake (08) 8648 6777.

**SEACLIFF**

Kauri Pde. Seacliff. 9.30am.

Rev Wally Zurrer (08) 8296 0801.

**WHYALLA**

28 Ramsay St. 9.00 am.

S/ Clerk: Helen Mashford

(08) 8645 0818



**CROSSROADS** (Hobart)

Campbell St. School 6.00 pm.

Rev David Jones (03) 6234 4701

**DEVONPORT** (St Columba's)

Edward St. **Don:** Waverley Rd.

I.M. Rev. Daniel Combridge (03) 6425 9525

**HOBART**

(St John's) 10.00 am & 7.00 pm

188 Macquarie St. (03) 6223 7213

Rev. Robert White (03) 6278 1370

**LAUNCESTON** (St Andrew's)

Civic Square. 9.30 & 11.00 am. @ 7.00 pm.

(Dec/Jan 10.00 am. & 7.00 pm.)

Church Office: (03) 6331 5412

Rev. Peter Thorneycroft 0438 315 412

Yth. Pastor: Brett Rutherford (03)6331 2584

**MONTROSE**

Cnr. Islington Rd. & Walker St. 10.00 am.

Rev. Steve Warwick (03) 6272 2608.

**RIVERSIDE**

Eden St. Also **Glenarry & Winkleigh.**

Mod. Ps. Bryan Crawford (03) 6352 4024

**ROKEBY**

Presby. Community Church, Tollard Dr.

Mod. Rev Steve Warwick (03) 6272 2608

**SCOTTSDALE**

George St. **Bridport:** Westwood St.

Mod.Ps. Bryan Crawford (03) 6352 4024

**STANLEY** (St James)

Fletcher St. **Rocky Cape, Mawbanna**

Mod. Mr I Bessell (03) 6443 4299

**ULVERSTONE** (St Andrew's)

65 Main Rd. 10.00am.

Rev Daniel Combridge (03) 6425 9525.

**WEST TAMAR**

Auld Kirk, Sidmouth and Mole Creek

Mod: Rev. John Britton (03) 6339 4480

*victoria*

**ARARU**

Cnr. Campbell St. (Pyrenees H'way) and

Queen St. 10 am. Mr Norman Sharp

O.(03) 5334 3747 H. (03) 5352 4054

**ASHBURTON**

Junction of High St. and High Street Rd.

near Warrigal Rd. 10.15am.

Rev Peter Orchard (03) 9889 6034.

**ASPENDALE**

Cnr Station St. & Lyle Grv. 9.00am. &

6.00pm. Rev A. Campbell (03) 9580 0530.

**AUBURN**

Cnr Rathmines & Station Sts

Hawthorn East 10.00 am.

Rev S P Swinn (03) 9882 5256  
**BAIRNSDALE**  
 7th Day Adventist Church, 149 Nicholson St. 10.00 am. 1st of Month 5.00pm. S/school 9.00 am.  
 Past. Laurie Leighton (03) 5153 1669  
**BALACLAVA**  
 Hotham St. & Denman Ave. 10.00am.  
 Rev Mike Wharton (03) 9527 3270.  
**BENDIGO** (St John's)  
 Forest St. 10.30am.  
 Rev Andrew Clarke (03) 5443 6189.  
**BLACKBURN**  
 53 Gardenia St. 11.00am.  
 Rev P Locke (03) 9725 6417  
**BUNDOORA**  
 Bundoora Hall, Noorong Ave. 10.00 am  
 Admin: Mrs M Goodson (03) 9431 1851  
**BURWOOD**  
 (Chinese Presbyterian Church) 11.00am.  
 Cnr. Greenwood & Tennyson Sts.  
 Rev Dr John Elnatan (03) 9801 7645.  
**CAMBERWELL- Trinity**  
 cnr Riversdale & Waterloo Sts. 10.00am.  
 Rev. Philip Mercer (03) 9836 4102  
**CAMPERDOWN-TERANG**  
 9.30 am Aug — Jan. 11 am Feb — July  
**Terang:** 1 Warrnambool Rd.  
**Camperdown:** Campbell & Brooke Sts.  
 I.M.Rev. C Ten Broeke (03) 5562 2029  
**CANTERBURY**  
 146 Canterbury Rd. 10.30am. & 7 pm.  
 Rev. Grant Lawry (03) 9836 4601.  
**CANTERBURY JAPANESE**  
 146 Canterbury Rd. 10.30 am  
 Rev. Hugh Price (03) 9894 2384  
**CAULFIELD-ELWOOD**  
**Caulfield:** Neerim/Bambra Rds. 11.15am.  
**Elwood:** Scott/Tennyson Sts. 9.15am & 4.00pm. Rev Stephen Tay (03) 9505 3013.  
 Assistant: Mr John Cho (03) 9571 5218  
**CHELTENHAM (Pioneers' Memorial)**  
 8 Park Rd. Cnr. Charman Rd. 9.30am.  
 Rev. David Palmer (03) 9583 2785  
**CLIFTON HILL**  
 Cnr Michael & McKean Sts North Fitzroy. 10.30 am  
 Int.Mod. Rev Peter Phillips (03) 9481 4642.  
**CROYDON HILLS**  
 Good Shepherd Lutheran Primary School  
 53-57 Plymouth Rd. Croydon. 10.00am. & 6.00pm.  
 I.M.Rev. John P Wilson (03) 9898 9384  
**DANDENONG**  
 51 Potter St. 10.00am.  
 Ses. Clerk. (03) 9793 1423  
**DONVALE**  
 Cnr. Springvale & McGowan's Rds. 8.30am, 10.30 am & 6.30pm. Rev Gerald Vanderwert (03) 9842 9493. (03) 9841 7020 (O)  
**DROMANA — MORNINGTON**  
**Dromana:** St Andrew's, Gibson St. 9.00am.  
**Mornington** (The Chapel) Cnr Strachans Rd. & Nepean Hwy. 11.00am.  
 Rev Andrew Venn (03) 5975 9514  
**DROUIN**  
 Church St. 9am. 10.30am. 7.30pm.  
 Sept-April; 7.00pm. May-Aug.  
 Rev. Ken Brown (03) 5625 1126.

