

the pulse



THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

INTRODUCING OUR NEW PULSE EMAG: 2

COVID-19: 3-7

LATEST NEWS: 8-15

JERICO ROAD: 10

APWM: 18

PETER BARNES HAS THE LAST WORD: 24

PUBLISHER:

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
(New South Wales) Property Trust

EDITOR IN CHIEF:

JEFFREY FALLS
jfalls@pcnsww.org.au

EDITOR/JOURNALIST:

KAREN FORMAN
0425 675 555
kforman@pcnsww.org.au

PROOF READER:

BETTY THOMPSON

CIRCULATION:

SUZANNE JENSEN
sjensen@pcnsww.org.au

DESIGN:

BEN DAVIS
www.benrdavis.com
ben@benrdavis.com

The Pulse is an internal publication of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. We do not accept paid advertising. The Pulse is a forum for sharing ideas and encouraging outreach to our local communities, our nation, and the world.

GENERAL MANAGER:

JEFFREY FALLS

STATE MODERATOR:

REV RICHARD KEITH

168 Chalmers St
Surry Hills NSW 2010
PO Box 2196
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012
Phone: 1300 773 774
Fax: (02) 9310 2148
Email: general@pcnsww.org.au
www.pcnsww.org.au

The views and opinions expressed in The Presbyterian Pulse do not necessarily represent those of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in the State of NSW (Church) and the Church is not responsible for the accuracy, currency or reliability of any advice, opinion, statement or other information contained therein.

COVER: Amy Baker homeschooling with her kids Lucy, Claire and Curdie. She says homeschooling during the pandemic can have many positives.

Change is upon us!

Change is every day, every hour, every moment. Change is a natural part of our lives and we are being constantly reminded to not be afraid of it. And that is true! Human beings are resilient and adaptable, creative and opportunistic and right now, we are adapting to the changes in our society caused by COVID-19.



As Christians, we have the amazing grace of our Lord and Saviour grounding us as we change. As we sing, “on Christ, the solid rock, I stand; all other ground is sinking sand,” we know that in Jesus we stand on solid ground amongst an ever rapidly changing world.

We see this assurance in James 1:17: “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”

It is wonderful to know that in a world of constant change, of anxiety and fear about catching an illness that can lead to death, we can rely on the constancy of Christ and the hope of the future.

This new form of electronic magazine is an example of the adaptability driven from crisis. In the circumstances that our churches stand closed and in us not being able to meet in groups or to socialise outside the immediate family, we are all learning new skills in electronic communication.

So it is my pleasure to welcome you to this new Pulse format and encourage you to share this eMag with your family, friends and wider church community.

As it is an amalgam of pre-COVID-19 stories and more current stories, you will see it is longer than previous hardcopies, but I commend every story to you. Please take the time to become familiar with it. I welcome

feedback on this new format and ideas for future stories, content and format. As we will not be constrained by publishing and distribution timelines, we plan to publish this eMag monthly for the next few months to see how it goes.

Send me an email to jfalls@pcnsww.org.au to let me know how you find this new format. I would like to know your thoughts on the font size, length of stories, content, ease of reading on laptop, iPad or phone, and suggestions for stories, book reviews, etc?

I recommend the PCNSW website for information generally, including all COVID-19 Updates that have been sent to Ministers, Session Clerks and Treasurers over recent weeks.

You can also [read our stories on Facebook](#), with us gathering together on a daily basis all PCNSW/ACT Facebook page stories on the one Facebook page. Please Like us and share us with your family and friends. It's a great way to stay connected. It reinforces us as a “community of communities” as the Moderator, Rev. Richard Keith, affirms in his [current message to all congregations](#).

I trust this new Pulse eMag finds you well: well in your health; and well in your soul! Uphold those families who may be struggling financially; those who may be strained by the inability of getting out of the house; and those who may be finding it difficult to stay connected with their church and their church family. Uphold them in prayer and reach out to them in encouragement – even by phone.

Grace and peace,
Jeoff Falls

Trustee Investment Fund (TIF)
Interest rate on deposits
As from April 1st 2020

2.25% p.a.
No Fees

LOVE IN THE AGE OF CORONAVIRUS

BY RICHARD KEITH, PCNSW/ACT MODERATOR



Dear friends, I'd like to invite you to join me in an adventure about which we will tell future generations: the story of how we arrived alive together in 2021, and how we didn't just survive, but, by the grace of God and by His Spirit by which he raised His Son Jesus from the dead, we thrived.

My dream of a quiet year opening fetes and attending debutante balls lies in tatters. Daily COVID 19 Updates for Ministers and Sessions is now my new normal. Two days ago, it was my sad duty with our church's General Manager, Jeof Falls, to advise Sessions to close their church buildings' doors and to find new ways of delivering the ministry of Word and Prayer to people who were to remain in their homes.

They call it social distancing. I call it physical distancing, because the gospel of Jesus calls us to social nearing. God in Christ has come close to us, so that we might be drawn close to Him and to each other in love.

But love takes different forms in different seasons of life, and in this season, love calls us not to physically gather in church services or growth groups or for children's ministries. We do not make this choice in order to please the media or to avoid litigation. We make this choice in order to protect the lives of the most vulnerable members of our community, to be good citizens of our nation and to be faithful stewards of the lives that God has given us. This decision forces all of us not only to find new technological ways to reach our computer literate age, but also to rediscover old ways to remain connected to our older members.

For a time, it may be necessary to turn inwards, to reconnect our faith with the true and living God who is our only hope in plenty or in plague. And we will be naturally concerned about the dangers and threats that challenge us at a time like this. But we will not retreat inwards to some illusory safe place where we can bunker down until all the viruses go away and we can go back to normal life. Because the turn inwards – the times of introspection, when we reconsider all the assumptions of our comfortable lives – is always and only in order to turn outwards, to engage with our world and to declare the praises of Him who called us out of darkness and into his marvellous light.

And so, we will fuss about the finances and daily updates will continue. But we will not neglect our calling to witness to our wonderful saviour in word and deed. We who are strong and well will care for the weak and sick. We will not hoard, but we will share. We will remember to pray for the heroes among us, the doctors and nurses and supermarket shelf stackers. And we will not neglect sharing the good news of Jesus - who came to us to make us well in body and in mind and in spirit - to all who will hear us. If our plan is to survive, our church will surely die, if not this year, then in the years to come. We must instead find opportunities to actually and really thrive, because this experience will change and transform us, but whether it is for the better or for the worse, I do not yet know.

But I do know one thing: I did not respond to God's call to be a minister of the Word and prayer in order to feel sorry for myself the moment the church building's doors closed. God has given me a message of love and calls me to a life of love. And this mission continues even in the age of coronavirus. So tonight, I will host my first Bible Study by video conferencing. And tomorrow I will keep trying to find people in my town who have no family to care for them if things go bad, before finishing the family game of Carcassonne. Rinse and repeat.

I invite you to join me in this adventure, following Jesus, pursuing God's mission in His world by His grace and through His Spirit, in whatever form that takes in your corner of the world with the gifts that you have been given.

As we continue to love, even in the age of coronavirus, we can always depend on God's sure promise in his Word: "Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain." (1 Corinthians 15:58, NIV)

Home schooling: one parent's experience

As parents around Australia consider the practicalities of what it could mean for schools to close and their children's education to continue under their own roofs, AMY BUTLER reflects on the thing she treasures most about having her kids around 24/7.

My kids range from ages 15 to six. My husband and I decided to educate them at home the week before my eldest enrolled to start school. Initially it was only to be a temporary choice, but here we are, over 10 years later and they're still at home.

I cannot pretend that it is anything other than challenging and demanding. But the paradox of course is that it's often the things that are hard, which bring the most blessing. What I value and treasure about living life with my kids is precisely that I have QUANTITY time with them, which in turn provides multiple opportunities every day to teach them about God.

Here are seven things I have learned.

1. Our kids belong to God:

Charlotte Mason was an English educator at the turn of the 20th Century. Her philosophy underpins the teaching of many Christian home-educators in Australia. One of her underlying principles was that 'children are born persons.'

