

# the pulse

A young boy with dark hair and a wide smile is lying back in a black stroller. He is wearing a white neck brace and a pink t-shirt. A small dog is sitting in the stroller with him. The background is a window decorated with many red heart-shaped stickers. The title 'the pulse' is written in large blue letters across the top, with 'PRESBYTERIAN' written vertically in smaller blue letters between the words.

## Allowah's ask: Our unique hospital for kids needs your help

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**MEET OUR 2021 MODERATOR:**  
ELDER ADRIAN LAMROCK IS READY FOR HIS NEW ROLE

**IS THE BIBLE YOUR GURU'S CAT?**  
ANDREW CAMPBELL'S FINAL MODERATORIAL COLUMN

**PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH:**  
THE VALUE OF CAMPS FOR OUR KIDS

**MEET OUR MISSIONARIES:**  
FROM FRANCE TO COVID-STRICKEN INDIA, DOING GOD'S WORK

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COVER: OUR COVER: Allowah Presbyterian Children's Hospital is a special place for children with severe disabilities, but its future is in doubt due to financial constraints exacerbated by COVID-19. Jericho Road is asking our churches and people to help.

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

KAREN FORMAN

**The Pulse team was feeling excited. Life was looking like it was returning to normal as COVID-19 infections decreased around NSW and the ACT and our churches started meeting again in their buildings.**

After more than a year of publishing our denominational magazine solely online, rather than printing 10,000 glossy copies and mailing them out to all of our churches, aged care homes, hospitals, schools and our theological college (because people were in lockdown and not attending), we were starting to think about printing again.

Although our email list tells us that The Pulse is read online, our people have been calling for a printed version again. Many readers don't have access to the internet, or just prefer reading a printed magazine that they can pick up and put down as time permits.

Now, though, it feels that just as we had made some plans, the virus has reared its head again resulting in lockdowns in Sydney, the Central Coast, Wollongong and even the Gold Coast. As the Pulse went to press (proverbially – actually, as it was published online), we were all facing major uncertainty again – and that's not exclusive to the Pulse team.

Our General Manager and

Moderator have been busy keeping everyone updated with new Public Health Orders which have resulted in churches being closed in the locked down regions and compulsory masks and banning of singing in regional areas.

We are all disappointed. We are all anxious. We are all wondering what the future looks like.

Pope St. John Paul II once said: "We are Easter people". That means that as Christians, we focus on hope (of the Resurrection) even while suffering the pain of the Crucifixion. Without Good Friday, we don't have an Easter Sunday. Can this be applied to the pandemic? Without the pandemic, would we have discovered how far we could reach people with the Good News through Zoom? How we can minister differently and even more creatively?

We hope to return to printing the Presbyterian Pulse as early as the August edition.

"In every circumstance and in all things, I have learned the secret of being well fed and of going hungry, of living in abundance and of being in need. I have the strength for everything through him who empowers me."

Philippians 4:12-13

# Jericho Road reaches out to save Allowah Hospital



**Jericho Road tries to reach out with the love of God to people who without its particular support would be isolated. It aims to fill the gaps, to see the unseen and to give voice to the unheard.**

One of the ways it does this is through the Allowah Presbyterian Children's Hospital in Sydney's Dundas. CEO Elizabeth McClean says Allowah is a ministry that belongs to all the Presbyterian Churches across NSW - and one way churches get to show the people of Australia that they believe all people are made in the image of God.

Now Jericho Road needs help to keep Allowah afloat. COVID-19 is hurting Allowah badly. JobKeeper meant that the 2020 financial result was about breakeven, but the effects of COVID-19 are continuing into 2021 and JobKeeper has ceased.

"We know that people living with disabilities are made in the image of God and have infinite value, and we strive to show them that every day

at Allowah," Liz says. "The children we care for are often "unseen" and their families come to us so tired of being "unheard" in their journey to find the help they need.

"At Allowah, we support and care for about 120 families at present. For some this means living at Allowah for long periods of time. For others it means coming to our school holiday programs.

"For others it means having a therapist visit them at home. But they have one thing in common. The challenges they face in receiving care that suits their needs in our hospital and disability systems are very real. This is not the fault of the hospitals or other disability providers – these kids have complex needs and make up just a small percentage of children with disabilities.

"That's why we care for them – they are the ones that are at risk of falling through the gap.

"We help these families in every way we can."