**ELTHAM**  
 23 Batman Rd. 10.00 am  
 Rev. Don Elliott (03) 9439 9720  
**ESSENDON**  
 Cnr Wilson & McPherson Sts.  
 Moonee Ponds 9.30am. & 7.00pm.  
 Rev. Paul Ridgewell (03) 9370 1281  
**FRANKSTON**  
 30 Radiata St. 10.30am. & 6.00pm.  
 Rev David Kumnick (03) 9786 2976.  
**GLEN WAVERLEY-KNOXFIELD**  
 Highvale Primary School,  
 Ashton St. Glen Waverley 9.30am.  
 Rev. Trevor Cox (03) 9764 9141.  
**HAMILTON**  
 St Andrew's, Gray & McIntyre Sts. 10.00am. & 5.00pm. (last Sunday of month)  
 Rev Keith Bell (03) 5572 1009  
**HAWTHORN**  
 580 Glenferrie Rd. 11.00 am. & 7.00 pm.  
 Rev Dr Graham Lyman (03) 9819 5347.  
**KANGAROO GROUND**  
 265 Eltham-Yarra Glen Rd. 9.30am.  
 S. Clerk: Dr R. Baldock. (03) 9437 1265  
**KOREAN**  
 16 Walnut Rd. North Balwyn.  
 English language service. 11.00 am  
**LEONGATHA**  
 Cnr. Bent & Turner Sts. 10.00am.  
 Session Clerk: (03) 5662 4734  
**MALVERN**  
 161-163 Wattletree Rd. 10.30am. & 5.00 pm.  
 Rev John S Woodward (03) 9509 7373.  
**MELTON**  
 Mowbray College, Centenary Ave.  
 Rev Peter Owen (03) 9747 8195.  
**MOE — YARRAM**  
**Moe:** 34 Fowler St. 10.00am.  
**Yarram:** Cnr. Dougherty & Montgomery Sts. 2.00pm. Rev Jared Hood (03) 5127 1296.  
**NOORAT-DARLINGTON**  
**Noorat:** Cnr Mc Kinnons Bridge & Glenormiston Rds. 10.30 am.  
**Darlington:** Hall St. 8.45 am. (1st & 3rd Sundays) Rev. Barry Oakes (03) 5592 5220  
**NUMURKAH**  
 58 Saxton St. 11.15am. **Tallygaroopna:** Victoria St. 9.30am. **Cobram:** Cnr High and Pine Sts. (Anglican Church) 2.30pm. Pastor John Rickard (03) 5862 1621.  
**RESERVOIR**  
 81 Edwardes St. 10.00 am. & 7.00 pm.  
 Rev Chris Siriweera (03) 9460 9523  
**RINGWOOD-HEATHMONT**  
 Cnr. Waterloo St. & Canterbury Rd.  
 Heathmont 10.00am. Enq: (03) 9728 3374  
**ROCHESTER**  
 Cnr. Victoria St. & Echuca Rd. 11.00am. & 7.30pm. **Timmering** 9.30 am  
**ST KILDA**  
 Cnr Alma Rd. & Barkly St. 11.00am & 7.00pm. Rev Bob Thomas (03) 9537 1642 (O)  
**SHEPPARTON**  
 Cnr. Hayes & Leithen Sts. 9.00am. & 7.00pm. Also **Stanhope, Kyabram.**  
 Rev John Sutherland (03) 5831 6494.  
**SOMERVILLE**  
 Cnr Jones Rd. & Park Lane.  
 Rev. Ian Brown (03) 5977 5469.  
**SOUTH YARRA**  
 621 Punt Rd. 10.00 am. & 6.30 pm.

I.M. Rev. M. Wharton (03) 9527 3270  
**SORRENTO-RYE**  
**Rye:** St David's, Colwood & Lyons Sts. 9.30am.  
**Sorrento:** St Andrew's, Kerferd Rd. 11.00am.  
**SUNSHINE**  
 McKay Memorial, Anderson Rd. 10.00am. & 7.00pm. Rev Cor Vanderhorn (03) 9311 1661  
**SURREY HILLS** (St Stephen's)  
 Canterbury & Warrigal Rds. 10.15am. & 7.00pm. (2nd Sun: Youth Service 7.00pm).  
 I.M. Rev. Peter N Orchard (03) 9889 6034  
**UPPER YARRA – WARBURTON**  
 3471 Warburton H'way. 10.00am. & 6.00pm.  
 Mr. Tony Archer (03) 5966 2309.  
**WANGARATTA — REGIONAL PARISH**  
**Wangaratta**, 158 Rowan St. Yarrowonga, 47 Orr St. Myrtleford, 78 Standish St  
 Rev. Neil Harvey (03) 5721 6444  
**WARRNAMBOOL** (St John's)  
**Warrnambool:** Cnr Spence & Manifold Sts. 10.00am & 7.00 pm. Sunday Night Life 5.30  
**South Warrnambool:** McDonald St. 9.30  
**Woodford:** Mill St. 11.00 am  
 Warrnambool Office: (03) 5562 2029  
 Rev Chris ten Broeke (03) 5561 5373  
 Rev. Philip Burns (03) 5561 7899.  
**WEST FOOTSCRAY**  
 141 Essex St. (Scots) 10.00 am.  
 Session Clerk: Ms J Swift (03) 9687 5701  
**WILLIAMSTOWN** (St Andrew's)  
 87 Cecil St. 10.00am.  
 Rev. Bruce Riding (03) 9397 5338  
**WODONGA-RUTHERGLEN**  
 59 Mitchell St. Wodonga. **Rutherglen:** Community Centre, Sheridan's Bridge Rd.  
 Pastor Ian Leach (02) 6024 4028.  
**WOORI YALLOCK**  
 Healesville Rd. 9.15am & 5 pm, (7pm DLS)  
 Rev David Brown (03) 5964 6014.



**BICTON**  
 Harris St. & View Tce. 9.00am & 7.00pm.  
 Rev Stuart Bonnington (08) 9339 3542.  
**FREMANTLE** (Scots)  
 Cnr South Tce & Parry St. 10.00 am  
 Chinese Worship & Sunday School. 3.00 pm.  
 Rev James Nocher (08) 9319 2208.  
**WHITFORDS** (St Mark's)  
 Anglican School, St Marks Dr Hilarys.  
 9.00am. Rev Alan Perrie (08) 9447 1074

*To register your church in this section of the Australian Presbyterian is an easy, low cost exercise. Facsimile the AP office on: (03) 9723 9685 or E-mail us at: [austpres@bigpond.com](mailto:austpres@bigpond.com)*

*The Annual Fees are:*  
 Congregations under 50 \$45.00 plus GST  
 Congregations 51 -99 \$55.00 plus GST  
 Congregations 100 or more \$65.00 plus GST



## focus on GAA

### 100 years to the day

*Report and photos by Ramon Williams*

The Presbyterian Church of Australia held its centenary celebration and the opening of its General Assembly 2001, in the Sydney Town Hall on Tuesday 24 July, 100 years to the day from its commencement and in the same venue. The Town Hall was packed, with the overflow crowd occupying the nearby St Andrew's Cathedral.

After many months of planning, the centenary committee, led by **Rev. Robert Benn** as convener, finally saw the fruition of their plans. A Sydney Square program featuring the Scots College Pipe Band had to be postponed, then curtailed, because of a sudden downpour. But they were still able to play some stirring Scottish items, attracting many passers-by. Thus the centenary of the PCA was a witness to the Lord's faithfulness and grace, which was then portrayed inside the nearby Town Hall.

Special mention was made of the contribution by **Greg Gardiner**, CEO of the Christian Television Association, who came from Brisbane to help. A video presentation depicted the 100 years during which the Presbyterian Church has had an effect on life in the cities, country areas and among the various ethnic and age

groups of society.

Presbyterian worship in Australia began with individual Presbyterian settlers in the First Fleet, in 1788. The first "solid stone building with walls two feet thick" was built in 1809 and called "Ebenezer" – the oldest church in the country, and still in use today. The first Presbyterian Minister, **Rev. Archibald McArthur**, was based in Hobart, in 1822, followed by the first minister on the mainland, **Rev. John Dunmore Lang** in 1823 in Sydney.

On 24 July, 1901, leaders and representatives from all states gathered in the Sydney Town Hall for the official inauguration of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. **The Right Rev. John Meiklejohn** of Melbourne was inducted as the first Moderator General.

**The Very Rev. Bruce Christian**, the retiring Moderator General in 2001, was interviewed by Naomi Gorton in an



**Bruce Christian being interviewed by Naomi Gorton**

endeavour to portray something of the historical achievements over the past 100 years. "We've come to a deeper and more profound appreciation for the Lord, for his Church and for the Church's ministry over these years," said Mr Christian.

