

the pulse

A woman wearing a blue jacket, a blue and pink headband, and a large green backpack is climbing a rocky trail. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The trail is made of grey rocks and has a chain railing. The background shows trees with yellow and green leaves, suggesting an autumn setting. The word 'PRESBYTERIAN' is written vertically in red on the left side of the image.

Many are the plans in the mind
of a man, but it is the purpose
of the Lord that will stand.

PROVERBS 19:21

GOD'S BIG PLAN FOR OUR LIVES:
TWO HEARTWARMING REFLECTIONS

SINGING IS BACK:
BUT WE STILL NEED OUR COVID-19 PLANS

FROM THE BIBLE:
PETER BARNES HAS THE LAST WORD

PLANS AFOOT:
CENTENARY (PLUS ONE) CELEBRATIONS UNDERWAY

PY'S NEW FOCUS:
PLANS FOR MORE THAN CAMPING

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

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 ANDREW CAMPBELL

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: God's plan for us is not always our plan and our lives often strike rocky patches which we don't understand until much later. Read on to the two Reflections inside to see how God planned two journeys years out and even linked them together. Pic shows Gabi Forman on the way to a rescue while hiking the Overland Track.

God's plan; not always our plan, but a good plan

KAREN FORMAN



It is hard to believe we are almost halfway into 2021. COVID-19 is still very much in the news but Australia has been blessed, restrictions are easing and we are now singing in church again although we still all need COVID-19 Safety Plans.

On the topic of Plans, I was reminded of God's plan for all our lives while on my long-awaited hiking holiday in Tasmania last month. Basically, all our plans for the hike went wrong. But God's plan, put into place 11 years ago, went very right. Meanwhile, a church friend shared her recent experience with our Bible study group, showing how God had planned her collapse all along, with an amazing link between the two stories. Both reflections are included in this edition.

We are all very familiar with Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

From my experience on my holiday, I am also thinking of Proverbs 16:4 "The LORD works out everything to its proper end— even the wicked for a day of disaster" and also (and this is the best part) 1 Timothy 2:4 "who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth".

They all apply to this edition's Reflections, but also, in our ongoing battle against COVID-19, which has so much affected how we ran our ministries in the past year and a half. Through the hardships, the lockdowns, the time of no face-to-face services, then that very sad time of face-to-face services but no singing, God has shown that He is in control. So many wonderful things have come out of COVID-19. There are many stories of survival. Of working closer in teams, even over Zoom, from home. Many people have come to know Christ as a result.

We certainly have plenty to sing about. As long as we accept God's plan; not our own.

Churches still need COVID-19 Safety Plans



The PCNSW/ACT was thankful to God for the lack of COVID-19 cases in NSW and the ACT in recent weeks and enjoy being able to worship together in congregations.

However, churches are still required to have a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place and on hand if asked by NSW Health or others to inspect.

That's the message from PCNSW/ACT General Manager Jeof Falls and Moderator Andrew Campbell.

The latest version can be found online on the NSW Health website at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/form/covid-safety-plan/places-of-worship>

"You will see that those details which are captured in the Safety Plan are now quite minimal," Mr Falls said.

"The following are guidelines regarding some particular areas which may be of assistance. In all areas, please encourage good hygiene in

ways which are relevant to your facilities and to each situation."

MORNING TEAS, LUNCHEAS AND SUPPERS

Morning teas, lunches and suppers and other food can be served and this should be done in a COVID-safe manner. Please check this website for some helpful information about food handling and hygiene which gives some guidelines and could be shared with the folks who are involved in preparing the food at your church: <https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/industry/Pages/COVID-19---Advice-for-food-businesses-on-general-health-and-hygiene.aspx>

Seeking to have individual servings of food and drinks (rather than food placed in a communal location) is preferable. You might also think about using disposable plates, cutlery and cups.

COMMUNION

The Lord's Supper can be shared again. Please consider using disposable cups.

PAPER ORDERS OF SERVICE

Paper orders of service, Bibles, hymnals, etc. can be distributed. You might consider having one set of books set aside for each service or group.

MONEY HANDLING - OFFERTORY

Many congregations have moved to using EFT/online giving to collect freewill offerings. We understand that some people would like to continue to give using cash and having the following measures in place is recommended:

- Have the collection point in a fixed location rather than being passed around. As always, please take care to consider security. For example, you may consider making a locked 'mail box' available.
- Have one person handle the funds during counting the cash in order to minimize contact. The second person can carefully watch the first person as he or she does the count.

All invited to Concord's 101st birthday

Concord Presbyterian Church is holding its 101-year Anniversary on August 21-22 this year.

It would have been a 100th birthday, but COVID-19 meant a delay.

The team is now planning a special commemorative dinner on the Saturday evening, a combined church Service on the Sunday, followed by a potluck lunch.