Liz says Jericho Road does not have the funds to keep Allowah

open for many more years if the losses continue. But the Jericho Road team is committed to keeping this vital ministry alive. So, how does it do that?

It is restarting programs that were closed due to COVID-19, working on growing revenue and changing its services and all the good things you do to reach a breakeven point and we will continue to do that.

It has also approached the government to ask for support for the vital service that Allowah provides.

Liz says the reality is that it is an expensive ministry and the gap in funding is going to be hard to close. "We can't burden parents with fees they cannot afford and we can't reduce the number of staff it takes to care for these children. We need help. This year we are hoping to raise funds for Allowah to make sure that these children don't fall through the gap.

"We are always uncomfortable asking for money, but are compelled to do so during this difficult time."

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# The Guru's Cat

REV ANDREW CAMPBELL



**This is the final regular column from Andrew Campbell in his tenure as Moderator of the PCNSW/ACT for 2020-21. The Pulse thanks him for a year of insightful, Biblical and often entertaining articles – more than what other Moderators have had to write, as we published online monthly during COVID-19!**

There was a temple in India with a wise and beloved guru who would sit as gurus do, and teach his followers. And, usually, with his cat on his lap. He became well known, the guru and his cat.

Well, time passed and the guru died. And the cat would come and sit where the guru used to sit. And the guru's followers, out of love for their late guru, cared for the cat.

More time passed. And the cat died. And the guru's followers decided that they'd get another cat to remind them of their beloved guru. Another guru's cat.

Still more time passed. A long time. And there was a succession of cats. Eventually, even the guru was forgotten. But the temple authorities always had a cat in the temple.

Until one day someone asked, 'why do we have a cat in the temple?' And no one could answer. It was there because, well, a cat had to be there, a cat has always been there, though everyone had forgotten the reason.

I first heard the story about the Guru's Cat from Rev Dr Peter Cameron in 1992. He said that the Bible is like the guru's cat. It's there. And we have it in our churches. But it doesn't mean anything anymore. We don't need it. Don't argue about what the Bible says about homosexuality or women ministers, and things like that. What the Bible says is irrelevant. It's nice to have around. Comforting perhaps. A cute tradition.

But meaningless.

Now, for telling that story and applying it to the Bible, Peter Cameron was charged with heresy by the NSW Assembly and rightly removed as a minister.

But I'm sure that that's the case in many Christian churches today. Sure, the Bible is always there in one form or another. But really what's going on are churchy ceremonies. Smells and bells. There are lots of symbols and traditions.

Or you go into another church and there's a wonderful band, a light show and pretty girl singers. There's a brilliant preacher, and it's all very engaging and entertaining, but the Bible isn't read or explained. It's there, but like the Guru's Cat.

Or, go to another church where it's all about indigenous justice and getting out into the world, and climate change. And the Bible, well, it doesn't matter what it actually says. The Bible is there, mind you, but it's not where the action is. The Bible is like the Guru's Cat. Nice and comforting to have around. But ignored.

And I'm sure that's the case in many 'Christian' homes. The Bible is there, of course. On the shelf. Gathering dust. But it's hardly opened. It's the TV and the Internet. It is Netflix that rules.

And, perhaps, that's true of your life. Yes, you have a Bible or twelve, and it's there, of course, but well, you're so busy and so tired after a day's work. It's easier to blob with social media and the idiot box.

Perhaps you're treating God's Word more like Rev Dr Peter Cameron's Guru's Cat than you think!



## Facebook serves a message of hope for Warren PC

### God's hand certainly went before Warren Presbyterian Church in its latest project.

Back when the church went online via Facebook, it was soon noted by the community that the wonderful message of HOPE in Jesus was wrapped in a package that resonated with local citizens.

With its larrikin style humour and local content, this has the result of a viewing audience way beyond church attendees.

And so, Praise God, His Word continues to go out in this online platform even as COVID-19 restrictions have eased.

As well as the Bible being read and explained, the Warren PC Facebook page features episodes of Heroes of the Faith.

It was thought to make these "Heroes" stories available to the community viewers with the actual books and DVDs- along with Bibles and reflective books about Easter.

And so, a Pop-Up Easter Shop was opened for the week before Easter, in an empty shop in the main street of Warren.

The church's patronage was supported by the community with people "popping" in for a look.

Not many sales were made, but their presence was welcomed, and .... yes, they will do this again next year!

In the meantime, Father's Day looms and so does Christmas... no stopping Warren PC from popping up now!