A video report was presented from the "21C" national young leaders' development conference which was held from 21 to 24 July, under the theme "Developing Presbyterian Leaders for a new Century". **Rev. Ian Smith**, the New Testament lecturer at the Presbyterian Theological Centre in Sydney, gave the main address on "The Way Ahead", from Hebrews 12:1-3. The **Korean Choir** and musicians presented several items.

### New Moderator General

After the centenary celebration, the business sessions of the national assembly were opened, led by the clerk of General Assembly, **Rev. Dr Paul Logan**. The highlight was the induction of **the Rt Rev. Jack Knapp** as the Moderator General, taking over from Bruce Christian.

Overseas guests included the **Rt Rev. J. and Mrs Miller**, Moderator of the

Church of Scotland; **Rev. W. and Mrs Mackay**, Moderator of the Free Church of Scotland; **Rev. R.F.S. and Mrs Poots**, deputy clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and **Rev. Prof. I. Brewars**, representing the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Other Australian denominations represented included the Salvation Army, the Uniting Church in Australia, the Roman Catholic Church, the Baptist Union of Australia, the Fellowship of Congregational Churches of Australia, the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Anglican Church. **Mr Ray Hoekzema**, president of the NSW Council of Churches and representing the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia, responded on behalf of the various denominations represented.

The business sessions continued in the Presbyterian Church, Chalmers Street, Sydney until Friday 27 July.

*A video of the celebration rally is available from: Rebecca Wilson, 2 Prince Edward Street, Carlton, NSW 2218, for \$20.*

### Report on the General Assembly

*By Rev. Guido Kettinis*

The assembly opened on the morning of Wednesday 25 July, with a communion service. The newly inducted Moderator-General led the service, assisted by his two chaplains, **Rev. Lesleigh Hall** and **Rev. Chris Balzer**.

Then it was down to business. The assembly always forwards a message of loyalty to the Queen, which read: "May it please your Majesty: We, your faithful subjects, Ministers and Elders of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, take leave to assure your Majesty of our loyalty



**The Moderator General, Rt Rev. Jack Knapp**

and devotion to your Person and to the Throne. We pray that the Lord Jesus Christ, who is King of kings and Lord of lords, and the only Saviour of mankind, may, by his grace, sustain and uphold your Majesty in his providential care, and that he may grant to your Majesty personally

all the gifts needful for the discharge of the exacting duties of your high office. We also pray that Christ, through his unchanging Word and by the guidance of his Spirit, will grant to your Majesty, in your demanding position of leadership in Church and Nation, wisdom, integrity, courage and faithfulness to him.

"We have the honour to be your Majesty's faithful servants, Ministers and Elders of the Presbyterian Church of Australia."

The assembly did not neglect the Commonwealth Government, and the following communication was forwarded to the speaker of the House of Representatives and the president of Senate of the Australian Parliament:

"We, your faithful subjects, Ministers and Elders of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, celebrating the centenary of the Presbyterian Church in Australia, assure you of the regular prayers of the people of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, for the nation's elected representatives in the exercise of their responsibilities."

## Greetings from overseas

Several letters from overseas Presbyterian denominations congratulated us on our centenary and forwarded words of encouragement and challenge. Sadly, some of the denominations who replied do not have the same faith and trust in the risen Lord and the Bible. In fact the Moderator of the Church of Scotland expressed his surprise at receiving the invitation to address the assembly, pointing out that the Church of Scotland and the Presbyterian Church of Scotland diverge on a number of issues, including that of the ordination of women elders.

Of great challenge and encouragement were the Revs R. Poots and D. Campbell representing the General Assembly in Ireland. They spoke of the heart-aches and the fears that the Church faces with the continuing unrest in that country. They asked: "Is there hope?" And the answer came back with a mighty conviction: "In Jesus Christ there is always hope!"

## Robert Benn resigns

After many years as the director of Australian Presbyterian World Missions, Robert Benn has stood down, to conclude his ministry working in a parish. The assembly wished Bob and

Laurel God's richest blessing as they continue their ministry in the **Springwood** (NSW) Charge, and welcomed **Rev. Bill Lutton** as director. Bill and his wife Jenny are currently ministering in John Calvin Presbyterian Church in Townsville, and will leave there for their new charge soon.

## Presbyterian Inland Mission

The Superintendent of the PIM, **Rev. Jack Knapp**, reported that they now have four full-time padres, and two part-time padres. He said the Presbyterian Church was slowly re-building this important ministry to isolated people in the Outback. **Padre Terry Sadler** had been told he had terminal cancer, but instead is back to a 50 per cent work load, and will soon undertake a full load again.

When his doctor said: "I have some very bad news Mr Sadler: we believe your condition is terminal", Terry replied: "Doctor I have bad news for you too. I know where I am going, but you do not." The members of the Assembly rejoiced to hear that **Pastor David Hart**, previously enjoying retirement in Tasmania, is instead undertaking a large patrol in remote Western Australia with his wife **Doreen**. **Rev. Laurie Peake** and his wife **Gwen** are retiring at the end of the year (because of health reasons), to take up the family farm at Wandoan. Laurie and Gwen have ministered in South-West Queensland, and now are responsible for the Flynn Patrol in South Australia, moving into the Northern Territory as far as Alice Springs.

## Cross-cultural ministries

In recent years, the Church has set up Presbyterian ministries to serve such communities as the Japanese, Arabs, Chinese and Koreans, as well as the ministry to our own indigenous people. **Rev. Rick Manton** and his wife **Kayleen** are involved in a church planting venture among Aborigines in the Mt Druitt area. This has now become a joint venture with the Anglican Church. **Pastor and Mrs Ron Lyons** are now based full-time at Weipa. The members of the assembly were urged to become involved in and to support cross-cultural missions.

## Tyranny of distance

The tyranny of distance has been a constant theme since the opening of the out-

back of Australia. John Flynn's dream was to have a mantle of safety for those living far from "civilisation", providing education and access to medical facilities. The Presbyterian Church has recognized the need to provide ministry to her people in these parts.

The Church has recognized for a number of years, that where the service of an ordained minister is not ordinarily available, home missionaries who have served five years and passed an exam can administer the sacraments.

Assembly gave interim approval to administer the sacraments to those employed by the PIM for 12 months and not ordained, having received permission from the relevant church committees and the presbytery in which they minister and having sat for the special examination.

Under the laws of the Church, these overtures cannot become effective until all the states and presbyteries have voted and a majority has approved. So they can not come into effect (if approved) until the next general assembly, in three years. The laws do allow interim authority by a two thirds vote at the assembly accordingly.



**Rev. Robert Benn, retiring as APWM director.**

## Distance education

In recent years there has been a push to allow men to be trained for ministry by distance education, including the Internet. The debate centres on the quality of training these methods can deliver, compared with the traditional "face to face" method. While some distance education is allowed, most of the course must be done at one of the theological halls. An overture or request by the **Presbytery of Moree** for the College Committee to establish a complete course of training by means of distance education was not approved.

## Media blasphemy

The Church and Nation Committee drew the attention of the assembly to the increasing use of blasphemy in the media,

and urged Presbyterians to contact the Australian Broadcasting Authority to register their concern (phone 1800 226667).