Any past members who would like to attend please contact Janet Read on 0415 499 177 or email macalej@ymail.com

The church is also looking for stories, memories and testimonies as it is planning a church history booklet. Even if you can't attend it would love Pulse readers' stories to share. Did you know that friends at St James, Burwood fathered the work in Concord West? The District was changed to North Strathfield in 1932.

The first service was held in the home of Mr and Mrs Norman King, 15 Mackenzie St, and services were held there for some nine months conducted by the Rev R Scott-West of St James', Burwood to whom this congregation owes so much.

On a copy of the "Certificate of Title", dated 28th day of September 1917, lots 14 and 15 bounded by Mackenzie Street, Correy's Avenue and Concord Road were transferred from James Thomas Walker, Arthur John MacKenzie and Alfred



Consett Stephen, to the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in the State of New South Wales.

Also noted on the document is the register of a mortgage produced December 13 1920 and registered on the May 5 1921 between the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church and the Commonwealth Bank of Australia.

In 1918, the congregation of St James' subscribed the amount needed to purchase the land on which the current church, hall and manse stand.

On July 6 Burwood presented the embryo Church with the site on which the present Church Halls and Manse stand. Subsequently, by agreeing to mortgage this land, they made finance available to erect the Church Hall.

Foundation stones for the Church hall were laid on August 21 1920 by Mrs Dunlop and Rev Scott West.

The Hall was opened on October 30 1920 by John Kirkland, and the first service was held next day. Rev Mr R. Scott West at the table. Mr John Kirkland standing up with White Vest. Mr H Todhunter presenting him with a gold key. Henry Todhunter's daughter Elsie was married to Mr Arthur Walder at St James Presbyterian Church Burwood by the Rev R Scott West. Their son is Rev Ray Walder who attended Sunday School in this building.

“The Morning After” Art Therapy at Woonona



“The Morning After” Art Therapy is a new Go program at Woonona Presbyterian Community Church.

The group meets on the first Friday of the month, the morning after the ‘Overcomers Outreach’ (OO) 12 step support group.

OO is now in its third year at Woonona seeking to support people who are struggling with an addiction or self-destructive behaviour, or are being affected by someone who is.

The art therapy group is co-ordinated by Hazel Nisbet, Go Co-ordinator at Woonona.

Hazel explains, “When you are struggling

with an addiction, drugs, alcohol, gambling, food, smoking etc., it can be helpful to have something to get up in the morning and go to. We have set up this group to follow our OO meeting. 2020 has been a tough year for many people and it’s been good to get together again and relax with art”.

“Each month we have someone leading us in an art or creative outlet. Some of our leaders are artists and even art therapists for example, painting, water colour, pencil and charcoal but others are creative- soap making, knitting (‘wrap with love’), felting, native plant and seaweed pressing. It’s been great for OO and new friends from the community have joined us following our posts on community Facebook pages”.

God's 10-year plan: a dream dashed; a life saved; a believer returns to the fold

BY KAREN FORMAN



For 10 years, my daughter and I had a big dream: after a memorable day's hike when she was four, we wanted to return to Tasmania to the famous Overland Track and hike its entire 65km length over the mountains in seven days.

The plan was set. 2020, on the 10th anniversary of that day-walk, seemed a good target, but then there were bushfires and COVID-19... so, we figured 11 years, in April 2021, would be close enough.

Keen hikers, snowsports' participants and mountain dwellers, we planned and trained and booked for our trek. Even surgery for a rare jaw muscle tumour 11 weeks out did not stop us. We gathered together six Christian friends to join us and April 13 was the starting day.

Little did we know that God had His own plan and that while our own dream would go very "wrong", God's plan – for us to be in the right place at the right time to save a man's life, would

be rolled out perfectly.

He also had a short-term plan. A year ago, he sent a paramedic visiting from Queensland into the shop I work at a couple of half days per week, and we got talking about the remote area rescues he had worked on and equipment he carried.

He told me about a particular emergency beacon (PLB) with text messaging capability that he thought would work well for me as an adventurer and also a mountain bike coach (something I do in my spare time). These units work where mobile phones do not. Press the call button on a regular PLB and it brings emergency services by air to an unknown emergency. Use the text messaging feature on the recommended unit for communications that don't require an expensive emergency helivac.

So, I bought one. Little did I know that it would be instrumental in above mentioned rescue.

Two weeks before departure, I was offered the last vacant

spot in a Remote Area First Aid Course being held locally. I already had regular First Aid, but this was specific for helping people when far away from medical attention. Like, on the Overland Track. Praise God.

Our long-awaited trek started out well. God had healed me enough to be cleared medically to go.