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## Jericho Road reaches out to save Allowah Hospital

Allowah has one generous donor who has said that for every dollar donated in June he will match that donation dollar for dollar.

If Pulse readers (and others) make a donation to Allowah (which operates on a charitable basis and all donations over \$2 are tax deductible), the donor will match them.

You can [click here](#) for more information and [click](#)

[here](#) to watch a short video.

Liz has encouraged PCNSW/ACT churches to play the video at church services and share it with their church families.

"And please pray for Allowah – for the staff, the children and their families, that we would be able to continue to see and hear them, and show them God's love. We are sure that if it is God's will then Allowah will continue on for many years to come."

# Hear from two apprentices: My first year and life after METRO

## First Year of METRO: Tara Prince



I'm doing a part time METRO Women's ministry apprenticeship at New Life Presbyterian Church Gungahlin in Canberra.

I'm married and have two primary aged kids and so doing a full time METRO apprenticeship wasn't the best option for me. As I was exploring METRO, I discovered that there existed METRO 'Ministry Training for Women' apprenticeships.

These are part time, in school hours and school terms, and include two days of ministry in addition to Sundays and one day of study.

My ministry includes one-to-one women's discipleship and giving opportunities for girls and women of different ages to get to know each other more and encourage each other in their faith.

The study element includes doing the 'Academic Studies in Theology Certificate' (ASTC) as well as the option of doing the Christ College 'Ministry Training for Women' (MTW) course.

I've found studying Old Testament as part of my ASTC this semester, has been enormously helpful in growing my knowledge of the bigger picture of the Old Testament.

Also, being trained in women's ministry through Christ College MTW, gives me the opportunity to learn alongside other women across Australia, and has been greatly encouraging and enormously helpful in doing hands on women's discipleship at my church.

I'd encourage women who are thinking about getting involved in ministry to consider doing a METRO MTW apprenticeship.

## Life After METRO: Neil Auranaune



Since completing my METRO apprenticeship in 2019/2020 at Albury Presbyterian Churches, I have gone on to work for a Christian organization called Focus Military Ministry. Focus does (as the name suggests) ministry to the military.

Our aim at Focus is that every new person joining the ADF should have a chance to hear about Jesus. We do this by running Bible discussion groups (on the defense base), meeting up with trainees one to one to read the bible and we help them to connect in with a local church.

We currently have the ministry running at ADFA in Canberra, Albury/Wodonga and Cerberus and have plans for Wagga and Sale in the near future.

Although my METRO apprenticeship revolved a lot around kids' ministry, the time that I got to spend leading growth groups and meeting up with people one-to-one to read the Bible really helped me to be more confident in my current ministry position.

Without doing my METRO apprenticeship I wouldn't have been offered the position I now currently have. And through getting this position I have thankfully been able to stay local (Albury) and keep connected with Albury Presbyterian Churches.

**Applications for METRO Sponsorship in 2022 are available on [metro.edu.au](http://metro.edu.au) and close on October 30, 2021**

# From a Practising Hindu to a servant of Christ

BY DINESH

**Growing up in a middle-class conservative, Gujarati Hindu family I had never heard of Jesus Christ or Christianity.**

My first encounter with Christianity as a teenager was through Bollywood movies which showed Catholic churches with Jesus on the cross.

God in His grace sent a friend who shared the gospel with me. I quickly learnt that God knew what was going on in my life and spoke to me through His Word. No longer did I make offerings to please the Hindu gods. I was set free from paying off my karma.

After completing an accounting degree in Australia, I was praying and seeking God's will for my life. I was not enjoying my work and did not feel that it was my calling.

God took the initiative and brought in Rev Ewen Brown, minister at Bexley Presbyterian church who helped and guided me.

One day he said, "Young man, why don't you do a short talk on Sunday and we'll see how you go." This was a complete shock. I knew I was shy and introverted and for me to stand in front of people and even speak for a minute would be like a lifetime of torture. He set the passage – Matthew 10:32-33 and gave me a few weeks to prepare and said whenever you are ready let me know.

After spending a few weeks praying, reflecting and preparing the passage, I said yes. Just a day before I was to preach, Mr Brown called me to see how I was going. I was very nervous as I knew little about the Bible and had no theological training.

I said to him, "You are taking a huge risk by giving me the opportunity to preach, what if I



say something wrong, you don't know what I might say from the pulpit."

I still remember his exact words and every time I preach, I am reminded of those words, "Young man, every word you speak from the pulpit you will be accountable to the Lord and not me." Those words were a warning, and I understood the seriousness of it.