The committee also recommends the specially produced booklets on various issues such as homosexuality, euthanasia, gambling, freemasonry, and the dangers of cults (Order from Church and Nation, 49 Worthing Rd, Burwood 3125, \$6.50 each including postage).

The Presbyterian Church in NSW has a website which is designed to help people write letters of concern to parliamentarians and members of local government. An example was mentioned where a proposed brothel was not allowed to go ahead, following the writing of letters to the local government. ([www.churchand-nation.pcns.org.au](http://www.churchand-nation.pcns.org.au)) Of interest is that **Rev. Stephen Slucki**, a blind Presbyterian minister, is convener of this committee.

## Women's ministries

**T**he question of women and ministry was raised in three issues at the assembly.

1) An overture to open ordination to men and women. Some members sought to alter the Articles of Agreement to say that both men and women shall be eligible for admission to the ministry of word and sacrament in the Presbyterian Church of Australia. This overture was strongly rejected.

2) The Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria has in recent years, as did the Presbyterian Church in Queensland many years previously, approved that no women may henceforth be elected, ordained or inducted to the office of elder in Victoria.

The question of who is eligible for the ruling eldership is a state issue, and unless the state assembly has not followed its own rules of procedure, there is no grounds of appeal to the General Assembly of Australia. Two complaints from members of the Victorian Church about the decision of their assembly on



Packed Town Hall

women elders, were dismissed as they were not able to show that the Victorian Assembly had not followed their rules of procedure.

3) A special committee set up to explore opportunities for a positive approach to the ministry of women presented its report. It discussed the divergent approaches on interpreting the Bible, the influence of radical feminism, and the viewpoint that the role of men and women in marriage and in the Church is simply a peripheral issue.

The report sets out the committee's basic principles. (i) There is an absolute truth which can be discerned; (ii) all Scripture, not just part of it, is inspired by God; (iii) Scripture is infallible.

The committee identified six areas where women are able to have a fruitful ministry. These are: Within the family (wife, daughter, sister, mother, grandmother); through the home (hospitality, caring ministries); at the congregational level (evangelism, Bible study leader, ministry to and through children, pastoral care, cross-cultural ministries such as teaching language courses); through organised structures (as deaconesses, chaplains); through the wider church (missionaries, membership and employment of para-church organizations, PWA/PWMU); and in the world at large (employer, employee, volunteer work).

The assembly approved that the committee continues its work, investigating the issues raised above, and how women may use their gifts in the ministry of the Church and beyond. State assemblies will be asked to set up similar committees, as has already happened in Queensland.

## Ministers' applications

**T**he convener of the **Reception of Ministers Committee**, **Rev. Chris Balzer**, continues to receive a steady number of applications from overseas. Some applicants feel restricted in their present ministry because of the non-biblical teachings and practices in their current denomination; many believe God is calling them to minister in Australia to an ethnic community, or to fellow emigrants or to any congregation that God has prepared for them.

The committee interviews these applicants, and ensures they hold to the beliefs and practices of the Presbyterian Church in Australia as set out in the Scriptures and in the Church's Subordinate Standard – the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Declaratory Statement.



Rev. Ian Smith preaching the main address.

Each applicant has to be recommended by a presbytery and, if approved by the receptions committee, is then set any additional study which the College Committee (the committee responsible for the training of ministers) may require. An applicant is then eligible to be

called to a congregation.

The convener reported that since the last assembly one applicant had been inducted into a charge, and 10 had been received as ministers, subject to completing the set study.

## College committee

**T**his Committee has the responsibility of ensuring that candidates for the ministry throughout Australia are trained to the standard and requirements of the PCA, and has the task of approving the curriculum for the various colleges, and the course for each student every year.

There are three recognised theological colleges in Australia, in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. In addition, the Presbyterian Church in Western Australia is a consortium member of the Trinity Theological College, with the Victorian faculty acting as the faculty for the Presbyterian Church in WA.

Following the formation of a consortium between the Queensland Theological Hall and the Westminster Presbyterian College, the Queensland Church's overture to change the name of its theological hall to Reformed College of Ministries was approved by the assembly.

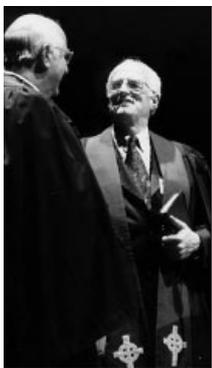
The convener of the College Committee, **Professor Allan Harman**, reported that since 1977 some 382 candidates have exited, with 53 exit certificates (certificates indicating that students for the ministry had successfully completed their course of training) issued since the last assembly. NSW had 30, Victoria 14 and Queensland nine.

Professor Harman stated that "the provision of suitable ministerial candidates must remain a matter of prayer for the whole Church, as there are only 37 candidates under the care of

Presbyteries and Theological Education Committees.”

## Moore tie severed

Since 1977, the GAA has approved Presbyterian candidates studying at Moore Theological College (Sydney Anglican). This was done originally as a matter of expediency, and the PCA welcomed the cooperation of Moore College at a time when it had to organise and set-up its own theological training Centres virtually from scratch. Over recent years, the College Committee has felt that, with our theological halls coming “of age” and able to grant various higher degrees, it was time to sever the relationship with Moore College.



Old and new:  
Jack Knapp, left,  
with Bruce  
Christian

As can be expected, the suggestion was keenly debated, but the assembly approved the following: “Without affecting the course of training of current candidates, discontinue the use of Moore Theological College as a venue for satisfying part of the course requirements for training of candidates for the ministry from 1 January, 2004.”

## Aboriginal training

In another significant move, the College Committee was authorised, in consultation with the **Australian Presbyterian Aboriginal Ministry**, to approve a modified course in theological training for indigenous Australians, which course may include training at an indigenous theological college. Such students will still have to do one year of study at one of the PCA’s recognised Theological halls.

The Assembly recognized the work of the retiring convener, and Dr Allan Harman was thanked for his leadership, wise guidance and generous encouragement over the past 16 years as convener.

## Reformed cooperation

Talks have continued with the **Christian Reformed Churches of**

**Australia** (formerly the Dutch Reformed Church), and cooperation is occurring in some areas. Discussions centred on the church’s membership with overseas bodies, and it was agreed to remain a member of the **Reformed Ecumenical Council**, despite serious concerns with certain theological opinions being expressed by members of this Council. The **Committee on Relations with Other Churches** was asked to monitor the situation and to investigate other options for international ecumenical relationships, including the World Reformed Fellowship.

## Middle East Reformed Fellowship

The chairman of MERF, **Rev. L de Young**, was invited to address the assembly. He emphasised that while there was once a time when Arab countries were open to missionaries, this is now no longer the case. However by God’s grace, the airways are still open, and Christian programmes are being beamed into these closed countries. Through the Internet, the Bible is able to be downloaded into countries where the Bible is banned. MERF had received many encouraging letters, in which the writers described their wonderful conversions.

Mr de Young also made this encouraging point: While the Muslim religion is increasing at an alarming rate, statistics indicate that evangelical Christianity is the only religion which is increasing by conversions and not merely by population growth.

## Australian Presbyterian

The assembly expressed gratitude for the continued satisfactory production and financial situation of *AP*, and for the editorial and production team.

While advertising revenue has increased, subscriptions are still declining (8 per cent over the past four years), although in the past few months, 60 new subscriptions have been received.