The huge snowstorm that saw us starting out in knee deep snow didn't deter us. We are mountain folk after all. But rangers warned us that conditions were risky. Hiking lore is to stay with your group, stay close to the person with the emergency equipment, look after each other.

Within 1.5km, one of our team turned back as he wasn't feeling well, while two others decided to forge ahead with their teenaged daughters at speed, leaving my daughter and I and our close friend to first tend to our unwell teammate, then hike the 12km in progressively thigh deep snow, to the hut where we would spend the night. Along

the way, we waited for a young couple behind us, one moving slowly with asthma and lack of fitness, then joined together as a group of five.

Night came and the snow turned to slippery ice. With headlamps on, we forged ahead, even more slowly, but the temps had dropped and we could not risk hypothermia by stopping for long enough to prepare a hot evening meal. God gave me strength to lead the group and I marvelled at His creation as the stars shone over the lamp lit snow and praised Him that the track was well marked and we were not lost. We arrived safely after 10 hours of hiking, but the night took its toll on my daughter and she slept poorly and needed rest and a lot of food the next day. Four of our group moved out early, leaving us alone and we encouraged my friend to continue with them, thinking we could catch up.

The next day, with an even bigger snow storm predicted, we were advised to backtrack rather than proceed further into the mountains as a duo, then start the trek over in a couple of days. This time, while the snow had melted, the track was a knee-deep freezing creek and the wind was blowing 100km gusts. We were well prepared for it and loved it! Before we left, I used my device to text our fallen team member, telling him we were walking back to the start. An estimated five hours. He answered he would walk to meet us. Unbeknown to us (but yes to God!), he immediately booked some accommodation for the night and told the local ranger, who issued him with

a pass to drive his car to the track start so we didn't have to walk 10km more.

He didn't expect we would show up with a man and his wife whom we had picked up along the way. The man, showing obvious signs of hypothermia, with no hat or gloves, his shirt open, refusing to eat or drink, and behaving irrationally and his wife crying with fear.

They had been left behind by the couple walking with them to walk 5km back alone. We saw not a single person out there. My recent studies told me by feeling hot, the man's body temp would have been less than 30 degrees. He was about to be in serious trouble. The wind was blowing; we were on a high ridge; it was pouring with rain. We could not put up a tent, put him into a sleeping bag, or boil water. We had to get him moving.

I could have set up the emergency beacon, and I had it ready, but it would have taken time for a heli to arrive; we couldn't stay still. He could walk and as he walked, he allowed us to layer him up and give him sips of water and licks of chocolate.

Praying constantly for guidance, we walked him down the hill for 5km, when our friend joined us, got him into a warm car and was able to share rooms with him. Praise God, after food and rest he became well again. Over dinner, he told me he had been praying, as he feared he was going to die, but didn't want to worry his wife. He now "knew" there was a God, as we had shown up.



The next day in a debrief, a ranger said we had saved the man's life. Unfortunately, while helping the man down a rocky ladder, I rolled my ankle, and although I felt little at the time thanks to my frozen hiking boots, an x-ray showed several torn ligaments and an avulsion fracture. No return to the track for us. Perhaps God's plan was a bit more rest for me?

So many disappointments: being left by our group; my daughter needing extra rest and being left behind again; not realising a dream; breaking an ankle. But how good that we know God and that He led us on His path! Everything that happened, happened because God intended it to. What a lesson for my daughter (who wants to be a doctor) in putting others ahead of ourselves. Our own GP (a member of our church) said she had never treated a hypothermia case and was thrilled my daughter had been able to help someone. She was also amazed at how God had worked. And, what a wonderful example to our new friend of God's providence. He is in regular communication and – wait for it: says he is back at church now!

A sequence of God-incidences

BY ELLA MEYER



SIX WEEKS PRIOR

A

friend from the coast wanted to spend time with me. She couldn't come on a weekend so it was decided I would take some annual leave on a weekday. I rarely take annual leave!

The plan was to spend a Monday together, drive to Cooma (45 minutes from home), have dinner and then part ways as I had a meeting on the Monday night.

This was the start of a medical adventure that would result in me looking back and only seeing how God had planned the whole thing – and how blessed I was that He had!

SUNDAY EVENING

She arrived late and we just went to bed.

MONDAY MORNING

I suggested we go to the local shopping centre for breakfast and we had a lovely meal and a deep conversation.

But then, I suddenly felt unwell and went to the bathroom. She sat to wait on the steps of the shopping centre, just outside the shop which had an escalator to the upper level – and as it turned out, to our local medical centre.

After 20 minutes I came out and she asked if I was ok. I said, “no, get (my husband).” I then became unconscious. Everything that happened after that has been told to me by my friend and my husband.