I was soon placed on the church roster for preaching, leading and other activities. After a year I was convinced that I was called to serve and to choose this as my vocation. Mr. Brown encouraged me to enrol at Christ College to equip myself.

After a semester at college due to family pressure and personal struggles I stopped studying. I still continued to serve at the local church.

After nearly six years and during a sermon preached by the late Warren Hicks at Camden Presbyterian Church on Isaiah 6 and Jeremiah 1, God brought a deep conviction into my heart, a burden that God had called me to serve Him and His people.

I could sense the prompting of the Spirit, as if God were telling me, "Will you go for us? There were tears in my eyes and I silently said to myself, "here I am Lord, please send me".

My wife sitting next to me turned and saw the tears in my eyes and nodded. She could sense that something happened to me spiritually during that sermon.

During this time, I was also part of an Indian ministry in Sydney. Alex Christian who was leading the group encouraged me to pursue studies at Theological College.

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# Adrian Lamrock: Our new Moderator

I want to visit as many churches, aged care facilities and schools as possible

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**Adrian Lamrock has been elected Moderator for the 156th General Assembly. Adrian and his wife Kerrie attend Grace Presbyterian Church at Warabrook, where he is an elder.**

The Pulse asked him to answer a few questions so we could get to know him and learn about his plans, hopes and prayers for his Moderatorship for the coming year.

## **How did you become a Christian?**

I had the huge privilege of growing up under Christian parents who took our whole family to church – an Anglican church in the Sydney diocese – and made sure that I regularly attended Sunday School where I was taught by Godly and committed teachers. At the age of 12 I attended a Crusader camp and it was made very clear that, although I knew a bit about Jesus, I had never made a commitment to Him personally. So, only

understanding that I could never make God's approval on my own and that Jesus made it possible, I made a commitment to Him. Since then, despite my ups and downs, God has remained utterly and undeniably faithful to me and has held on to me.

## **How did you become involved in the Presbyterian Church of NSW?**

As I said, I grew up a "Sydney Anglican" and sat under the

teaching of some very good and Godly ministers. In 1989 there was a Westminster PC plant – the only church in our suburb - which was doing good things for children and working hard at evangelism, so my wife and I moved into a strange world of Presbyterian government because we wanted to be part of the strong evangelism in our suburb. When I applied for, and was given, the job of Principal at The Scots School Bathurst we became members of the congregation at the then St Stephens Bathurst under the ministry of the late Stuart Clements and later Tim Abbey. From there, I became an elder in about 2001, was later nominated to attend my first Assembly, which I did as a member in about 2002.

At the end of 2003 we moved to Newcastle and joined the former St Phillips East Newcastle where John Macintyre was working to “overplant” the church there. Since then, I have been an elder at Newcastle East (now Grace PC), and have been Session Clerk there as well as Presbytery Clerk – and Moderator – for the Presbytery of the Hunter, a member of Assembly, Chairman of Scots Bathurst and also the former Muswellbrook Christian School. Oh, and I’m also the Session Clerk for the Interim Session of the Upper Hunter. These roles have brought considerable blessing and growth to me and I’m glad I can type quickly!

### **Where are you from?**

I grew up proudly “western suburbs” when it was almost the country. In fact, Emu Plains, where I grew up and later lived with my family, was, and still is, officially outside the Sydney metropolitan area.

### **And your family?**

Kerrie and I have been married for 42 years and have three adult daughters, all of whom live near us in the Newcastle area. Two of our girls are married and they, together with their husbands, have given us six grandchildren, currently aged between ten and four. They are a great joy to us and keep us busy.

### **Your career?**

For the most part of four decades, I was involved in schools, both government and independent, single-sex and co-educational, day and boarding. I also spent a number of years as Executive

Director of Crusaders, which was all about taking the Gospel to young people. I believe firmly in the role of Christian schools. I’d love to see more Presbyterian schools but that could be a while away!

### **How did you come to be elected Moderator?**

I still ask myself this. David Burke, who, incidentally, was part of the interview panel which gave me the job of Principal at Scots Bathurst, asked me to put my name forward. I did, not expecting to be anything more than a name to help fill the nominations, and here I am. I’ll talk to David about this at some stage in the future!