In other words, a child is no more or less the person God created them to be irrespective of their age and stage of development. Our role as parents is to allow them to flourish and not to hinder them. This takes a lot of pressure off because just as we say that their ultimate destination for eternity comes under the providence of God, so too their learning and growth. My whole approach to how and why I parent changes when I see my kids as not my own but belonging to God.

2. Kids can handle the Bible: We don't need to dress the Bible up or make it "more engaging". It's really just as simple as picking it up, reading and discussing it together. Resources like the Big Picture story Bible are still great to read. This is especially for younger children because it lays the foundation for good Biblical theology so that kids build an understanding of the context of the Bible as a whole. I think we get worried that kids won't understand things because we lack the confidence or have over-complicated

it. But kids have amazing powers of comprehension! It has been a delight to see afresh the power of God's word to turn the lights on. God has used my kids to remind me of just how amazing he is.

3. My kids see EVERYTHING about my life! And I really do mean everything – the good, the bad and the ugly. How I cope with the anxiety caused by COVID-19. How I express my trust in Jesus. How I model serving. When kids are around you 24/7, there is no 'keeping up appearances'. I have to be authentic. They push my buttons; they have

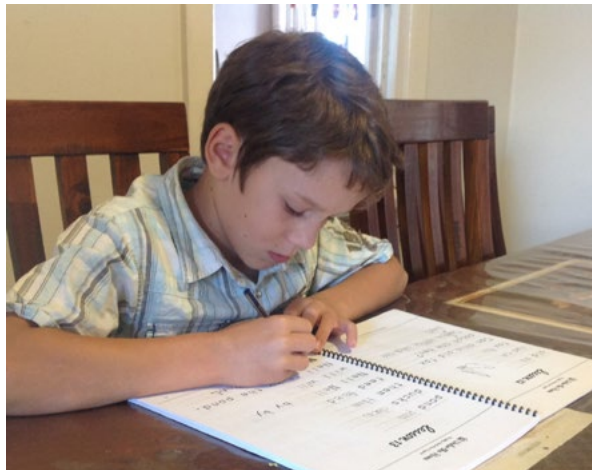
their own agenda for the day and find it hard to co-operate. Sometimes I lose the plot. I am tempted in these moments to feel like I'm a failure and to despair. But instead, I have learned that I am frail, just like them, and it is an opportunity to model my own need for God's grace.

4. I need to keep working out my own salvation with fear and trembling: If I'm going to be authentic about my relationship with Jesus and if I'm going to talk about him and

his word every day, I have to be actively engaged in working at my relationship with him and growing in my knowledge and dependence on him. Before I can be a good parent or home-educator, I have to get my mind set on Jesus.

5. Family devotions: If you've never done them, or they've been haphazard, now is a good time to start. Keep it short. Make it fun (eg over dessert). Sometimes it's hit and miss, but that's ok. Keep going. They will remember the practice even if they don't remember the details of every devotion. There is comfort in consistency but try not to be legalistic about it. Use your discretion. Sometimes kids are too tired. Instead just do a short prayer at bedtime etc.

Continued on p. 7



Curdie Baker home schooling

Why you shouldn't wear your pjs to work

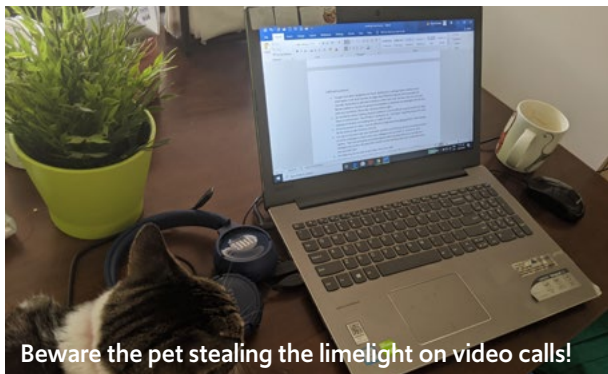
Pulse Editor KAREN FORMAN reflects on the pros and cons of being transplanted to a very different working environment.

With the Australian Government mandating stage one of its Corona Virus shutdown in March and many schools moving to online platforms, many workers found themselves embracing available technologies and working from home to protect themselves and potentially others, from the Corona virus pandemic.

While ministers and elders throughout NSW and the ACT pondered ways to bring church to the people, the PCNSW's Church Offices instructed its staff to start working from home instead of the Surry Hills office on March 24.

While it can be challenging, workers can take heed from physicist, mathematician and astronomer Isaac Newton, who had to work from home during the Middle Ages' Plague.

Mr Newton's university studies were interrupted by the scourge, which like Covid19 was a corona virus (meaning it came from animals – in this case, rats).



History tells us that it was while he was working from home that he developed his theories of calculus, optics, and gravity. I have been working from home, partially or fully, since I became a mother over a decade ago, so the work-from-home edict during the corona virus pandemic hasn't changed much for me.

Over the years I have created a routine that works for me. While feeling blessed that I have been able to work from home and spend time with my child, working from home does have its challenges and isn't for everyone.

If you have found yourself working from home during the Corona virus pandemic, here are some ideas:

PROS

- You don't have to dress for WORK, but make sure you DRESS for work, because it puts you in the frame of

mind for working and means you won't get caught out in your pyjamas when you go live on video with your colleagues and contacts.

- You get more done. Yes, those trips to the photo copier and coffee machine do take up more of your day, especially if you stop to chat with your colleagues along the way.
- You get more time with your family and pets. Just be sure the cat doesn't decide to wander across your monitor while you are on a video call.
- You save on travel time (and costs).

CONS (with solutions)

- You get more done. Sometimes too much. Getting into a working rhythm without much interruption, it can be all too easy to forget about life/work balance, both physically and mentally. Remember to take that lunchtime or after work walk. Set hours that you will work. Decide whether or not you are going to be available on weekends and weeknights and be strict with your boundaries. Reconsider sending emails at night.
- Surrounded by family, hobbies, the great outdoors, it can be difficult to get yourself in the right frame of mind to work. I like to follow a routine on my "work days" of getting dressed for work, walking out the door and walking back in, ready for work.
- If the housework isn't done, it can be difficult to forget about the piled-up dishes while working. Do the dishes (or get the family onto it!)
- It is easy to lose touch with your workmates and feel out of the loop. Be sure to send an email or an online messenger or phone call to your colleagues and just check in, not only on work matters. There are some great computer programs allowing video calls so you can see your colleagues face to face. Ask about their health and their families, just as you would do at work. And pray with them.
- The fridge may be too close to your desk. Watch your diet!
- Sometimes where you work at home might not be a dedicated office. If you use the kitchen table or somewhere else in your house, warn housemates not to flush the toilet, shout out, or talk loudly on the phone while you are on your conference calls.
- Sometimes communications can go awry. An adage I like is "the greatest barrier to communication is the assumption that it has already taken place". It's important to communicate emotions that would normally be obvious in a person's manner or face. Hence the handiness of emoticons, but don't over use them. It's not professional.

Words, not hugs, can create relationships

BY REV KAMAL WEERAKOON

Some preliminary thoughts on anthropology, communication, life and ministry under shutdown/lockdown pandemic conditions.

We are physical-verbal beings. Some aspects of our physicality endanger us at this moment - especially the fact that none of us has any immunity to this new cross-species virus.

However - precisely because we're physical beings, not merely disembodied ideas, physical presence is good. The word became FLESH and dwelt among us.

Some degree of physical presence is "necessary", even "essential", for human well-being. We need to be "present" to people whom we love, and who we know love us. The reverse implication is: loneliness and isolation is unhealthy and destructive.

Therefore, let's think laterally about how we might be physically present to each other, in very small numbers, from sufficient distance to minimise risk.

That said - even under conditions of normal health, most physical presence is not "tactile". Handshakes, hugs and high-fives are great - but most of the time we just hang around and talk with each other. Words - "verbality" - create and build relationships.

Therefore, we should be able to creatively use internet technology to "communicate" - to share enough of ourselves, especially our words, to create and maintain healthy relationships. Even if we can't be physically present, we can be sufficiently verbally present for people to know we love them and to know that they love us.

So, let's use internet communication tech widely. And help those who don't have access to it to get access to it.

I have kept this relatively abstract because my aim is not to suggest specific actions but to reflect on deep anthropological realities which I expect to remain stable during this Covid crisis.