- They both tried to wake me.
- When my husband got no response, he raced up the escalator to the doctor's surgery. They rang 000 but there was no ambulance available in the town and they had to wait 60 minutes for one to come from Cooma.
- My own doctor came down to help me. She established it was not a diabetic hypo and kept trying to wake me. She put in a cannula and checked vital signs continually, organising the practice to print out my medical conditions and scripts.
- The fire brigade arrived and

assisted putting me into the recovery position which was helpful because I had collapsed in an awkward place.

- Everyone kept trying to wake me.
- Ambulance arrived and my doctor gave comprehensive handover along with my medical information.
- The ambulance told my husband it was a heart attack or a stroke.

Along the way, I fluttered my eyes and became fully conscious as we were arriving at the hospital, where the doctor in duty organised a brain scan and monitoring. There were no delays because my doctor had provided the information re my medical conditions and the incident.

The ambulance had said I had a GSC (Glasgow Consciousness Score) of three at Jindabyne, four halfway and 14 at the hospital. A nurse told me later that a score of one means the patient is dead and 15 means fully conscious. I had been GSC three for 45 minutes.

When the tests found no reason for my condition, the doctor



consulted my own doctor who had been a direct witness at the time and I was monitored for 24 hours in hospital, where I was blessed to have nurses I knew, then released for a week of rest at home with more tests pending.

That morning, I woke up excited! I know that sounds mad but all I could see was God's hand on my life:

- God knew! I had applied for leave six weeks early. My own doctor said that alone is a miracle, as I don't take leave easily.
- My visiting friend is a nurse.
- My husband was at home not two hours away at work as he would normally be.
- My own doctor was there the whole time.
- I had collapsed from a seated position, If I had been standing, I probably would have had a head injury.
- The doctor in the ED was someone I knew and respected.
- My bag had been packed for

an overnight stay for my work meeting, so my friend and husband only had to bring it to the hospital.

God had His stamp all over this.

THURSDAY

I went to my doctor to say thankyou and plan more tests. Towards the end of the consultation, I said, "God had His hand on all of this". She asked me what I meant and explained all the above.

"She said, can I add my side to this?" She then explained that a week prior, a patient who needed a long appointment had booked in, and she had blocked out the following appointment times just in case to avoid running late. These two times were when she was with me!

We knew none of these circumstances were a coincidence. God had it all.

Amazingly, my doctor commented that the chances of it all happening as it did were as possible as "some patients of mine who went hiking in Tasmania and ended up saving a man with hypothermia".

Those patients are members of my Bible study group and good friends.

• Ella Meyer is the principal of Snowy Mountains Christian School and a former member of the St. Aidens Presbyterian Church, Wagga Wagga, now living in Jindabyne.



Don't write to your local member ...

REV ANDREW CAMPBELL

Don't write to your local Member of Parliament.

Instead, make an appointment. Talk to your member in person. They are, after all, our representatives. And there's nothing like a face-to-face meeting with voters.

One small church in NSW did just that. Back in December, they were concerned about the Victorian Parliament 'Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practice Prohibition Bill 2020.' This Bill makes prayer an illegal 'suppression practice' and claims extraterritorial application over NSW.

Well, this congregation decided not to send a letter, but make a personal visit to their MP. It took four months and a dozen email reminders, but eventually the appointment was made.

Three elders and four church members who could take time off work were there. They showed their MP a copy of the Victorian Bill and explained what a difficult position they were in. After all, Christians should and will pray for anyone in any kind of trouble or personal conflict. And anyway, how can something legal in NSW be pursued in Victorian courts?

Now, what surprised the delegation is that its MP did not know about the Victorian Bill. Busy with many other issues, it hadn't come to the members' attention. They received a concerned and sympathetic hearing and were assured that the claim to extraterritorial application would be taken up. They were also assured that no such Bill was being or would be considered in NSW at least under the present parliament.

The church members then asked about a NSW Bill, 'The Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Bill.'

The draft NSW Bill, responding to the Royal Commission on Institutional Responses to Child Abuse, establishes ten standards for all children's and youth organisations. The standards include LGBTIQ+ and gender diversity. The Bill gives the Children's Guardian powers that may be used to direct what we teach our children and young people about LGBTIQ+ and gender diversity issues.

Expressing these concerns, the delegation was again surprised that its MP did not know about this proposed Bill either. And though not known for conservative views,

there was candour, interest and concern. After all, the MP proffered, that if parents sent their young people and children to Christian ministries, they could reasonably expect Christian, Biblical teaching.

Told that the Gospel, Society and Culture Committee of the NSW Assembly has prepared a submission on the Bill, the MP asked for a copy to read and consider.

The interaction with their MP has taught this small church that they shouldn't assume that their local MP knows about all government legislation. They need to be told, as we all do.

Not only that, but a local MP may not know the concerns Christians have with government legislation. Unless it is brought to their attention, an MP may not know how legislation affects Christians.