### **What do you hope to achieve in your year as Moderator?**

I’d like to visit as many pastoral charges and home mission stations as I can, to encourage ministers, elders and congregations to bear witness to Jesus, to dig into their Bibles and to encourage each other to serve Jesus and each other. I also hope to visit all our schools, aged care facilities and other agencies and such committees as may invite me. I have much to learn and look forward to doing so.

**It would be wonderful if people across the State could pray for Kerrie and me as we take up this task. Your prayers and encouragement are greatly valued. We look forward to meeting many, many of you.**

## Planting a church in France: étonnante!

**Colin and Catherine Puffett with their young children Julien and Simone work with CMS church planting in France and are Partner Agency missionaries with APWM. Their home church is Scots Kirk Hamilton NSW. Catherine writes for The Pulse on life in France . . .**

France is an amazing place to live. I have first-hand experience of delicious warm baguettes, picturesque castles in the middle of town, and excellent high-speed trains. I even have first-hand experience of the emergency department in our local hospital, and the amazing care after the birth of a baby here. France is a great place to live, by secular standards.

What France is missing is easy access to flourishing, evangelical churches. That is why my family is here, in a large city of 600,000 people. It is why Colin and I spent a year in intense language study. It is why the Union of Evangelical Churches of France (CNEF) has made its vision the planting of new churches the centre of an ambitious vision: one church for every 10,000 people! It is a vision to triple the number of churches in France so that everyone might get the opportunity to be confronted by Christ.

This is why APWM and our agency the Church Mission Society send people to France, to reach those people who haven't heard the Good News.

We have been working towards planting a new church since September 2020, but when churches are moved online for lockdown, when meetings can't take place physically, when leaving your house has a one kilometre limit and even the coffee date with a friend is impossible, it's been hard.

My faith is typically expressed in everyday evangelism. In open sharing of my life, in hospitality, and the witness to God's care, action and transformation of how I live and why I hope.

COVID-19 makes this open sharing of life different. No more invitations into my home. No more exchange during school drop offs. No more casual chats in coffee shops or regular meet ups at the park. People are more scared of contact, and paradoxically desperate for relationship.

Some people have amazing stories of people coming to faith and joining church communities for the first time now that they are online. I don't.

I haven't seen big growth in my relationships outside the church. What I have seen has been a rethinking of church, and a pruning season.

Things are stripped back like a grapevine being readied for a bumper harvest the next year. Consolidation is probably the word that most speaks to me out of these times. While there are fewer new relationships, the existing ones have often matured or gone deeper. I'm reminded that Jesus asks us to make disciples and to bear fruit, but that this comes from abiding in Him.

*Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me (John 15:4).* And this fruit might not just be new disciples, but rather, maturing disciples.

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## In the midst of the storm

**Many APWM missionaries are serving in countries hit hard by COVID-19. They are restricted as second waves of the virus put them and their ministries in lockdown again. One, who needs to be anonymous for safety reasons, writes for The Pulse, 'in the midst of the storm'.**

I grew up in the outskirts of Sydney. Our home was surrounded by bush land. I remember noticing the trees dancing beyond our large glass doors and watching with awe and delight. Evening news broadcasts revealed that what I had witnessed with awe and in safety had, in fact, been the edge of a devastating and destructive storm.



In much the same way, I am watching from relative safety the devastation and destruction of India's second, tsunami-like wave of COVID-19. The devastation and destruction is very real, and for many, that is all they will be able to see and feel at the moment.

Mahima is caught in the storm. When her mother arrived at the hospital she was struggling to breathe. A chest x-ray indicated COVID-19. Her prognosis was not good. With oxygen treatment, her saturation levels did improve but on the fifth day, the doctors also confirmed she had multidrug resistant tuberculosis. She was moved to palliative care. Without oxygen treatment, her life slipped away quickly.

What a huge impact for Mahima. Her father died many years ago so her mother's death brought great sadness and with it, great uncertainty for this sixteen-year-old. In a country where

education is only compulsory until the age of 14, a major concern for her is whether she will be able to continue her studies.

Indeed, the pandemic has had a devastating impact on the education of many in India. With schools closed to younger students for most of the last year, many children will be starting school a year or two later than they would have otherwise.

For many more, their foundation years have been terribly disrupted.

For those 13-14 continuing their education beyond the compulsory years, they have been disengaged from schooling for the past year.

Some will have started working to help their families survive, particularly if their family's usual income supply is disrupted.

In such cases, it is unlikely that they will continue to pursue their education. For those due to graduate from high school and eager to commence their tertiary studies, exams are delayed and like last year, the whole admission process will be too.