I hope these thoughts are relevant not just to "streaming" church services, but to all our ministries. I hope they're useful not just for Christians but for everyone - for our entire way of relating to each other.

All of the above is premised on the hyphen which connects "physical-verbal". If this bi-perspectival anthropology is correct, I hope it can help us guide our life and ministry in these uncertain times.

Running "church" when you can't go to church

Ideas for "meetings" online

Zoom is a free web-based video conferencing tool with a local, desktop client and a mobile app that allows users to meet online, with or without video. Zoom users can choose to record sessions, collaborate on projects, and share or annotate on one another's screens, all with one easy-to-use platform. Zoom offers quality video, audio, and a wireless screen-sharing performance across Windows, Mac, Linux, iOS, Android, Blackberry, Zoom Rooms, and H.323/SIP room systems. You can join a meeting, set up a meeting and schedule a meeting. Zoom is great for everything from a meeting with your supervisor through to a team and we've seen it work well with 30 students and a teacher all connecting.

FaceTime is a video chat application developed by Apple and can be used on Apple devices.

Facebook Messenger is free and can be used independently of Facebook. It has video ability but is perhaps not as secure as Zoom.

Skype is one of the most popular video call services. You don't need a lot of equipment and the software is user-friendly, enabling you to make video calls within minutes of downloading it. You can share files, do video chats and text message.

Revesby livestreamed on its Facebook both Sunday services on March 22, and plans to continue to do that.



Minister Peter Barnes (pictured) says it worked reasonably well but lacked what Hebrews 10:24-25 sets out.

"Preaching is an activity where preacher and listeners feed off one another. Bible studies will go Zoom, but that is in need of some work at the moment.

“Sermon notes, prayer notes, the newsletter, and news items are being sent out by email. We will look at the Lord’s Supper by livestreaming, but that will need some organising. The telephone is also coming back into its own! Time for prayer, reflection, and writing should be utilised more faithfully.

“Do what we can, in a spirit of service and praise, and press on, fearing God more than man or viruses.”

In the New England, Rev Andrew Campbell says: “New England has had it all. Years of drought and then fire. And just when we thought it was safe, with good rain and no more fires, we now have the plague. Guyra and Glen Innes churches are wondering what God is telling us ... Considering our options, Andrew Campbell plans to distribute a CD, ‘Geebung Flat Radio’ (‘Geebung Flat’ being the name of their bush property).

“With a significant minority of the congregation without the Internet, phone calls and an audio CD seems to be the best option to stay connected. The CD can be used at home, on the tractor, travelling, or wherever; and doesn’t just feature a talking head. It will include a service, music, messages from elders and more.”

GracePoint in Lidcombe in Sydney’s inner west started streaming services on Sunday March 22 using a combination of Facebook and Youtube.

Missions Director Kamal Weerakoon has invited all to Sunday Church livestream.

“If you’d like to stay in contact with us so we can keep you updated on what’s happening, if you have questions, or if we might be able to help you, [please feel free to let us know](#).

At this time if you need prayer, we’d love to pray for you.

Let us know at <https://tinyurl.com/gpprayerrequest>
Our service program and sermon outline is available at <http://bible.com/events/7138408>

For more information about our church community, you can visit our website at <https://www.gracepoint.org.au/>



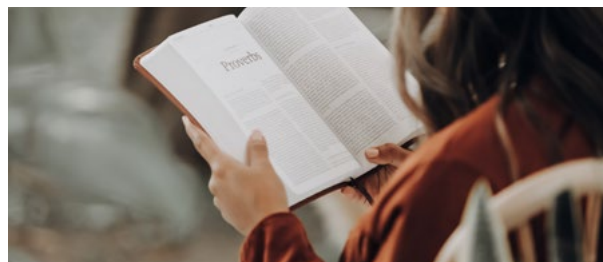
What is YOUR church doing to connect with your people? Send us your story and photos to our Editor Karen Forman kforman@pcnsw.org.au

Continued from p. 4

Home schooling: one parent’s experience

6. Enjoy great stories together that inspire the moral imagination: Jesus told stories! We all get to be heroes in our own story, so great books provide role models and create shared experiences between parents and children and among siblings. Great stories help us internalise truth, beauty and goodness. For more on this and book suggestions, check out storywarren.com

7. Finally, Love Jesus, love yourself, work on your marriage, love your kids: I struggle to keep it in this order. It seems counter intuitive to put myself so high on the list. But if I’m not going well, I’m not going to do any of my other jobs properly. Read your Bible, try to get enough sleep, eat well and exercise (Pilates on YouTube anyone?). Try and enjoy these special people God has placed in your life. For all we know, they may be the closest company we keep over the coming month.



PWA cancels activities

BY JACKIE REINER

It was with much sadness and regret that It was decided to cancel all PWA activities.

As Christians, we must take all measures to protect ourselves and loved ones from unnecessary illness.

Many thanks to the presbyteries who hosted rallies earlier this year. These included the Illawarra, Canberra, Hunter, New England and North West.

Thank you to our secretary, Asenati, who has been in isolation after returning from NZ, for keeping Council members informed of the latest information concerning the virus.

May you spend this time, absent from one another, reading and meditating on God’s word and embracing the hope we have in Jesus.

Lessons in the letterbox

BY BEV PATTERSON

For many years the Christian Education Committee of the PWA has been sending out God Space SRE material to families unable to get to a Sunday School.

The same material was being sent to some small Sunday Schools. This material finished at the end of Year Six.

Last year a review of the material was done in conjunction with PY to access its suitability for use as Sunday school material.

SRE material is written in a way to fit into an environment that is hostile to faith.

Sunday School material should reflect the full truth of the Gospel at an age appropriate level for our children and young people in Sunday School.

Recommended options are Anglican Christian Education Publication Kids@church or online material Kidswise for Sunday Schools.

For individuals from preschool to adult PSSM (Postal Sunday School Ministry).

Letterbox lessons in association with PSSM -

- Free Bible based learning
- Correspondence or by email
- Return your work and a real person will respond to it and answer questions.
- For those isolated from fellowship/church due to circumstances or distance, or if you just want to do it.
- All ages:- preschool to adult
- Sponsored by PWA in association with PY
- Presbyterian students are allocated Presbyterian teachers.
- Check out PSSM.com.au website to get an overview.

Bible translators multitasking

BY ELIZABETH BROWN

Some Australian Presbyterian World Mission NSW (APWM) mission partners are involved in Bible translation work. Some have supporting roles; others are immersed in the long term work of translating.

For various reasons some are home based in Australia; others live in the countries of the translated languages. Teamwork is vital and involves national colleagues.

Papua New Guinea is the most linguistically diverse country worldwide with 860 languages plus dialects.

Stephen Emerton works in the Milne Bay area of South PNG with Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL). His multi-skills in IT, administration and linguistics means he has several roles within regional centres and translation teams.



(clockwise) Stephen Emerton working with translators in Papua New Guinea

From March to November he is based in Alotua and divides his time between working at the SIL Regional Centre and Topura village where he works with translation teams.

Using his management skills: Stephen provides approvals for project expenditure in the region as well as some program management functions for a cluster project of two languages Dawawa and Kakabai. A Papua New Guinean colleague leads this project.



Using his IT expertise: Stephen provides software support for the Milne Bay teams regarding programs used in Bible translation and linguistic analysis as well as technical support for laptops.

Teacher trainer and adviser: Stephen has been part of a team that has trained the language translators for the Wedau and Topura languages. The team worked on a panorama of the Old Testament and the gospels of Mark and Luke.

For several weeks in Jan/Feb Stephen is a team member at SIL in Melbourne teaching the 'Language Awareness' component of the SIL Australia 'Launch' course. This course introduces students to how languages are learnt.

The need to keep skills updated: Stephen is working on a MA (ministry) through Melbourne School of Theology to update his linguistic/research training as well as issues related to training and leadership in a cross-cultural context.

Multitasking inside Global Recordings:

Wira and Debbie Dharma work in the Global Recordings International (GRNI) office at Prospect NSW. Again, Wira and Debbie multi-task. As a family they arrived in Australia from Indonesia in 1998.

Wira works in accounting and finance with GRN Australia and GRNI. This is a very comprehensive role, including receipting and dispersing all donations, BAS statements and fund transfers overseas and everything in between. He is also a translator.