Imagine the pressure if every politician was beset by requests for personal interviews by every church in their electorate!

Don't do nothing, and don't write to your local member. Ask for a face-to-face meeting. Like this church, you may be surprised.

BOOK REVIEW:

DISABILITY AND THE CHURCH: A VISION FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION, LAMAR HARDWICK

REVIEWED BY REV. JASON FORBES

In his book *Disability and the Church: A Vision for Diversity and Inclusion*, Lamar Hardwick discusses the need for churches to be more inclusive of people with disabilities. Throughout the book, there are plenty of profound insights in the short and to-the-point chapters. However, his interpretation of key Bible passages is concerning.

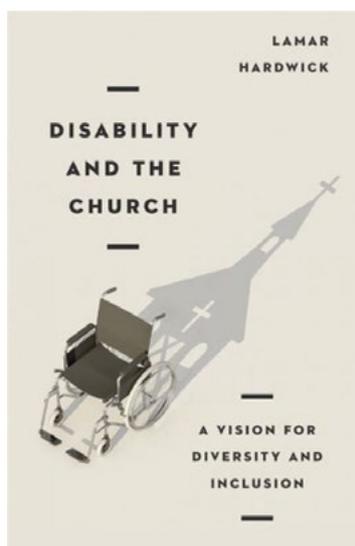


Hardwick is a church minister at Tri-Cities Church in East Point, Georgia (U.S.) who has struggled with social awareness and skills all his life. This has had an impact on his ministry which he made a habit of denying. At age 36, he was diagnosed as having Asperger's syndrome. Since then, he has been able to put techniques and structures in place to manage the social challenges he faces. He has also become an advocate for churches to become disability inclusive with a particular focus on children with autism.

Hardwick offers insights that really should inform any ministry, but particularly ministry to people with disabilities. Hardwick perceives that being in relationship with God is important for a person's well-being. This relationship will have a variety of expressions, and therefore, the church should be looking for those who are vulnerable to being left behind on the basis of the Parable of the Lost Sheep (Matt 18:10–14; [Luke 15:4–7]). This is reinforced by Hardwick's exposition of the Parable of the Great Banquet (Luke 14:12–24). Here, the argument is made that a lack of inclusion is seldom about money. Rather, a lack of inclusion is often driven by an unwillingness to ensure full access to the church and full participation in its

life, having people with disabilities present in the church and to have their stories heard. Instead, the church can often become a reflection of cultural norms that exclude people with disabilities in the first place. Hardwick makes the key observation that one of the cultural norms is the avoidance of suffering. However, the priority for the church should be the honouring of God. So, the emphasis should be on hearing people's stories, recognising them as a bearer of God's image and enabling them to honour God within their story. Hardwick also gives consideration to the place of the body in the new creation, and argues, quite convincingly, that there may be a continuation of the remnants of disability. Often, the conception of our heavenly existence is merely a projection of our cultural ideals.

Such conceptions of heaven can conceal prejudices against people with disabilities. However, nowhere in the New Testament are believers promised a new body. Instead, they are promised a renewed body which suggests a continuation of our present existence in some form. In the new heaven and new earth, we will be recognisably us, yet transformed. That does not mean identical, so our characteristics have to be retained, but glorified. Pointing to Revelation 5:12, Joni Eareckson Tada writes in 'Lamp Unto My Feet' that she was strengthened by the thought that, even in heaven, 'Our Lord will be honoured as the slain Lamb. His sufferings will never be forgotten.'



CONTINUED ON P.16



Presbyterian Youth

An investment in youth: reflecting on the 2021 PY Annual Forum



Every year, people involved in and invested in the ministry of PY gather together for an Annual Forum, to discuss the current needs of youth and youth ministries, and plan and pray together.

This year, PY Annual Forum had a slightly different format, with two pre-meeting Zoom calls added on to allow for even more consultation and discussion.

At the first Zoom meeting, the focus was camps. The PY team was able to share their plans for 2021 and beyond, particularly explaining why even though Winter Camp won't be running, PY's focus on helping youth and leaders remains strong.

Though camping will not be such a big focus for PY going forwards, this will free up time and resources for the PY team to invest in helping churches disciple their youth throughout the year.

Though there was some sadness expressed by attendees about the end of Winter Camp, Juno Yu, PY Camp Director, said of the people in this meeting, "They've been part of PY for a long time. They're invested in PY and because PY has mostly been about camping, they've been invested in camping. But their real investment is in youth. So, they see where we are going and they're happy to be part of that."

Juno found it exciting to share how PY is hoping to support local churches more, and is looking forward to more opportunities to

connect with churches to share about this soon.

The second Zoom meeting was particularly for ethnic churches to meet and discuss their unique needs, with representatives from Chinese and Korean Presbyterian churches in attendance.