**National Journal Committee**, which is responsible for the *Australian Presbyterian*, aims at continuing to have incisive articles by a variety of authors, to lift the format and quality of the journal and to make it *the* evangelical magazine in Australia. Changes have been made to make the Journal more readable and attractive. While some expressed concern over the “meaty” type of articles, others have strongly commended the journal for

them.

The assembly urged all members to consider subscribing, and approved making \$19,500 a year available as a communication service fee.

The committee is also responsible for the Internet website. Over the past four years, thousands have visited the site and it has become an initial point of contact for overseas visitors.

The assembly paid tribute to the retiring convener and editor, **Rev. Robert Benn**, who has steered the journal to its present high standard and quality, and has been an inspiration to the whole editorial and production team.

## The use of Sunday

In response to a petition received from a member of the church, the assembly approved a notice of motion to set up a committee to research the biblical practice of Lord’s Day observance. The convener of this committee is **Rev. Peter Bloomfield**, minister of the Bald Hills Presbyterian Church (Qld).

## 21C Conference

Some 70 young people from around Australia attended the 21C conference in the Blue Mountains before the assembly. Those who attended were greatly encouraged, and the conference was judged a great success. The assembly agreed to make available \$3000 for the ongoing work of 21C – for training and encouraging youth leaders on a national level.

Delegates to 21C produced a statement, expressing gratitude to God and determination to make diligent use of his gifts.

It said: “We believe that the following four areas are of great importance: (i) We are committed to unity, across all ages, using all gifts to build up the body of Christ. (ii) We are committed to training: learning from experienced Christian leaders and passing that on to those in our care. (iii) We are committed to being outward-looking: presenting Jesus in an ever-changing society, through the unchanging Word of God. (iv) We are committed to the future of our Church: remaining faithful to God’s Word and following His leading.”

There is no better way than to conclude this report with the committed and visionary outlook of our young people. May this also be the prayer, commitment and vision of the whole church.

# Baby non-boomers

*What if unto us a son is not given?*

*Reflections of the meaning of children, from the blessing of love to the child factory.*

It is probably natural to want a child of one's own. Is it also good? Perhaps if it is truly natural, in accord with our created nature, it must also be good. But the seemingly innocent desire to have "a child of one's own", combined with the high-tech possibilities of modern medicine and the ever-present pursuit of commercial gain, has fashioned a world in which we regularly create moral conundrums that are beyond our ability not only to solve but even to name. The things we are willing to do tell a story – a story about the point of having children.

Consider the following cases, all roughly adapted from "real life", chosen almost at random:

- A woman unable to have a child "of her own" had her ovum fertilised with her husband's sperm in the laboratory. The resulting embryo was then implanted in the womb of the woman's mother, who, having carried the pregnancy to term, gave birth to her own "grandchild".
- A husband and wife who thought they wanted a child "of their own" contracted for the conception of a child who would be conceived from sperm and ovum that came from anonymous donors and who would then be gestated in the womb of a hired surrogate. Shortly before the child was born, the husband and wife who had wanted this child divorced. A judge felt compelled to rule that the baby girl actually had no legal parents at all.
- A woman undergoing infertility treatment in order to have a child "of her own" conceived triplets. For medical reasons she was advised that it would be safest if she were to undergo "fetal reduction" – that is, reduce by abortion the number of fetuses she was carrying to one. She did, but weeks later, having undergone amniocentesis, she learned that the one remaining fetus had a genetic anomaly. She therefore aborted that fetus as well.
- An infertile married couple desiring a child "of their own" underwent in vitro fertilization (IVF) and conceived a child. Four-and-a-half months into the pregnancy they learned from amniocentesis that the child they had wanted so badly and worked so hard to make had Down's syndrome. Having learned that, they decided to abort.

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## Gilbert Meilaender

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• A 63-year-old woman, wanting a child "of her own" had implanted into her hormonally primed uterus an embryo made in the laboratory from her husband's sperm and an ovum from a younger donor. She then completed the pregnancy and gave birth to a child.

Such cases could be multiplied almost without end, and we may sometimes find it hard to remember or believe that the first "test tube baby" was born less than 25 years ago, in 1978. Two decades later we live in a world in which a woman can give birth to her own "grandchild"; in which a child can have as many as five "parents" (the donors of sperm and ovum, the surrogate who carries the child during pregnancy, and the two "rearing parents"); in which people can "have children" posthumously; in which parents can go to great trouble and expense to conceive a child whom they then abort if prenatal diagnosis shows that the child is "defective" in some way; in which quite soon it may be possible to give birth to identical twins born years apart; and in which it may soon be possible for a woman without ovaries to receive an ovary transplant from an aborted fetus, making that fetus the biological mother of her child.

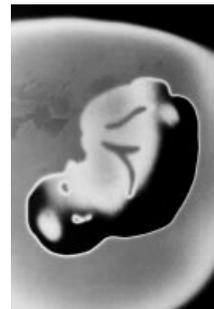
Taken together, these cases display the story we have begun to tell each other about the meaning of children. The story line is, roughly, as follows: Because having children is something many people want for their lives to be full and complete, and because it is such a fundamental aspect of human life, we ought to use our skills to help them achieve that desired fulfillment. Indeed, having children is an entitlement to which there are few limits.

Of course, we ought not exercise this right in a way that directly harms children, but in many cases, after all, the children would not even exist were it not for the use of new reproductive technologies. If

the suffering that infertility brings can be relieved, and if children are not harmed, then high-tech reproductive medicine is a good thing. This is the story that, more and more, we tell ourselves in this society.

Is there a different image of the child, an image that tells a different story about what it means to have children? Christians should hope so, and they should search for it. The poet Galway Kinnell, in a wonderful poem titled *After Making Love We Hear Footsteps*, provides such an image: The child is, he writes, a "blessing love gives again into our arms".

What makes this a better image than that emerging from the examples with which I began? What story of the meaning of a child underlies this image? One way to think about such questions is to reflect upon the desire to have "a child of one's own". This desire, which is simultaneously quite natural and problematic, needs examination.



***To the world,  
having children  
is an entitlement  
to which there  
are few limits.***

Christians have a story to tell, a story we regularly teach to our children – of an infertile woman who deeply desired a child of her own, how her wish was granted, and what she then did. It is the story of Hannah, her husband Elkanah, and their son Samuel (1 Sam. 1-2). Why did Hannah want a child of her own? In part, it seems, it was because she suffered the scorn of Peninnah, Elkanah's other wife, who had children. But that only presses the question a step further. Why should this be an occasion for scorn? What is so important about having a child? Why do people care so deeply?

Sometimes today, when we ask such questions, answers of the following sort



come back: "I desire the experience of pregnancy and childbirth." "Having a child is an important part of defining who I am." No doubt there is some truth about us buried in such answers. There are deep psychological, and even biological, imperatives at work in the impulse to give birth.

But such answers, which make of the child a means of meeting our needs, cannot be satisfactory. To think that way is already to begin to think of children as products made to satisfy some of our desires. And, of course, if and when the product turns out not really to satisfy us, we may be hard pressed to muster the kind of unconditional love children require if they are to flourish.

**T**here are, though, deeper and better reasons for having children. We would make a little moral progress were we to say, "I want a child because I want a link to future generations." Surely that was part of Hannah's desire – it is of considerable human significance. We are not angels or free spirits who can choose to be whatever we wish; rather, we are embodied creatures, located in a particular time and place. In part, at least, it is lines of kinship and descent that identify us.