Wira translates the GRN website and 5fish app into Bhasasa Indonesia. He translates and at the same time

approves the translation and makes it ready for uploading to the website or app. Wira doesn't work alone in this. There are several volunteers in Australia and in Indonesia who also assist in this translation work. "This is a continuous job", says Wira, "as the websites and 5fish app need updating from time to time."

Debbie works in the GRN studio. She is responsible for ensuring the accuracy of information for the GRN recordings database (or grid), as well as entering information into the data base about new recordings. Recordings go as far back as 1939. Debbie has a huge task of clarifying and completing information of various recordings from around the world, recordist's name, language name, bible passages and other information about the recordings.

All the old recordings are kept in reels, DAT tapes, cassette and CDs/DVDs. It is Debbie's job to keep them in the GRN cool storage room, just like a library. Sometimes Debbie 'borrows' from this library to look for more information about the recording. Debbie also tries to keep tabs on all the recordists in 418 locations worldwide. It is hard to get your head around so much multi-tasking and Debbie works part time and is a volunteer!

If you are interested in Bible Translation work or a support role do contact APWMNSW at nswconvener@apwm.org.au or the APWMNSW National Office on (02) 80737490. Inquiries about support for these ministries can be made through the same contact details. Invite Wira and Debbie to share of their work at your church.



Our services' immediate response to the pandemic



How Jericho Road can help during the COVID-19 pandemic

1. Financial Support Appeal for individuals and families affected by COVID-19

Jericho Road is appealing for funds to help those affected financially by the impact of COVID-19. This appeal is limited to PCNSW folk both giving and receiving rather than a community wide appeal. It is one way we can support each other through this time. The need for financial assistance in the wider community is likely to be much greater than we can both administer or meet. As with all Jericho Road appeals, funds will be given directly to those most affected via local Presbyterian churches. This is one way the broader Presbyterian Church can assist each other at this time.

How does the Jericho Road 2020 Financial Support Appeal work? The way the Financial Support funds work is through local churches. We work with them to determine what individuals and families need and how best to deliver it. Sometimes this might be purchasing gift cards or sometimes it means a cash transfer to the church account so that they can distribute the funds onwards to people. We can also make a donation direct to an individual or family identified by the local church as being in need due to COVID-19.

We do it this way so that the funds are delivered within a caring relationship. This is similar to what we have done in other appeals and it

seems to work really well. We pass on 100% of all funds raised. We will aim to pass on all funds within the next nine months. Any funds received that are in excess of what is needed for distribution will be used for non-COVID-19 related financial support after that time.

To make a donation, please go to our website jerichoroad.org.au/donate where you will find a number of ways to donate listed. For online donations, please use the description "JR Financial Support" to make your donation easily identifiable.

2. Access to Counselling

The Presbyterian Counselling Service is available to connect folk from the Presbyterian Church in NSW to Christian counsellors. During this period where COVID-19 is restricting face-to-face contact many of our counsellors are providing assistance via phone and video link. This service is currently only available to individuals and families within the Presbyterian Church in New South Wales.

Jericho Road is providing subsidies and many of our counsellors are reducing fees, to assist people access counselling during this time. Bulk billing is available for Telehealth with a referral from a GP. Counselling may assist people who are anxious, grieving, finding relationships difficult, dealing with depression and the like.

To access the service, you can call 1800 818 133 or complete the form on our website jerichoroad.org.au/counselling.

3. Chaplaincy support for healthcare workers

Jericho Road is appreciative of all frontline health care workers who are caring for so many and under added strain at this time. To help health care workers who are part of PCNSW we have set up an open chat time with our Senior Chaplain, Ian Schoonwater.

Ian has worked as a hospital chaplain

and has some insight into how difficult this time is for our healthcare workers.

Ian will host a live chat on Tuesdays 9-9:30am and Thursdays 5-5:30pm where anyone can just drop in. He will do a short devotion and there would be an opportunity to pray together and to share concerns and support one another in general. The chat will be held via Zoom and the Meeting ID: 654 470 888

4. Food ministries

Jericho Road has issued guidelines for all congregations relating to food ministries, both new and planned, for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

These guidelines apply to food services provided to the broader community, whether it is via community kitchen, providing cooked and frozen meals or providing access to a pantry or food hampers. You can find the guidelines on our website at jerichoroad.org.au/covid-19-and-food-ministries.

Please note: These guidelines do not apply to individuals providing meals to neighbours or members of their church. Dropping food into your friends is different as it is not a service offered to the wider community. It does have some risks, and some of those you can address (like don't deliver to anyone if you are sick etc) and maybe you could add some protection (such as wipe the packet with a soap/alcohol wipe before leaving it for pick up). You can use the guidelines to assist with what precautions you might take.

5. Conduct Protocol Unit

The CPU is issuing helpful tip sheets about how to conduct safe ministry online and via social media. These can be found on the website at jerichoroad.org.au/breaking-the-silence

Presbyterian Aged Care (PAC): Paul Sadler CEO

At PAC we care for people who are among the most vulnerable to the effects of the virus - older Australians.

And our top priority is doing everything we can to keep them safe and well, along with our valued staff who care for them. We are running an essential service for older people.

We announced March 27 that we will be locking down our residential aged care services from 4pm March 29 to prevent the spread of coronavirus into our facilities. Only in exceptional circumstances can people visit. We will be reviewing this regularly and will lift the lockdown as soon as it is safe to do so. We are appointing additional staff and have provided additional iPads to help residents keep in contact with their families.

Currently we are very fortunate that no PAC service has been directly impacted by a case of COVID-19, and we hope and pray that that continues.

And certain types of services have been suspended, like large group activities which carry increased risk.

Unlike other sectors, PAC does not expect to have to lay off staff. Because we are an essential service, we are anticipating we will actually need more staff rather than less, to maintain our services.

Along with the health of our consumers, the health and safety of our employees and volunteers is our top priority.

We understand there are additional risks of transmission of COVID-19 in the current situation, and we are taking every possible step to minimise those risks. We are working with the Government to make sure that adequate levels of Personal Protective Equipment are available if we need them.

All staff must complete the infec-

tion control training we have been running throughout March. And of course, all staff should continue to attend work unless they have symptoms which would exclude them.

As a faith-based organisation in challenging times like these we draw inspiration from the Scripture. Among passages that come to mind is Philippians 4:6 "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

At PAC, we have to think first and foremost about the needs of the older people we care for, and who are dependent on us. To that end we should all pay heed to the words of the Apostle Paul in Philippians 2:4: "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."

As the Apostle Peter says: "Cast all your anxieties on God, because he cares for you." (1 Peter 5:7).

Christ College: Alistair Lum-Mow Operations Manager

Christ College Premises and Working Remotely

- The College Building, including the Library, was closed on Wednesday March 25 2020 till at least April 27 2020.
- All staff are working from home and are contactable by email during usual working hours.
- Library staff are working hard to provide resources for students including the purchase of additional online resources, and a weekly document delivery service.

Classes

- New Zealand Campus Intensive: Dr. Ian Smith, Principal, was due to deliver our first class at our new NZ campus from March 23-27, 2020. Due to the travel ban, he was unable to go to NZ to teach.

Instead, he conducted the class via Zoom and all reports are that it all went extremely well.

- Tremper Longman Intensive: Tremper Longman was due to deliver a class on Proverbs from March 30-April 3. Due to the travel ban, he was unable to come out to Australia from the USA. Instead, he will be conducting classes via Zoom. All students will be able to study from their own homes.
- Study Tour Intensive: We were due to send a group on a Study Tour to Greece and Turkey from April 9-26. Unfortunately, this tour could not proceed, and we are hoping to postpone it to a later date.
- Most of April is a term break and so there are no other classes currently affected. A decision on how classes will continue after the break will be made in the coming weeks.

Events

- Graduation: We were due to have our Graduation Ceremony on Wednesday March 18. Unfortunately, we had to cancel the event, and hope to be able to run another Graduation Ceremony later in the year.
- All other events in the next month have been postponed or cancelled. We are looking at ways to deliver some conferences via alternate means.