Attendees discussed matters including how to transition English-speaking youth into appropriate church services when their parents have been attending services in, for example, Mandarin or Korean. They also noted the challenge for these youth in feeling caught between cultures, and discussed ways that PY could help equip youth leaders to manage these unique issues.

At the main Annual Forum meeting, many ideas were shared and discussed. Attendees considered matters like how to help youth leaders teach about issues including consent, alcohol and pornography, and pondered whether a youth survey might be helpful to gain a clearer picture of what issues young people in the Presbyterian church are most concerned about.

As PY's vision and plans for the future continue to evolve and emerge, Juno and the whole team are thankful for the opportunities that meetings like the PY Annual Forum provide for them to gain valuable advice and insights from the broader Presbyterian church.

"We've got to figure out what we want to be great at, rather than try and do everything for everyone," Juno reflected.

"We're for churches, and we're trying to help them. And when people come to these forums and talk in them, they help set the standards and direction for youth and PY in the future."

Keep an eye out for future opportunities to come along to PY meetings – they're always extremely encouraging and this is an exciting time for youth ministry in the Presbyterian church.



Timor Leste: Cyclone Seroja

On Saturday 5th April, Cyclone Seroja struck Timor Leste, one of Australia's closest neighbours. This resulted in major flooding and landslides which caused damage to property and in some cases the loss of homes.

Our Partner Church is the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Timor Leste.

Our Moderator-General, the Rev Dr Peter Barnes, has launched an appeal for funds for relief. We have already sent AUD\$4,000 for immediate assistance.

[You can watch a video about the flooding here.](#)

How to Donate

Direct Deposit

Bank: Westpac Account

Name: Australian Presbyterian World Mission

BSB: 032 260

Account Number: 151207 and mark your gift 'Timor Cyclone'. Please email finance@apwm.org.au so we can send a receipt.



The capital city, Dili. (Photo Facebook)

Cheque

Please send cheques to

APWM National 1 Clarence St Burwood NSW 2134
(Gifts are not tax deductible) Please note, if we receive more funds than needed, these will be used to provide relief from the effects of COVID-19. Thank you for your partnership.

Commissioning: Rob & El Falls

Thank you to the churches and individuals who have joined Rob & El Falls' support team. At the time of writing they have pledged for 88% of their financial support.

A commissioning service is planned for 2:30pm on Saturday 22nd May at the Chatswood Presbyterian Church.

In June/July they will attend the six-week SIL 'Launch' orientation course at Kangaroo Ground in Melbourne. This course will provide them with skills in language acquisition, culture and anthropology. They were recently featured in an article in the [Eternity newspaper](#).



For more information please see <https://www.fallsvanuatu.info>



Talua: One Year Later



On Monday 5th April 2020, Cyclone Harold hit northern Vanuatu, causing extensive damage to the Talua Theological Training Institute. The damage was so great that Talua closed down for a year while repairs were carried out.

Cyclone Harold exposed a number of weaknesses in past building practices and so the aim of the reconstruction has been to 'build back better'.

This has been made possible through the generous donations of you, the members of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. We were able to send \$127,633.37 to be used at Talua alone.

The photos above are just a small sample of the rebuilding work. By the time that you read this Talua should have reopened with the College picking up where it left off this time last year. Talua thanks you for your generous partnership and gifts of love.

ReachOut: Pastors Attend for Free!



The annual ReachOut missions conference is being held this year at Katoomba and online.

ReachOut will be a huge encouragement for your pastor and being online means it is even easier to join.

In 2019 Ray Galea spoke at ReachOut and said that he wished he'd come to ReachOut earlier because he was so encouraged to hear what God is doing in the world.

"The local church is the seedbed for the next generation of missionaries. As church leaders we need to be constantly growing in our knowledge of God's global mission so that He might use us to raise up these workers for the harvest field."

Tim Silberman, Speaker ReachOut 2020, SMBC lecturer and member of the Cornerstone Presbyterian Church.

At ReachOut 2021 there will be an extended 'Pastors Workshop: How can I grow global mission in my church?' on Saturday afternoon. ReachOut wants to encourage pastors so they can register for FREE.

www.reachoutmissions.com.au/2021-conference

Contact

Australian Presbyterian World Mission
1 Clarence Street Burwood NSW 2134

national@apwm.org.au

Phone: (02) 8073 7490

www.apwm.org.au

facebook.com/AustralianPresbyterianWorldMission

COMPLEMENTARY, NOT COMPLIMENTARY MINISTRY

BY SYLVIA SIU

I have a bad habit of spelling “complementarian” with an ‘I’.

It started because my spell check didn’t recognise the word when I spelled it correctly (it still can’t) - and so I defaulted to what my computer was the correct spelling “complimentarian”.