To learn to affirm and give thanks for our place in the world is part of growing up – and, more important, part of learning how to receive the mysterious gift of life. It is, therefore, quite natural that we should want to give life even as we have received it. That takes us some considerable way beyond the narcissism of wanting a child simply as a means to fulfilling ourselves.

But it does not take us quite far enough, for it continues to think simply of a child of my own, still part of the project by which I make my way in the world. We get much closer to a satisfactory understanding if we think of a child of our own. Elkanah is already a father, but he and Hannah together – as one flesh – are not parents. Even in so ancient a story as

this one, there are hints that this too is part of the reason for wanting a child. We are specifically told that Elkanah loved Hannah. He himself tells her that she is more to him than 10 sons.

Their love-giving has not yet been life-giving, however. It is natural that they should want a child, for that child would be the sign that the love by which they give themselves to each other is creative and fruitful.

Indeed, this last step – in which they seek a child not of his own or her own but of their own – begins to take them still further. It presses almost toward elimination of that little word "own".

In the passion of sexual love a man and woman step out of themselves, so to speak, and give themselves to each other. That is why we speak of sexual ecstasy – a word that means precisely standing outside oneself. No matter how much they may desire a child as the fruit of their love, in the act of love itself they must set aside all such projects and desires. They are not any longer making a baby of their own. They are giving themselves in love.

*We might think of it as adoption that occurs before rather than after the child's birth.*

And the child, if a child is conceived, is not then the product of their willed creation. The child is a gift and a mystery, springing from their embrace – a blessing love gives into their arms. They could and should, if they think the matter through, quite rightly say that they had received this child as a gift of God, as the biblical writer says of Hannah: "The LORD remembered her". Samuel is neither Elkanah's "own", nor Hannah's "own", nor even "their own". He is "God's own" – asked of the Lord and given by the Lord. He is not, therefore, simply Hannah's or Elkanah's to hold on to; rather, he must be offered back to God, as Hannah does. Lent to the Lord, for as long as he lives.

Christians, then, do not underestimate the sheer human significance of biological ties. We understand the deep desire to have children. But we must also constantly remind ourselves that children are not our possession; they are gifts of God. They exist not simply to fulfill us but as the sign that, by God's continued bless-

ing, self-giving love is creative and fruitful.

And what if the Lord does not "remember" us as he remembered Hannah? That is reason for sadness, but it is not reason to take up the "project" of making a child. The couple who cannot have children may adopt children who need a home and parents, or they may find other ways in which their union can, as a union, turn outward and be fruitful.

**I**f this is how Christians understand the meaning of the presence of children, how shall we evaluate the vast array of new reproductive technologies – not, for the moment, as a matter of public policy, but simply as possibilities within our own lives?

The first thing to note is that many of the new techniques involve parties other than husband and wife in the reproductive process. Artificial insemination and in vitro fertilisation very often involve sperm and egg from anonymous donors, and there is an irony here that we should not ignore. If what infertile couples want is a child "of their own" in the genetic sense, techniques using donated gametes will not provide it. They are, in a sense, deceiving themselves. In the name of having a child of their own, they fail, in fact, to honor the importance of biological connection, of kinship and descent.

I can think of one possible exception to the claim that Christians ought not participate in new reproductive technologies that involve sperm or ovum from third parties. A couple might "adopt", gestate, and rear a donated embryo. In such a case, unlike sperm or egg donation, the child will not be genetically linked to either parent. We might think of it as adoption that occurs before rather than after the child's birth.

But if we are looking for needy children to rescue, they are, alas, all around us in our foster-care system. Prebirth embryo adoption is not likely to signal similar attempts at rescue. It is far more likely to be one more way of exercising quality control, of finding the child whom we want – rather than loving the child we have been given.

In short, many of the new reproductive technologies will involve the use of third parties. In doing so, they break the connection between love-giving and life-giving in marriage. That is not just a minor nuance, for it is this connection that teaches us to think of the child as a gift, that keeps us from thinking of chil-

dren as our project, as existing for the sake of satisfying our desires. It is no accident, then, that these technologies usually encourage genetic diagnosis – whether before implantation or after – of the “fitness” of the embryo or the fetus. If we understand the child as our project, if we accept that kind of responsibility, then we may inevitably find that “quality control” seems like an obvious – perhaps even imperative – part of the process. This is a journey we ought not even begin.

But what if no third parties are involved? There are certainly some circumstances in which an infertile couple might make use of new reproductive technologies while using only their own sperm and ova. Women may take drugs to influence ovulation. This may be combined with assisted insemination – when the sperm are placed directly in the vagina, cervix, or even uterus if the man’s sperm count is low. It is even possible now, within the IVF procedure, to inject a single sperm into the ovum.

**E**ven when no third parties are involved there are serious moral concerns in the use of new reproductive technologies. The couple will be encouraged to “screen” the embryos formed in the laboratory, to consider whether a particular embryo is really the child they desire.

If more embryos are produced than are implanted in the woman’s uterus, they will have to ask themselves what should be done with the extras. Even apart from any IVF procedure, the use of ovulation-enhancing drugs alone means that the possibility of multiple fetuses – triplets and even higher-order multiple births – is greatly increased, and such pregnancies involve significant risks for the children conceived.



*Even when no third parties are involved, there are serious moral concerns in the use of new reproductive technologies.*

In general, and even entirely apart from the use of donated sperm or eggs, it becomes increasingly difficult to think of the child as a gift and not a product. These are simply some of the hazards of the road they are traveling.

When we remember again the number of needy children who go unadopted precisely because of their needs, when we consider the degree to which new

reproductive technologies have – in a very short time – begun to teach our society to think of reproduction as a right to which everyone is entitled, when we ponder the implications of these technologies for our society’s understanding of children, we must ask whether Christians should not call a halt – at least for themselves.

We do not have a story that teaches us to think of children as our entitlement or our possession. Indeed, the story we tell goes even beyond that of Hannah, Elkanah, and Samuel. For knowing as we do that God has already provided The Child, we can free ourselves of the feverish need to have a child of our own, whatever the cost. Perhaps the greatest service we can perform for our own children and for the world into which they will be born is to live in such a way that we remind ourselves and others that each child is indeed not our product, our project, or our possession, but a “blessing” that “love gives again into our arms”.

*Gilbert Meilaender holds the chair in Christian ethics at Valparaiso University. A second edition of his book *The Taste for the Other: The Social and Ethical Thought of C. S. Lewis* has just been released by Eerdmans. This article is reprinted from *Christianity Today*.*

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# Enter the mentor

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**D**ear em,  
I was interested to hear you say a friend of yours recently went to a conference on mentoring. You're wondering if you need a mentor. Let's just have a think about what mentoring is first. Mentoring is nothing new really. The concept has been around for centuries. The term itself comes from the myths of ancient Greece. Mentor was the wise and trusted friend of Odysseus. While Odysseus was away fighting in the Trojan wars, Mentor acted as the teacher and adviser to his son.

In many cultures, mentoring has been part of the fabric of society, in the home and the workplace. Old-fashioned apprenticeships were a kind of mentoring. A young apprentice would not only learn a trade or craft, he would learn from the life and character of the master craftsman. I suspect the renewed interest in mentoring in commerce, industry, education and public life is a recognition of what many feel we have lost in western society. We've got so caught up in skills, we've lost sight of personal character.