And finally, a story on how God provides:

How God prepared Christ College for COVID-19 in October last year. Last year in October Dr Bryan Chapel was due to travel to Christ College and present a Day Conference on Christ-Centred Worship followed by an intensive week of classes on Christ-Centred Preaching.

A couple of days before he was due to fly to Australia, he sustained an injury and informed us that he would not be able to travel. This threw us into a bit of a spin with only two days to work out what to do. We hastily arranged for Dr Chapell to teach his classes via Zoom, learning many things about teaching remotely as we stumbled through the week.

Continued on p.12

Continued from p. 11

Our services' immediate response to the pandemic

By God's grace, the week turned out to be a great experience for the students even though Dr. Chapell was unable to be there in person. For many staff members, this was

the most challenging week we'd experienced in our time at the College, and it was tempting to wonder why God had allowed it all to happen.

Fast forward to today where all our classes might need to go online, we look back on last October in amazement as we realise how God was using that experience to prepare us for these unprecedented times. How great is our God!

Teaching Schools Alliance Sydney: A New Generation of Teachers

Five Sydney schools have joined together to pilot a training program, ensuring the future supply of high-quality Christian teachers for their schools.

Trainee teachers will enter a four-year undergraduate or two-year postgraduate degree program with a significant difference: the trainee teachers will be working in the schools with students for their entire tertiary education.

In this way Scots will directly contribute to the training of innovative Christian educators who will graduate uniquely equipped to teach in a Presbyterian school.

The Scots College principal, Dr Ian PM Lambert said: "We joined the Teaching Schools Alliance Sydney because education requires sensitive, strategic reinvention to meet the changing needs of Australia. This pilot program is an investment in the future of education at Scots. We hope to share the insights gained with other Australian schools.

"As a Presbyterian school, our heritage, ethos and values are central to our practices inside and outside the classroom. As a boys' school with an educational philosophy framed by experiential learning, we have watched the growing trend – across many industries – toward new forms of on-the-job training. This pilot program is a highly appropriate model," he said.

The Teaching Schools Alliance Sydney has been established by St Andrew's Cathedral School, The Scots College, William Clarke College, Inaburra School and Blue Mountains Grammar School. With an emphasis on the formation of Christian educators who possess vocational clarity, the Alliance will partner with Australia's largest Protestant-affiliated tertiary provider, Alphacrucis College, to deliver the degree program. The Alliance addresses wider social concerns about student teacher quality, ethos alignment, high attrition rates in the profession and the classroom readiness of graduates.



Principal of The Scots College, Dr Ian PM Lambert talking to the first intake of Teacher Trainee Applicants.

The pilot program directly addresses these issues, by providing an effective model that can be replicated nationally.

"The professional life of a teacher at Scots requires excellence across a wide range of activities beyond the classroom, such as co-curricular, sport and outdoor education. In this program, teachers who want to work in the Independent Schools sector can gain broad firsthand experience under the guidance of mentor teachers.

"There are excellent teachers graduating from universities across Australia and we work hard to attract them to Scots. But, on the whole, we have noticed that teaching graduates are not as 'classroom ready' as they could be. One reason is that they have not had sufficient exposure to the day-to-day realities of teaching such as interaction with parents, problem-solving and student conflict resolution," said Dr Lambert.

Informed by the Clinical Teaching Model, the initiative re-connects schools with the training of the next generation of teachers and utilises the tertiary partnership to form a 'Teaching School Hub'. The model is already operating successfully in the Hunter Valley with a cluster of schools from St Philip's Christian College group of schools.

Continued on p.13

Continued from p. 12

Teaching Schools Alliance Sydney: A New Generation of Teachers

Each Hub will assess applicants on the basis of proven volunteerism, Christian ethos alignment, EQ, IQ and appropriate academic standards before commencing training.

The trainees are well supported; they receive a scholarship, are paid part-time as a teaching assistant, and they graduate with significant work experience.

A typical Alliance trainee will spend 1-2 days per week paid to work in the classroom with a Mentor Teacher, which means that by the completion of their degree the trainee will already have hundreds of days of school-based experience.

The academic program includes a mixture of local face-to-face intensives, bespoke cohort training, mentoring and online coursework. The Visiting Fellow program offers trainees exposure to some of the leading Christian educators and thinkers. A significant point of difference from existing models is that the training follows the rhythms of the school calendar rather than the traditional university calendar. This means that trainee teachers are receiving 40 weeks of training each year rather than the common uni-



The Teaching Schools Alliance Sydney with Teacher Trainee Applicants.

versity calendar of two 13-week semesters.

The degrees awarded are the same degrees awarded at traditional universities with the same standards, rigour and accountability to the governing bodies that set and monitor academic standards in Australia.

Full and partial scholarships are available to prospective trainees.

“Scots will still recruit graduates as we always have, and we will continue working hard to attract the best candidates we can, but this model is an additional source of candidates who we will know extremely well by the time they graduate,” said Dr Lambert.

Book Review

BY JENNY BERINGER

WHEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT

The author: Ruth Myors.

Get it from: Reformers Bookshop;
RRP: \$24.99.

This is such a compelling book! It vibrates with God-directed zeal, bald honesty and captivating humour.

Many times the ‘lights did go out’, metaphorically, in the two decades Ruth Myors was in Africa.

There were floods, coups and communist attacks, danger and evacuation, difficult surgeries with lim-

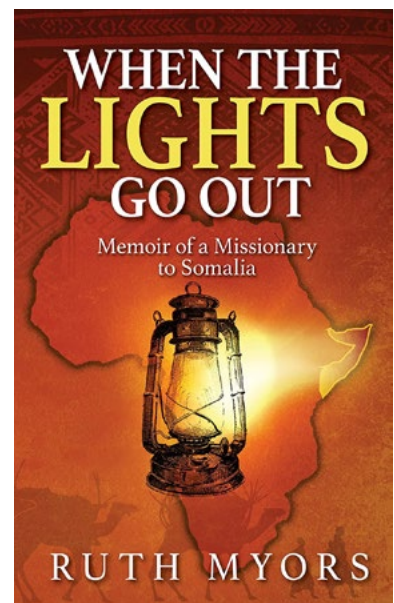
ited resources, shocking loss of a colleague and much more.

Ruth left Australia in 1960 and worked as a midwife in rural hospitals in Somalia and Ethiopia as well as some years in radio ministry in Kenya.

What stands out is the author’s persistent faith in those dark moments and her exuberance to serve her Shepherd and her dearly loved Somali people.

What followed her return to Australia was the completion of an Honours Degree in Psychology at the age of 52 and the establishment of the Christian Synergy Centre, together with Kath Donovan. This ministry was a vital component in preparing and debriefing missionaries, the value of which is now widely recognised.

This book will enliven your faith and may galvanise your obedience.



Some things remain the same

September 2019 feels like a lifetime ago and, in many ways, it is. The world we live in has changed a lot since then, the drought has continued in many areas, we have experienced a season of catastrophic bushfires, some areas have experienced terrible flooding and now we are living through a time of uncertainty, heightened anxiety and forced changes to the way we live almost every aspect of our lives brought about by the Coronavirus pandemic.

In the midst of this there are things that remain the same. Our sure and steady hope founded in our God who will always be our strength and refuge. Our knowledge that our God is a good God and he is in control. Our desire to continue to care for those around us and our longing to demonstrate God's immense love for them. We are all needing to find new, innovative and creative ways to do this, but our commitment to doing it hasn't gone away and perhaps grows even stronger in these times.

Our mission at Jericho Road has not changed, we are continuing to work with and for the Presbyterian Church to demonstrate the character of God to the most vulnerable in our communities. We are needing to think carefully and adjust the way we do this but we're continuing to work hard to ensure we can continue to support people and that support is particularly important in times like this.

We wanted to share a story about a group from three Presbyterian Churches in Sydney who took a trip 'out west' in September last year. Right now, a trip like this is not an option, but we share it to celebrate the difference it made to the local communities, to remind us that these communities are still in need (and in fact, so many more in our communities are facing some very tough times) and to prompt us to think creatively about how we can support and encourage those around us.

This is a story about a number of groups from the Presbyterian Church, working together, recognising and learning more about the needs in particular communities, thinking about ways they could meet those needs and then coming together to make it a reality. We hope you find it inspiring and encouraging.