The uncertainty may see many opt for quick and easy, short-term income and ultimately forgo studies that would have given them better employment and financial prospects in the future.

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Presbyterian Youth

# The value of camps for youth ministry

DAVE PHILLIPS

**Sometimes, it helps to be reminded that you're part of something bigger than yourself.**

It's one of the reasons that Kent Cheney has, for the past six years, packed a suitcase with cold-weather clothes and a car full of high school students to spend a weekend at KYCK — along with thousands of others.

The youth minister at Coffs Harbour's Harbourside Presbyterian Church brought 40 high schoolers and leaders from the church's youth group to the conference earlier this year. The group is made of young people aged between 11 and 18 years old, up to 30 per cent of whom have no other connections to church beside the Friday night youth group.

The group's attendance at the Christian youth conference has increased over the last few years, Kent says, as more youth see how valuable the weekend is.

So, when they made the six-hour drive to the Katoomba Conference Centre, they knew it would be worth it. The weekend focused on the Old Testament book of Joshua, with a call for young people to be similarly strong and courageous in growing in, and living out, their faith.

"The youth really connected with parts of the message, which is good," Kent says. One teen, who hadn't been to church in a few years, came to the conference after re-visiting the youth group earlier this year, and decided to make a recommitment to Jesus on the camp.

"He really seemed to understand different things, which was cool," Kent says. "And he was keen to try to make youth regularly." Seven others also chose to commit to the Lordship of Jesus over their life, at least two for the first time.

When they weren't in the main sessions, the youth group spent time exploring the Blue Mountains and bonding as a group.

"We went on a few different walks, out to the Three Sisters, that sort of thing," Kent says. At the same time, leaders were able to have intentional conversations with youth about the talks and faith. "We had a lot of different downtimes that had good conversations and [we were] just enjoying creation and each other's company, which was a lot of fun."

Kent won't forget a scene he witnessed one evening: seeing his youth sitting "in the pitch dark and freezing cold" singing along to the worship songs that were sung throughout the conference. "It was really cool seeing a bunch of them singing, unorganised, singing out praises to God," Kent recalls.

There's a reason Kent is so passionate about getting his youth along to KYCK each year: in his experience, such youth camps are often crucial moments in a young person's faith journey.

"Something like 80 per cent of people decide to follow Jesus before they're 18," Kent explains. "So, I think that age is really critical. When it's a conference with a few thousand other young people, I think [the camps] can really help someone's faith, because this is a sign that, not just my local youth group that believe this, but there are thousands of people who believe this."

"You see a little glimpse of heaven in that sense. Lots of people wanting to understand God's word and sing praise to him."

Being connected to one another and exploring God's word "is not just a conference experience, but a part of our lives," says Kent.

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## FROM STUDENT TO TEACHER: AMELIA'S BACK IN THE CLASSROOM

**Amelia Ray only finished school last year, but she's already back in the classroom teaching SRE.**

Amelia heard a presentation at her church, Harbourside in Coffs Harbour, about the need for more SRE teachers for the local primary school, and she was immediately struck by the conviction that this was something she should do.

"I went to a public school and remember having Scripture classes. It was always fun," she recalls.

Though Amelia comes from a Christian family, she recognises that parents who don't go to church also choose SRE. SRE can help all kids ask questions about God.

After having some conversations with her pastor and the SRE coordinator, Amelia began her online training.

She says of this training, "I normally prefer doing things face to face, I'm a visual learner so I like to see people doing things. But the online training was good. There were photos and videos and it was all easy to understand."

Then it was into the classroom to shadow another teacher for a few weeks, and get some hands-on experience. And finally, Amelia was ready to take on her own class of Year One.



So far, she's loving it. The kids are engaged and happy to see her each week. They ask questions, they have fun together and they find all the Bible stories exciting.

There are a few kids from Christian families in Amelia's class. These kids like to tell her what they've been learning at church or show her what they've read in the Bible recently, which brings Amelia great joy.

But for the rest of the children, the Bible is completely new and they have lots of questions about God.

In a recent lesson, Amelia was teaching the kids about the Lord's Prayer. She was worried at first that the kids wouldn't be interested in this topic, but was delighted to discover that all of them wanted to pray the prayer with her at the end of class, and they asked questions about the meaning of each line.

"One kid asked about the line, 'give us this day our daily bread', 'Oh, so is God going to send us hamburgers from the sky?' So, we got to talk about what it means to ask God for food and how he takes care of us," Amelia says.