Mentoring isn't something new to the church either. For the Christian, mentoring takes the form of an intentional commitment to encourage another's life and ministry. Both the Old and New Testaments provide examples, including Moses and Joshua, Barnabas and Paul, and Paul and Timothy. Jesus chose to make disciples and commanded his disciples to do the same (Mt. 28:18-20).

I see mentoring as disciple-making in the broad sense of the term, not merely seeing to the conversion and nurture of young Christians but their lifelong



**Colin Spragg**

growth to maturity (Col. 1:28,29). This isn't just a role for those who "shepherd" the church. It's something each of us can do as we grow in maturity (Titus 2). God wants us to build up others in their faith at a personal level. I'm thankful for people who made that sort of investment in my life, and continue to do so. You may be able to think of a few people who did the same for you, including your parents. In some cases they may well have done so quite intentionally, like your sixth class Sunday School teacher who still keeps in touch with you.

What's the aim of mentoring then? I like the model we find in 1 Thessalonians. Paul cared for the Thessalonians so much, he not only shared the word of God with them, he shared his life as well (1 Thess. 2:8). He did that with a church. There's also a place for that one to one. The aim is to build up others in their faith, encourage them in their life and ministry, and help equip them to use their gifts to serve others. Obviously, this isn't at the expense of everyone else in the church, it's so the whole body may be built up toward maturity (Eph. 4:11-13). We don't do it for our own glory, but for God, who equips us for the task (Heb. 13:20,21).

**Y**ou may find you're already doing that with the girls in your Bible study. I'd encourage you to keep it a pri-

ority. There are a few books that can help you with that. *Fruit That Will Last* by Tim Hawkins is a good start. If you want more on mentoring you could have a read of John Mallison's book *Mentoring*.

Since you've taken on a big role leading the girls' bible study, it's worth seeking out someone who can encourage you in that role. Seek out a mature Christian woman who is prepared to meet with you on a regular basis to pray, read the Bible and talk through what you're doing. You might be wondering, "what about one of the guys leading the youth group?" Maybe in a group context, but it's not a good idea one to one. That sort of relationship can get pretty messy, from either side of the equation.

So how do you find a mentor? For a start, pray about it. Trust God with this. It may take a while. Have a think about possibilities in your church. Is there a mature Christian woman or a married couple you respect and could learn from? It doesn't have to be the minister's wife, but then maybe you could be a real encouragement to her too. Are there possibilities where you study, perhaps one of the leaders or a staff worker you respect in the Christian group there?

There may be someone in the network of leaders at a recent Christian camp. Have another talk to your friend who went to the mentoring conference. Maybe you could find a mentor for the two of you. The Lord might be preparing someone right now to have that sort of input in your life.

Regards, tdd.

ap

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# Movie Watch

## Bridget Jones' Diary

Reviewed by Bryson Smith



Renee Zellweger and Colin Firth in *Bridget Jones' Diary*

**B**ridget Jones' *Diary* may quite possibly change the face of modern romance movies. Unlike the mass produced American efforts, full of cliched plots and cardboard-cut-out characters with shiny hair, *Bridget Jones' Diary* is a movie much more in tune with real life. Here's a story in which life is hard work, people's hair is genuinely messy and there is not a single character who is completely likeable. Centre stage of the movie is taken by our heroine, Bridget Jones. Played by Renee Zellweger (who stacked on the weight to play the part), Bridget Jones smokes, drinks too much, struggles with cellulite and is at times an utter embarrassment because of her ridiculous behaviour and incoherent conversation.

Forget the cute, quirky and impossibly beautiful characters played by Meg Ryan and Julia Roberts – Bridget Jones is hopelessly flawed. She is rash and at times frustratingly stupid. She sings drunkenly at staff parties and is forever saying the wrong thing. She is definitely no role model, and there are points of the movie in which you are truly irritated by her. Which is precisely what makes the movie such a jewel. Here at last is someone in a movie whom normal, struggling people will relate to.

Life for Bridget Jones is a continuous struggle to improve herself – yet she almost always fails. Some days she has momentary victories. Some days she actually says the right thing. But those days are the exception! Most days are a blend of disappointment, disaster and a lonely glass of wine before bed.

Into Bridget Jones' life step two men – Richard Finch (Hugh Grant), her sleazy,

womanising boss and Mark Darcy (Colin Firth), a decent but annoyingly remote friend of the family. Like Bridget, both men are imperfect.

As you can predict, the movie breezily chronicles Bridget bouncing from one disaster to the next as she, an imperfect female, seeks to find love in the arms of an imperfect male.

It's a journey that is sometimes hilarious, sometimes crushingly sad, but all the time captivating, for it cleverly captures enough of real life to make nearly everyone identify with parts of it.

In many respects *Bridget Jones' Diary* is similar to *As Good as it Gets*. Both are masterful depictions of the limitations of life, both are full of flawed characters reaching out to each other in a fallen world. And yet *Bridget Jones' Diary* does it even better because the dialogue actually sounds more believable. The quick wit of Helen Hunt and Jack Nicholson in *As Good As it Gets*, though enormously entertaining, is beyond most mere mortals. Bridget Jones however has more of us in her. She often speaks without thinking and so what comes out isn't clever... but it is authentic. And it makes for compelling viewing.

**F**or the Christian however, there is much in *Bridget Jones' Diary* which is unhelpful because the strength of the movie. Its "realness" is also its weakness. In a fallen world like ours, "real life" also brings with it obscenity – and *Bridget*

*Jones' Diary* is full of it. Many scenes and much dialogue were quite offensive (let the viewer beware).

Indeed, in a recent interview Hugh Grant described the movie as a celebration of sex and drinking too much. He's right, it is. And for me it took the gloss off what could have been a quite extraordinary and enthralling movie. Ironically though, maybe it's at the very level of its debauchery that *Bridget Jones' Diary* reaches its strongest connection with the gospel. Here is the real life struggle of a person to find acceptance and deal with disappointment.

As for many people, Bridget Jones seeks to find the answer by "gratifying the cravings of the sinful nature and following its desires" (Eph 2:3). The wonderful news of the gospel is that there is a better way.

Bryson Smith leads the ministry team at Dubbo Presbyterian Church. ap



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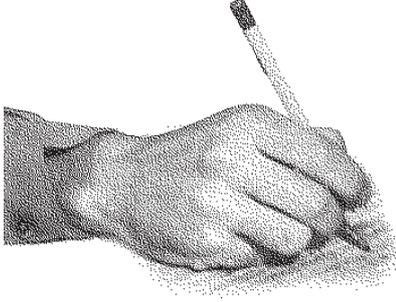
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# letters



## A simple decree

We appreciate Peter Barnes' review of Douglas Milne's "update" of the Westminster Confession (*AP*, June), and well understand the difficulties encountered by those who have the courage to modernise traditional language, but when we discover that "God's Eternal Decree" has become "God's Eternal Decision" then one is inclined to say the old is better.

The word "decree" is powerful and unique. It speaks of that which is absolute and authoritative, issuing from the glorious source of all power, wisdom and truth. It cannot be revoked. It is to be revered and obeyed. It lies at the very heart of our understanding of the Reformed faith.

"Decision", is feckless by comparison. It implies that there may have been, and may continue to be alternate courses of action. A decision, once made may be changed. Those who are under its rule may consider that they have the right to call it in question and to seek to modify it – indeed in theological terms it is of the very essence of Arminianism!