I’ve used this spelling of the word in so many contexts, it wasn’t until a kind commenter on the PCNSW Women Facebook page graciously called out my mistake.

“Complementarian”, as a theological term, describes the Biblical relationship between men and women, in both the church and family.

Complementarians believe that men and women are equal in value and dignity, although they are called to perform different roles.

Discussion around complementarian theology usually centers on what women can and can’t do in church services – and while there is definitely a need to consider the practical details of these roles in more specific detail, a helpful first step would be to consider the etymology of the word, and why it has been applied to our theology (of course, the word does not appear in either the Old or New Testament – but then, neither does “trinity”!)

The google definition of the word ‘complement’ is a thing that contributes extra features to something else in such a way as to improve or emphasise its quality.

It speaks to the fullness that arrives in the combination of opposites; the completion achieved by the union of men and women in both the family and church.

The Oxford dictionary has a similar definition, but goes one step further by asking the question: “Compliment or complement?”

These words have similar spellings but completely different meanings. If you **compliment** someone, you say something very nice to them:

She complimented me on my English.

If one thing **complements** another, the two things work or look better because they are together:

The different flavours complement each other perfectly.

This helpful clarification also contributes to our understanding of why we pursue a complementary theology in our church practice: our goal is to live out the fullness of the body of Christ. And that means realising the vision of men and women of diverse tribes and cultures, united in Christ as one body. Paul describes this in 1 Corinthians 12:24-26:

But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

What a beautiful picture of the fullness achieved in the Church as each part – male and female, old and young, of every race and tribe – come together to make what was scattered whole.

The body of Christ, the Church, is made up of individual members (1 Corinthians 12:27) but together we become one body. When we unite together as men and women (and as people from different generations, races and cultures) we honor those whom the world has despised.

There is to be no battle of the sexes in the Church, no battle for affirmation, power or control. If women are harmed by the patriarchal practices of the Church, the whole church suffers.

CONTINUED ON P. 18



CONTINUED FROM P.11

DISABILITY AND THE CHURCH: A VISION FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION, LAMAR HARDWICK

Hardwick then discusses techniques for the church to embrace this diversity, and how the church can build a better Christian culture. However, this is where his interpretation of the Bible is a concern. His basis for building a better culture is the Parable of the Seeds (Matt 13:18–23) and observes that the seed is not responsible for producing fruit. The right environment is required for the seed to grow. From this, Hardwick explores ways of how the church can create environments to ensure that people grow as believers with a particular focus on those with disabilities. The insights that Hardwick makes are incredibly profound and helpful.

The only difficulty is, the point of the parable was not how to create an environment where believers can grow. If this was the point, then Jesus failed to adhere to his own lesson as only a very few grew in their faith in him. Rather, the point of the parable is to explain why Jesus speaks in parables (v. 10). Jesus' ministry is compared to Isaiah's where, essentially, he was preparing God's people for judgement (vv. 14–15). Jesus' ministry exposes people's different preoccupations that inform the way they

respond to him. Unfortunately, this is overlooked by Hardwick.

Another difficulty is Hardwick's reading of Paul. Like many who write in the field of disability and theology, Hardwick sees Paul as having a disability. While this is possible, such readings are, at best, speculative. Little doubt, Paul experienced ailments. However, to say Paul's life experience was comparable to people with disabilities today is simply to read too much into the text.

Hardwick's book offers a lot of profound insights for including people with disabilities into the life of the church. For this reason, it has value for developing more inclusive ministry. However, the reader needs to be wary of his interpretation of the Bible.

--

Rev. Jason Forbes is the Jericho Road Disability Advocate.

Jason is posting a series of weekly Disability Inclusion Tips on Facebook. So if you're looking for practical ways that you and your church can enable greater inclusion for people with disabilities, then head over to Jason's page <https://www.facebook.com/disabilityadvocate.nsw>

Jason is available to visit churches, run seminars and hold workshops. Get in touch at jforbes.disabilityadvocate@jerichoroad.org.au and find out how disability advocacy services can support your church's ministries.

CONTINUED FROM P.18

GOD AGAINST THE IDOLS

Once we get hold of that truth, the appropriate response is to give Him glory (Rev.4:11). Augustine once listed all the things which God gives to His people, and drew the right lesson: 'God, then, has given you all these things. Love Him who made them.'

God is the judge, the idols and their worshippers are judged

Because God is the creator, He is also the judge. No wonder the idols and the stars are so popular - they do not judge anybody (Isa.47:13). Only the God who created can judge, and only the God who judges can forgive and save.

The idols can do nothing; they themselves are under judgment.

God is true and knowable; the idols are false and imaginary

God is true (10:10): the idols are false (10:14). God's very nature is truth; the very nature of the idols is falsehood. The idol is simply not what it is claimed to be - it is not God.