Top (and above) Sydney Presbyterians travel out west to support rural folk

Towards the end of September 2019, a group of 16 people from Ryde, North Sydney and Macquarie Chapel Presbyterian churches travelled out to Gilgandra in a bus kindly provided by Scot's College.

The aim of our trip was to "Love because He first loved us". We planned all our activities around what the churches in these towns felt would be most helpful.

We shopped locally for all our needs, stayed in a locally owned motel, and ate out at local establishments on two evenings as a way of supporting the local economy.

Continued on p.15

Continued from p. 14

Some things remain the same

On the Friday night we headed out to local farmer, Ross Stockings' place for a bonfire which was a spectacular burning of a dead tree. We enjoyed the stars and supper with people from the local churches at Gilgandra. This was a valuable time for the team to meet locals and hear first-hand people's stories of the drought, hardship, survival and faith.

The next morning, we arrived for breakfast at the Gilgandra church hall to find their working bee was already underway! After devotion and breakfast, the team split in two and the Gilgandra team stayed to help paint the church toilet block and provide lunch while the Warren team travelled another 90kms out to Warren.

The scenery along the Warren road shocked us – it was the driest country we saw on the trip. Not a crop in sight and very few livestock. The people at Warren Presbyterian Church greeted us warmly with scones and a cuppa and then we got to work on the gardens of those whom the church had identified would benefit from yard work being provided.

At Warren we heard more stories of struggle and survival in both this drought and past droughts. We heard of people running out of water on their properties, of selling all their livestock, of workers losing their jobs and of the pain of farmers laying off workers.

The Warren people were deeply appreciative of our visit even though we felt they worked harder than us. We were inspired by their resilience, creativity and sense of community. We were blessed by their deep faith and willingness to allow us to serve them.

We returned to Gilgandra for delicious Japanese curry cooked by Ayumi Tamsett and enjoyed time as a team with the lovely Tamsett family who minister at Gilgandra Presbyterian church. Ayumi is also a local school chaplain.

On Sunday the Gilgandra team travelled to Gulargambone for church where John Buchanan preached and then came back to Gilgandra for the service there. The Warren team headed out to Warren for church where Dave Woolcott preached. We enjoyed spiritual conversations afterwards and were blessed to worship and fellowship with people from these churches. We were blessed to be able to hand out some "Project Kin bags" to local children and a baby pack to an expectant Mum.

The overall team consensus was that we received far more than we gave. We are very appreciative of the hospitality, humility and kindness shown to us by those who are doing it tough.

The trip also alerted us to some needs of local families and ministries and we have been able to distribute funds donated by generous individuals and Jericho Road towards these needs.



(top) John Buchanan preaches at Gulargambone
(centre) Painting the Gilgandra church toilet block
(above) One of the churches visited by the team

NEW ISSUES CHALLENGE OUR ETHICS

BY JOHN MCCLEAN

Life has changed, and many of the changes relate to questions of ethics. We are recalibrating our concerns and assumptions about how to live well.

Think about some of the new issues that have emerged on the individual level and as national and international questions.

How much space should I give someone in a line at the shops?

How much economic cost is justified to fight a pandemic? How do a landlord and tenant negotiate a 'fair' arrangement when the tenant cannot pay?

When does an organisation lay off staff, and how?

Should a government help a stranded cruise ship with multiple COVID patients?

Nations such as Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu donated to Australia during the bushfires — what do we owe them in this crisis?

Should the government provide for non-citizens who are trapped in Australia? How?

Should the police enforce stringent 'do not gather' laws? Does public health justify limitations on personal freedom? What will that mean for the future?

As we move our lives online, what are the privacy risks? What are the risks to vulnerable from privation and violence when their usual supports are removed?

How do I protect myself and at-risk friends and family members?

Should I buy more food for my family? How much more? What do I do about someone at risk who will not protect themselves the way I think they should?

What are the risks of abuse and addiction as people move life on-line? How do you manage that for yourself, your family, your church or organisation?

Who should get priority of treatment if medical resources are scarce?

Who is to blame for panic buying and shortages?

Should the government have brought in harder limitations faster?

Is it acceptable to fast-track possible treatments and vaccinations by shortening the normal checking process?

How do churches respond to limitations on gatherings? Should we do more than authorities require?

Should I criticise the government? To whom? For what? When?

Do medical staff have a moral duty to face higher risks as they treat patients?

How much pay should executives give up? What if that makes no real difference in how many employees lose their jobs?

Should children go to school or not? Should schools be open?

How much can drastic action be justified when there is not enough data to give good predictions?

Is it acceptable to blame people from specific ethnic backgrounds for spreading the virus?

How do I care for people I used to see daily but are now locked across the road or across the city?

Is closing churches a matter of religious freedom?

How much should I know and care about what is happening in the wider world?

What news do I share with my family? What should I share on social media?

How much space can I ask for when the whole family is restricted to the house?

I'm sure you can add to the list and there are more questions to come!

Every one of those questions is ethical. Each requires a judgement about what is right or best. Most are recognisable variations of more traditional questions. Yet, each comes at us with increased force and new dimensions. No wonder we are feeling exhausted!

So, what do we make of this ethic onslaught?

Step one is to admit that life is harder to understand and navigate. Since everyone is in the same situation, we should exercise extra patience and kindness.

Don't be surprised that people are making surprising calls (including yourself). New complex questions shake up our usual patterns and surface assumptions that we have not previously recognised. While this can be disturbing, it can also be clarifying. Even ethics benefits from disruption.

Our society may start to recognise the shallow nature of most modern ethical discussion. The cracks in the foundations will start to show. That will open new opportunities for a Christian voice in personal discussions and the public square.

For Christians, new situations send us back to old truths. We know life is lived for God and fellowship with him is the proper purpose of every person. We rejoice in God's faithfulness and compassion, so we can love those around us. We affirm the value of every person in every part of the world and aim to be generous to neighbours near and far. Hope grounded in the resurrection of Christ is the basis for courageous service. We pray for our leaders and seek to contribute to the common good. We see the blessings in God's created order and embrace his gifts of family, friendship, bodies and creativity. We reflect God's care for the weak and vulnerable by protecting them — including older people, those with disabilities and refugees.

Those commitments do not offer simple answers. The current crisis highlights the fact that we often face situations in which there is no obvious right answer. Our world is always in moral chaos, it's just that we get used to the normal version. The sudden shift shocks us with the complications.

That will take time and effort to see how old truths connect with the brave new world of COVID. It is important to base decisions and assessments on accurate information — as much as we can get it; and to take time, if that is available, to understand it. It is easy to assume that an old answer fits a new situation, we need information and reflection to work out how much things have changed.

This is a call to think carefully and prayerfully, together. We will not all face the same questions with the same intensity; we will all face some. We will need God's help, we have to trust his word and we will benefit from shared insights and encouragement. In this season, the Gospel, Society and Culture Committee will be working to identify and produce resources which can help the church face the onslaught of questions (keep an eye out for our material on <http://gsandc.org.au/blog>). In the ethical storm which we could not have imagined a month ago, Jesus will enable us to be the salt and light of the kingdom.

Sketch and Scripture Outback Patrol update

BY JACK AND GWEN COWELL

"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me Strength, that He considered me faithful, appointing me to His service" 1 Timothy 1:12

We have been sharing the Good News of Jesus over 16 years now and are still hoping someone will be inspired to take over from us using their gifts, in the 50-60 schools who have welcomed us over these past 16 years.

We have decided, this year, we will semi-retire and spend time with family members, plus still going out to share with about 20 schools within three to four hours' drive. Maybe also as we spend time with some of the friends we have made on patrol, we will share with the schools near them. So please continue to pray for God's guidance and hand upon our preparation, presentation and for schools' time to be available. Please accept our heart-felt thanks for prayers, support and encouragement, that you and your PWA branches and others have given to us. It has been so special and blessing us in more ways than you know.

An overview of our activities in 2019:

1. We shared with 76 plus schools
2. Shared with over 1800 children plus teachers
3. Presentations were about 90

4. I did about 480 sketches, with a few extra requests at some schools and drawing lessons.

5. Albert (puppet) is still the favourite in every school. During 2019, he was so popular that nearly every child wanted to hold and or shake his hand. He is surviving well. But the runners up at Christmas were Donkey and Baa Baa.