This may well be symptomatic of a deeper malaise which afflicts us to-day and which finds expression in the manner

in which many of us conduct worship. There is a traditional introduction, namely "Let us worship God" and "Let us pray", which unfortunately many of us seem to consider outmoded, and instead ask the question "Shall we pray?" (to which my old nature immediately answers "No!") – or, worse still, "Why don't we pray?"

Now, this approach would be entirely appropriate had God simply *decided* that worship and prayer is a good thing, in which case we should offer our people the opportunity also to "decide" this matter for themselves. I prefer the traditional approach which expresses the mighty truth that the infinite and eternal God had *decreed* that we should come before him in worship, praise and prayer, so that when we are gathered together for that great purpose, we simply invite our people to get on with it with the words: "Let us worship God..."

*Charles Abel,  
Sandy Beach, NSW*

## Progress's straight line

Dr Rowland Ward (Essay, *AP*, July), as a member of the PCEA, necessarily has a different view of our centenary than we do. He uses the analogy of rowing a boat; and keeping an eye on whence we have come. I prefer a more contemporary analogy.

In all my years as an Air Force chaplain I never saw a navigator work this way! He always drew a line on his chart joining departure and destination points – then guided the pilot to fly that course to accomplish his mission. Even if weather or other obstacles dictated a change of course, he knew whence he had come and he knew his destination. Mission and destination were what were to be achieved.

Rather than a "useful bit of ecclesiastical joinery" the Presbyterian Church of

Australia is a proud union of those Australian Presbyterians whose action, paralleling that of the nation, witnesses to our historic and forward-marching faith. Along the way the watchword is *semper reformanda* – under the Holy Spirit.

Maybe we have detoured occasionally over the century – the Angus years are a case in point. But we have never forgotten whence we have come as a Reformed people – nor where we are headed. And our mission? To glorify God and to enjoy him for ever.

*Rev. Peter Davidson  
Theodore ACT*

## Local history

Robert Benn's article "100 Not Out" (*AP*, July) contained a photographed portion of a page of an historical document. I was intrigued to recognise this as being from the Notes of Rev Thomas Johnstone, minister of the Armidale (NSW) Parish from 1857 to 1903. Readers may be interested that what followed in these notes was a description of his journey to attend the 1870 NSW Assembly.

He travelled from Armidale as far as Aberdeen by buggy, complaining that the roads were very rough, preached at the village of Bendemeer and at Newcastle on the way, the journey of some 330 miles taking him 8 days. He writes that "Assembly opened on Tuesday 1st November, and Rev J.B. Laughton was elected as Moderator."

On the weekend of October 13-14, we are celebrating 150 years of Presbyterian ministry in Armidale where Rev Dr Thomas Johnstone served for 46 years.

*Keith G Lewis,  
session clerk,  
St Paul's Presbyterian Church, Armidale.*

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# The enemy within

*When the law of sin is least felt, it is most powerful, warns John Owen.*

**T**he great purpose of the apostle Paul in the epistle to the Romans, chapter 7, is to speak of indwelling sin in believers. Here he discusses its power, efficacy, and effects. So the apostle affirms in verse 21, "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me."

Notice that Paul states four things in this verse. First, he says that sin is a "law". Second, he describes this discovery: "I find a law." Third, he indicates the context of this discovery: "when I would do good." Fourth, he specifies the state and activity of this law of sin: "evil is present with me."

Indwelling sin is a law. By a "law" we first mean a directive rule or an operational principle that is effective. As a moral rule, it directs and commands, regulating the mind and will in many ways. This is what a law does.

A secondary sense of a law is an inward principle which moves and inclines a person. This we call "the law of nature" when we say that everything moves toward its own end. Thus in Romans 8:2 the powerful, effective working of the Holy Spirit with the grace of Christ in the hearts of believers is called "the law of the Spirit of life". Similarly, the apostle speaks here in Romans 7:21 of indwelling sin as a "law". For it is a powerful and indwelling principle that inclines and forces into action what suits its own nature. So the apostle admits: "I find that this is the state of things with me, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me." We have this again in Romans 7:23 as well.

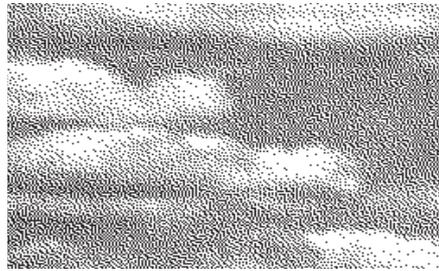
The "law", as applied to sin, has a double sense. First, it denotes the reality and nature of sins. Second, it signifies the power and efficacy of sins. Both meanings are comprised in the single term used in Romans 7:21. Thus indwelling sin is an exceedingly effective power in believers, working constantly toward evil.

**A**lthough the law of sin is in believers, it is not a law to believers. Nevertheless, even when the rule of sin is broken, its strength weakened and impaired, and its root modified, yet it is still of great force

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## IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

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and efficacy. When it is least felt, it is in fact most powerful.

Believers must personally discover indwelling sin. The apostle tells us how he has found this law. He has heard about such a law, it has been preached to him. This information gives him some general knowledge about it. But to experience and find it for one's self is another matter. This the apostle has personally experienced. "I have found the experience of its power and efficacy in my own life."

Believers find this law is present in them when they "would do good". For this law is one unto them, the be all and the end all of life. They would do good. Grace has sovereignty in their lives. This gives them the will to do good. They do not make it their business to always sin (see 1 John 3:9). Thus a believer does not commit sin in a habitual and wilful way. Grace enables him to have a constant and usually prevailing will of doing good. While the best a non-Christian can do is to sin, the worst a Christian does is to sin. Nevertheless, the Christian finds it is when he wills to do good that "evil is present with me".

Observe the state and activity of sin within believers. For believers, the will to do good has two aspects. First, there is a habitual residence in Christians to do good. They have always an inclination to will to do good. Paul mentions this in Romans 7:18. Second, there are special times and seasons for the exercise

of the principle "when I would do good".

But sin is opposed to these two things. Sin is a contrary law to the inclination to do good. It is "when I would do good" that "evil is present with me." I know therefore when sin will appear, for it is in those times when I would do good. So Paul writes in Galatians 5:17, "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary to each other: so that you cannot do the things that you want."

In Romans 7:21 lie the dynamics of the whole course of our obedience. To be acquainted with the principles discussed above and their actions is a major part of our wisdom. Next to the reality of the free grace of God in our justification by the death of Christ, they are vital for us to experience.

Knowing this is to see the wisdom we need to guide and to manage our ways before God. Just as politicians must learn to know the positive and the negative aspects of government, so Christians must learn to discern what builds up and also what destroys the hearts of believers.

**W**hen we realise a constant enemy of the soul abides within us, what diligence and watchfulness we should have! How woeful is the sloth and negligence then of so many who live blind and asleep to this reality of sin. There is an exceeding efficacy and power in the indwelling sin of believers, for it constantly inclines itself towards evil. We need to be awake, then, if our hearts would know the ways of God.

Inquire, then, how it is with your soul. Search out its poison. When you would do good, respond in humility, self-abasement, intensity of prayer, and with diligence and watchfulness. Then you will also discover what supplies of grace and what help from the Holy Spirit will be yours.

*This is an edited extract from Sin and Temptation by John Owen (edited by James M. Houston, Bethany House, 1996).* 