This is the power of SRE – kids are given an opportunity during the school day to dig deeply into who God is, and what it means to have a relationship with Him.

**Continued on p.20**

## Care for families in the wake of the fires



**When the fires ripped through the NSW South Coast over the summer of 2019 – 2020, hundreds of families were left homeless, their property and possessions destroyed.**

Members of the Presbyterian Churches in Moruya, Tuross Heads and Narooma joined together to help their community.

Thanks to the generous donations given to Jericho Road in the bushfire appeal, the team have been able to reach out with practical support to over 200 families who lost their homes and possessions in the fires.

The team have also been distributing care packs and donations from organisations such as Hello Fresh, Big W and Harvey Norman.

This outreach has opened many doors for the



team to pray, care and show the love of Jesus to people outside of the church.

On May 15, the Jericho Road Partner Ministries team hosted an online prayer event. Members of the South Coast team were interviewed, sharing their stories of the hope and the connections that have come about, through a very challenging time in their community.

It is 18 months on and the need continues. Only two of the 200 families they care for have been able to rebuild - the rest are living in pods, caravans and sheds.

Many are families with young children and many are isolated, living far from their local town.

The team hasn't stopped caring for their community, reaching out to the isolated and helping families prepare for a second winter in temporary housing.



Thanks to donations given in the recent Jericho Road South Coast Appeal, the team will be distributing doonas, blankets, beanies and scarves to those families. Please pray for the volunteers as they seek to make Jesus known in their community.

#### **South Coast Volunteers' Prayer Points.**

- Pray for the families who have been affected by the bushfires. The discouraging nature of the long haul to recovery is leading to depression and mental health issues.
- Pray that people will continue to reach out and ask for prayer and help.
- Pray that the people will find hope – the eternal hope that is in Jesus.
- Sustained energy for volunteers to keep going 18 months on.

- That God will provide helpful resources so that they don't have to visit empty handed.
- That they can continue to model Jesus to the people they are serving.
- Wisdom for the team to prioritise well and focus their efforts where there is greatest need.
- Pray for ongoing positive relationships with the local council, RFS and SES and continued support from organisations.
- That the team can be discerning and compassionate through the long recovery process.

Stay up-to-date with all that's happening at Jericho Road by subscribing to the Newsletter at [www.Jerichoroad.org.au/pray/](http://www.Jerichoroad.org.au/pray/) or follow-on Facebook at [www.Facebook.com/presbyterianjerichoroad](https://www.Facebook.com/presbyterianjerichoroad)



## Timor Leste and India: Thank You!



Timor Leste Pastors

On of the privileges of serving with APWM is seeing God's work in His people, around the world.

A few months ago the Moderator-General, Rev Dr Peter Barnes, launched an Appeal following the devastating flooding caused in Timor Leste by Cyclone Seroja. It was stunning to see \$61,000 donated.

Our brothers and sisters in our Partner Church, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Timor Leste, have told us of their gratitude to God for such a response. They also feel very humble to receive such a practical outpouring of love.

Timor Leste's immediate needs for food, shelter and clothing, were met by emergency responses by international aid agencies and the East Timorese Government.

Your gifts are now being used to:

- Carry out repairs to church buildings and making the necessary upgrades in anticipation of future devastating weather events;
- Repair damaged homes and assisting those whose homes were destroyed;
- Assist students whose study materials were destroyed in the Cyclone, making study very difficult;
- Assist churches who have suffered loss

of income because church members had to spend money replacing damaged possessions or repairing homes, which in turn meant they had less to contribute to an already small church budget.

To carry out this program in a responsible manner will take some months.

Conscious that the Appeal for Timor Leste was still open, another Appeal was launched as the scale of the COVID devastation in India became apparent.

We contacted our Partner Church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of India and asked for an assessment of their needs. The response told us that very few congregations were untouched. Our Indian brothers and sisters are very grateful for the \$35,000 received in donations.

Your gifts are now being used to:

- Pay medical bills including COVID tests;
- Assist families who have lost income following the death of a breadwinner;
- Provide some assistance to day labourers who have lost their jobs;
- Assist Churches whose income has undergone a sharp decline in income because of COVID.

On behalf of our brothers and sisters, thank you for your generosity.





## Indigenous Ministry Sunday 11th July, 2021

The last 12 months have witnessed a growing awareness of the issues confronting Indigenous Australians in the 21st century. How can we respond as followers of the Lord Jesus?