6. We travelled more than 6000km. Our fuel money provided by the sale of our Gloss Cards through Christian Education and a very generous supporting family.

7. Plus, we were able to give to schools affected by the drought food, water, dog food plus funds to help any child having a need to go on excursion or school needs or end of year presentation night. Approximately \$2000. This was money given to us from supporters and branches, wishing us the chance to do Mission work on their behalf. Sharing the joy of Christ to all we met and shared with.

8. Our resources were with thanks to the Bible Society mostly. We gave each school a copy of the book Jesus Facts for their libraries. Plus, each teacher was given a pack with tracts, magnets or a booklet called, It is so Simple. Seniors received Gospels, Bibles from the Bible Society were also offered to High School students and those who specially asked.

9. We answered and were asked many questions about God, Jesus and why Jesus died. We gave our testimonies and were able to sit down and read with the children. At Christmas the children received Christmas sticker books and tracts.

We also made chatterboxes for them. We had lots of fun singing songs and playing air guitars and drums.



Exciting Development for Vanuatu

Rob and El Falls from the Hornsby Presbyterian Church are among APWM's latest missionary couples. Commencing in early 2021, Rob and El will serve on the staff of the Talua Bible College in Vanuatu, replacing John and Kara Dekker. Rob is in his final year at Christ College and El works as a nurse and midwife. They have two children with another arriving very soon.



Robert Falls, Talua Principal Pastor
Philip Baniuri and El Falls

Prior to studying at Christ College, Rob served in the APWM National Office and was a short-term staff worker with the Evangelical Union at Sydney University.

Rob and El are currently developing their partnership support.

If you'd like to find out more, then please visit <http://fallsvanuatu.info> or contact the APWM office.

2020-2021 APWM Directory

The 2020-2021 APWM Directory is now available. Here you'll find information to help you pray for our 100+ mission families. If you want a Directory, please talk to your minister or if he can't help you then please contact us.

Majority World Ministry

For many people, David Burke needs no introduction. He has served as a minister in various parishes in NSW and Singapore, and for the last nine years has lectured at Christ College.

During that time he developed a growing interest in the 95% of the world's pastors who have had no more than three months theological training. [That's right! Three months.]



That interest has led David to run short training courses in countries as diverse as Ethiopia, Malaysia, Nepal, Timor Leste and Vanuatu.

David Burke

At the end of 2019 David left his full-time teaching position at Christ College to embark on a new phase of ministry. He's now an APWM Associate Missionary which means that when he now travels the globe he does so under the authority of APWM. We are grateful for David's willingness to serve our brothers and sisters overseas in this way.

Vanuatu: We Pray for Australia



Earlier this year we received a letter from the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu PWMU ladies (pictured).

"Warm New Year 2020 greetings from the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union (PWMU) of Vanuatu in Christ.



I am writing on behalf of the PWMU, to express our sincere and heartfelt condolences and sympathy for those who have lost their lives, homes, livelihood due to the devastated bushfire that affected New South Wales and Victoria, and the whole of Australia in terms of smoking pollution.

We have seen and read about the extensive damage done by the fire, and we share your feelings before the Lord. As the fire continues, we continue to uphold Australia before the Lord, and especially that the Christians and Christian Churches will have this opportunity to share God's Word

where opportunity arises to comfort those who are hurt.

The Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu and the Vanuatu Christian Council will be holding a worship service this coming Sunday 2pm for the bushfire victims in Australia.

Our prayers are with you brothers and sisters.

In Christ, Cindy Vanuaroro, General Secretary, PWMU"

What a great reminder that we belong to the worldwide family of believers!

How An Atheist Unintentionally Helped Bible Translation

Simon is an APWM missionary who serves as a Bible translator in a remote location. Simon won't tell you his real name because his ministry takes place in a country that doesn't welcome missionaries.

When Simon first served in that country, he was a single man. In time it became clear that he should marry and so he spoke to the church elders and they found Ruth, a local believer, whom he married. Ruth was a teacher, not a Bible translator and wasn't involved in the day to day translation work.

Now the translation project was progressing very well, but living nearby was a lady who was an atheist from the USA. She suspected that Simon was a Bible translator and told people "This man must be stopped! After he goes home his translation work will remain in our country!"

The time came for Simon and Ruth to travel to Australia for home assignment. While they were gone the translation office was raided following a tip-off from a local. The next time that Simon tried to return to that country he was denied entry. He was blacklisted and couldn't enter the country.



What would happen to the translation project now that Simon didn't have access to the local mother-tongue translators? God had a plan, and that plan involved Ruth.

Simon started to train Ruth and over time she grew in skills and confidence. The translation work continued at a steady pace and turned out to be of a higher quality than would have been possible in the home country. The result? At the end of 2020 the New Testament will be printed in the local language.

And that's how an atheist unintentionally helped the gospel go out in a closed country!



How is APWM Funded?

Every mission agency in Australia has to fund its operating costs. Most charge an administration levy of around 10% on the funds they receive. The APWM National Committee is no different. We face increasing costs in areas such as:

- record-keeping compliance for the Australian government,
- ensuring that our missionaries comply with requirements for Safe Ministry training and clearances,
- the costs of maintaining overseas partnerships,
- seeking to provide theological training for Christians in our overseas Partner Churches.

APWM receives funds from most of the APWM State Committees, gifts from congregations and individuals, and interest from investments. This money is used to resource ministries approved by the General Assembly of Australia and to contribute towards meeting administration expenses. However, this income is not sufficient to meet the necessary operating costs as well as APWM's approved ministries.



Robert Benn and Carlos Marcal,
Moderator of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of
Timor Leste at the 2019 General
Assembly of Australia

Responsible administration of mission work and care of APWM missionaries needs to be resourced. On top of this, the Australian government recently introduced requirements that mean that APWM must keep increasingly detailed records and reports on the money and resources that we send overseas.

For all these reasons APWM charges an administration levy of 10% on most of the funds received, in order to assist in resourcing the administration expenditure needed to support our missionaries and ministries. APWM will always seek to keep operating costs at a minimum to ensure that funds entrusted are used in a responsible way.

APWM always welcomes donations to help with our running costs.

Mount Magnet: Ready to Serve!

If you were to ask most people for the location of Mount Magnet, Western Australia, you'd probably receive puzzled looks. Yet this remote outback town is where God has been at work 'beyond the furthest fences'.



Alvin and Narelle Chai,
Mount Magnet

APWM has been excited as we have seen God working through the ministry of Surendra and May Wesley at Mount Magnet. During their time, many people, including the Aboriginal population, heard the gospel. When the Wesleys finished at Mount Magnet in late 2019 we anticipated a long vacancy — but God had other plans.

We are very pleased to announce that God has raised up former cross-cultural missionaries, Alvin and Narelle Chai, to serve at Mount Magnet commencing in July 2020. This ministry is a valued partnership between APWM and Presbyterian Inland Mission.

APWM has a particular interest in this ministry because of the large number of Aboriginal people in the area. We are seeking to raise \$20,000 to support this work. If you would like to partner with us then please contact national@apwm.org.au or write to 1 Clarence Street, Burwood NSW, 2134 or phone (02) 8073 7490.

Post Christian A Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture

BOOK REVIEW BY MARK POWELL (CORNERSTONE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH)

Every now and again you read a book that you just can't put down. For me, Veith's latest work was one such book. In the space of one afternoon—and a very late night! —I ploughed through the more than 300-plus pages. I simply could not put it down.

Veith provides one of the best analyses of contemporary thought and culture currently in print. He tackles all this through four major sections: Reality (how we understand our existence especially since the Enlightenment), the Body (how we now view gender and sexuality), Society (in particular how education and politics have changed) and then finally, Religion (that people are more 'spiritual' but less attached to religious traditions).

Not only does Veith write in an engaging style, but he is also incredibly well-read. There is a wealth of information in the footnotes for the reader to follow-up on if interested. Veith is also a Biblically conservative Lutheran which means that there is always a Gospel framework to whatever issue he discusses.