You have heard people say: 'I am simply not interested in religion.' Nobody would say: 'I am not interested in my health in the future.' But they in effect say: 'I am not interested whether

I suffer forever in hell or enjoy God forever in heaven.' The point is: 'Is there a God who is true, and who has made Himself known, or not?' The first reason for believing in the God of the Bible is that He is true.

What have the idols revealed? Anything you like! What do the stars reveal? Anything you like! The true God, however, has revealed Himself in the Bible and in His eternal Son. He can be known; He is knowable. This has certain consequences. People who had been worshipping idols repudiated those idols when they came to know the true God (see 2 Kings 23:4-7, 11-15; Acts 19:18-20). We are inherently religious; we will believe in something - in idols, statues, crucifixes, horoscopes, superstitions, séances, reincarnation, the Olympic movement, in the God of liberal theology, anything but the God of the Bible.

At the end of all this, Jeremiah was in trouble with the Anti-Discrimination Board because he had vilified other religions. But the issue is: Who is the true God? The New Testament says that He is the God who has revealed Himself fully in Jesus Christ (Col.2:9). In the film Martin Luther, the director of the Augustinian monastery, Johann Staupitz, asks the Reformer: 'If you take away the amulets, and the beads ... the rosary and the crucifix, what will you put in their place?' Luther replies: 'Christ.' To that, we can only say 'Amen.'

CONTINUED FROM P.16

COMPLEMENTARY, NOT COMPLIMENTARY MINISTRY

In the same vein, when we honor the men who have been appointed into positions of headship and leadership, the whole church rejoices and receives the honor.

Our thoughtful practice of complementarianism should neither stroke the male ego or wave the

feminist flag. There is no place in the Church for promoting one gender as superior to, or less than, the other. We are not in the business of complimentary ministry, elevating either men or women because they have earned our praise.

Rather than being complimentary and appealing to flatter either of the two genders, our goal should be to live out the beautiful symphony he has composed: men and women (of every generation, tribe and culture) united in beautiful harmony as His body, for the glory of His name.

GOD AGAINST THE IDOLS

JEREMIAH 10:1-16

H

ere is a scathing and satirical attack on idols and an exaltation of the true God. The house of Israel is told not to learn the way of the Gentiles or the nations (10:2). The Gentiles

trusted in idols, in wood decorated with silver and gold. Not only that but they were terrified at the signs in heaven.

People take this seriously today. In California a booklet has even appeared with the title: Your dog's astrological horoscope. When people turn from the true God, other influences rush in to fill the vacuum.

But there is a great gulf between the God of the Bible on the one hand and the idols, including the stars, on the other. Calvin comments on 'how greatly our nature inclines toward idolatry'.

We ought not to feel smug at this attack on idols which may not mean much to us. An idol is anything that takes the place of God. It can be a car, a sport, a house, a person, even a ministry (see Col.3:5).

God is full of power, the idols are powerless

Idolatry is futile; the idols are a delusion. If the nails are pulled out, the god will topple over (10:3-5). The ESV, NASB, and NIV all speak of an idol like a scarecrow in a cucumber patch or a melon patch. Scarecrows are meant to scare crows. That is all they can do.

An idol is a ridiculous figure - it has no voice, no mobility, no ability to do either evil or good. It will pass away in the judgment (10:15). The Lord Jehovah is far, far different; He can do whatever He wants (10:6-7; Ps. 135:5-7).

Those who read the stars, avoid going out on Friday 13th, are afraid of black cats, touch wood, and all the rest of it, are reverencing



something that is useless. Genesis 1 says that God created the sun, moon and stars. Psalm 19 says that 'The heavens declare the glory of God.'

They are grandiose, but they point to someone greater. The creation points to an all-powerful creator. People have an exalted view of the stars if they have a low view of the Lord.

The God of the Bible is the high and holy one who inhabits eternity, whose throne is in heaven and whose footstool is the earth, and who will not share His glory with another.

The Lord is the creator, the idols are created

Idols are all done up in much finery, but they are still a work of man (10:3-4, 9). God, however, is not like that; He created all things and needs nothing (Acts 17:29). God created man, as well as the wood, gold and silver that man refashioned into an idol (Jer.10:11-12).

Not only that but He sustains and controls the world (10:13). He sends the rain, the sunshine, even the earthquakes and the tidal waves (10:16). He made all things out of nothing.

It was not that a lightning bolt hit some hydrogen molecules billions of years ago, and so developed a primitive cell which later developed into fungus, then a fish, a frog, a lizard, a bird, a mouse, a dog, a horse, a monkey, then a Darwinist. None of that sounds very likely.

God is the everlasting King (10:10), whereas the idols and the stars all have a beginning and an end.

CONTINUED ON P.18