One of the best insights that Veith makes—and this really frames the approach of the entire book—is in his introduction titled, "The Universal Wolf". Veith quotes from William Shakespeare's, *The History of Troilus and Cressida*, act 1, scene 3, lines 109-10, 122-27:

“ Take but degree away, untune that string, / And, hark, what discord follows... / Then everything includes itself in power, / Power into will, will into appetite; / And appetite, an universal wolf, / So doubly seconded with will and power, / Must make performe an universal prey / And last eat up himself.

Veith explains the significance of this as follows:

“ For Shakespeare, the coming together of power, will, and appetite forms a “universal wolf” that devours everything. As we have been seeing in contemporary thought and culture, this wolf is eating up universities, laws, technology, the family, the arts, the media, and churches. But, having done so, there comes a point, says Shakespeare, when the wolf starts eating up himself.

This is an extremely helpful observation and insight,



especially into our contemporary culture. As Veith goes on to further argue:

“ For both post-Marxists on the left and Nietzscheans on the right, all institutions, all governments, all art, all moral beliefs, and all religions are nothing more than a mask for power. All of culture—the family, social institutions, philosophical systems—is nothing more than one group exercising power over another group (men over women, whites over racial minorities, heterosexuals over homosexuals, humans over animals, etc.) Thus, every dimension of life is politicized and critiqued as part of a system of oppression. The only way to resist this oppression is to be transgressive and to seize power for your own group, which will include exercising oppression against your enemies (silencing them, marginalizing them, and otherwise punishing them).

Another key point that Veith makes is promoting the long-forgotten work of J.G. Hamann, a contemporary and brilliant 'metacritic' of the Enlightenment thinker, Immanuel Kant. Veith is currently overseeing the translation of Hamann's works from the original German and believes that he still provides one of the best critiques against the worship of reason by many secularists.

If you are at all interested in culture and how Christianity should interact with it—and every believer should—then this is a great place to start. Regardless of your political leanings, you will not be disappointed.

www.reformers.com.au/postchristian



"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others." 2 TIMOTHY 2:2

New Apprentices for 2020

The METRO program is supporting these five new apprentices in 2020. Along with the six apprentices from 2019 continuing into their second year of apprenticeship the total number of Presbyterian Apprentices in NSW is 11. Many of these apprentices met at the MTS G8 conference in January. This allowed the apprentices to get to know each other, to hear some excellent bible teaching and to have time to share their METRO experiences and pray together. Read below what two apprentices have to say about their apprenticeship. Applications for funding support for METRO in 2021 are open on metro.edu.au

David Bell, Convener

John Le

What I would hope to be doing in my apprenticeship is to serve in both existing and new ministries at my church, which include the university student ministry, my one-to-ones, Kids' church and High school Scripture teaching, as well as up-front service leading and preaching.

Being involved in these ministries will enable me to cultivate both my God-given gifts and in my godliness. I will strongly suspect that I will be trusting upon God more often than ever as I dip my toes in areas of ministry I'm not familiar in doing.

Jasmine Horrocks

I'm in the second year of my apprenticeship with the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students (AFES) at the University of Newcastle with the student club, Newcastle Christian Students (NCS). I loved being part of NCS as a student, as I grew so much in my faith and knowledge of God and was encouraged to boldly share Jesus with my friends. Over the past year I have had the privilege of discipling women one to one on campus, leading small groups of students doing Bible study together, engaging in cold contact evangelism and getting involved in international student ministry. This year I'll be continuing those ministries, seeking to grow in my competence and character as I share the gospel and serve students.



"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others." 2 TIMOTHY 2:2



*JOHN LE WITH
ELLIOT KU (TRAINER)*

• GRACEPOINT PRESBYTERIAN

*WAYNE DURAND WITH
JOHN MCINTYRE (TRAINER)*

• GRACE PRESBYTERIAN •



GRACE OGG

• BATHURST PRESBYTERIAN

*JESSE HUCKEL (TRAINER)
WITH SAM KOSTER*

• GRIFFITH PRESBYTERIAN •



JASMINE HORROCKS

• GRACE PRESBYTERIAN

ONCE AGAIN: YAHWEH OR BAAL?

2 KINGS 1

T

he central question for any of us is 'Who is God? Who is worthy of our devotion and trust for our salvation?' In our day, this question can take the form of 'Is Christ the only way or as one of the ways?' In Elijah's day, the question took the form of 'Yahweh or Baal?' Ahab thumbed his nose at the first commandment, and paid the penalty. Then his son Ahaziah became king about the year 853 B.C. (1 Kings 22:51-53). Alas, it was a case of 'like father, like son.'



'If you don't like what you hear, take it out on the messenger, but don't ever think you could be in the wrong.' Ahaziah is after Elijah's hide. 'Come down' is the message. God has exhausted His mercy (1:10). Does Ahaziah learn anything? His father learnt something - not much, not salvation, but something (recall 1 Kings 21:27-29). But Ahaziah seems as hardened as Pharaoh in Egypt, or Peter FitzSimons in the Sydney Morning Herald (1:11-12).

Judgment deserved

Ahaziah fell through the lattice of his upper chamber in Samaria, and cried out to Baal, the lord of Ekron, one of the five major Philistine cities (2:1-2). Despite Ahaziah's knowing about the drought for three-and-a-half years, the contest on Mount Carmel, the rain that broke the drought, and how Ahab met his death, his mind was made up. No doubt he thought Elijah was the one who was narrow-minded and unscientific.

So Ahaziah turned not to the God of the law and the prophets, but to Baalzebub. 'Baal' means 'lord' and 'zebub' means 'prince', so probably the original name was 'Prince Lord'. But 'Baalzebub' actually means 'lord of the flies', and came to be used in the New Testament as a name for Satan (Matt.12:24). The law is clear on this (Lev.19:31): no star signs, no seances, no tarot cards, no crystals, no meddling with the spirit world (1 Cor.10:20). These things are not harmless at all. Ahaziah turned to Baalzebub in order to know his fate just as many today turn to fortune tellers, astrologers, clairvoyants, spiritualists and gurus. Ahaziah's body may have been the worse for wear, but his soul was in an even more perilous state.

Judgment pronounced

Ekron was about 72 kilometres from Samaria, and the king's messengers must have barely started their journey when Elijah confronted them with a sombre message - Ahaziah would die (1:3-4). The messengers apparently did not know Elijah but they were so impressed by his appearance that they returned to Samaria (1:5-8). Here was this strange man - a hairy man (NKJV) or, more likely, a man with a hairy garment (NIV, ESV) - and he told the messengers that the king would die. John the Baptist was to dress in the same way (Matt.3:4). Both men dared to subject kings to the Word of God, and so too all political leaders shall give account to the true King of kings.

Judgment resisted

The king was anything was submissive, and sent fifty soldiers to retrieve Elijah (1:9). It is his father's old sin:

How did Ahaziah explain the first fire from heaven. A great fluke? Who knows? His mind was blinded by hatred for Elijah and his God. Beware of such an attitude, of seeking to strive against our creator (Isa.45:9). Ahaziah is a warning to us. He refuses to learn (1:13-14). Ahaziah is so hard of heart that he cannot think straight (Prov.27:22). The third captain at least had some common sense. There is no need to see any deep faith here; self-preservation was probably the motive.

Judgment carried out

Ahaziah died (1:17). Here was a man whose body was broken through a fall from a roof. One might have thought that his affliction would have prompted him to meditate on his sins and his relationship with God (see Ps.119:67). Not so Ahaziah - he hardened his heart, and turned to Baalzebub, and tried to have Elijah killed. God punished the first two captains and their 100 men, and now He punishes Ahaziah. Do not say: 'This is harsh Old Testament teaching.' It is severe but the God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament. Ask Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11). It was not Peter who struck them down but God. Similarly, it was not Elijah who sent the fire from heaven but God.

The wages of sin is death. Ahaziah died physically and because he was already dead spiritually, he died eternally. When God's Word comes to you, do not be like Ahaziah and harden your heart (Heb.4:7). Surrender to God, lay down your arms, and accept His mercy.

*Today Thy gate is open,
And all who enter in
Shall find a Father's welcome,
And pardon for their sin:
The past shall be forgotten,
A present joy be given,
A future grace be promised;
A glorious crown in heaven.*

Ahaziah would not hear of it; he turned to Baalzebub. The God of judgment is also the God of mercy; and the God of mercy is also the God of judgment.