Rick Manton says “We can't afford to sit on the sidelines while Aboriginal people are dying without Christ.” Prayer is essential. The problems faced by our Indigenous neighbours can only find their ultimate solution in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ and His gospel.

APWM asks that all churches set aside Sunday 11th July as ‘Indigenous Ministry Sunday’. We ask that on that day you pray for our Indigenous people that:

1. God would continue to raise up and develop leaders for the Indigenous Church and that they would be well trained for the challenges they face.
2. That the Word of God would remain central in the life of the Indigenous Church.
3. That God would send His Holy Spirit and that many young Indigenous people would come to

a genuine relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. That God would raise up workers for His harvest — Indigenous and Non-Indigenous.
5. That through the gospel there would be true reconciliation between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians.

You can find a video to show in church on Indigenous Ministry Sunday at APWM's Vimeo page: <https://vimeo.com/563544012>

Thank you for your partnership.



Mount Magnet Presbyterian Church, Western Australia



## Presbyterian Youth: Japan 2022

In November/December 2019, NSW Presbyterian Youth ran its first study and vision trip to Japan. Everyone had a great time and learned a great deal about what life is like for Japanese Christians.

PY is planning another such trip in November/December 2022 to Osaka and Tokyo, COVID safety permitting. It will be a great opportunity to meet missionaries, learn about gospel opportunities and barriers as well as sampling Japanese culture.

If you, or someone you know in the 18-22 year old age bracket would be interested in attending or have questions then please contact David Bell — [bellfam@bigpond.net.au](mailto:bellfam@bigpond.net.au)



Osaka Presbyterian Church

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# New history on Middle East Christian Outreach

Middle East Christian Outreach and its predecessors had never had an overall history written so about 20 years ago, Minister Emeritus John Woods “thought it would be a good idea - as no one else did!”

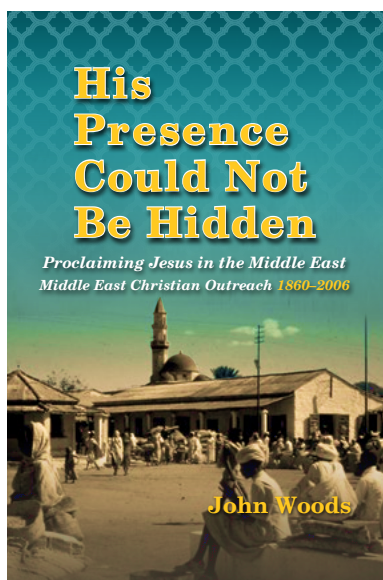
He started in 2015 and says a MECO veteran in South Australia on hearing this, said “I have been praying for someone to write this for the last 20 years”.

“This person then gave me liberal financial support to realise publication and distribution,” John says. “It took me two years and then Paul Cooper of Eider Books took over another two years to edit and print, a mammoth task, which he performed excellently.”

John describes the whole book as written against the background of Islam in the ME although the original beginning in what is now Lebanon was triggered by a massacre of people in 1860 belonging to one of the ancient ME churches.

“The book is about people, their vision, their dedication and their sacrifices,” he says.

“Indeed, there is a theme of dedication and sacrifice running through the book. Both arms of the mission were founded by women, their lives are of considerable interest. It is of interest also to see how the work began in a colonial world but has now changed to carry on in nation states, some not very stable; this evolution involved expulsion from Egypt and two civil wars one in Eritrea and the other in Lebanon.



“The main theme is captured by the quotation “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news”.

“Hopefully readers may have their interest in the progress of the gospel in the ME awakened or re-awakened.”

Titled His Presence Could Not Be Hidden - Proclaiming Jesus in the Middle East, Middle East Christian Outreach 1860-2006, John’s book is published by Eider Books, 2020, (400 pages).

“It is about people rather than organisations although there is background about Islam and the ancient Middle East churches,” he says. “People’s experiences are related, there is a theme of dedication and sacrifice running right through, at the same time ‘How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news.’

“These servants of God deserve recognition and appropriate appreciation. They came from the UK, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, USA and South Africa, a few from Europe. A chapter from Mike Parker and material from Elizabeth Kendal bring the account up to date. Countries involved include Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Eritrea, Sudan and to a lesser extent, Gulf states, Turkey and Yemen.”

His Presence Could Not Be Hidden – Proclaiming Jesus in the Middle East is available from Reformers Bookshop, Stanmore, Cost \$30.

**Continued from p.7**

## **From a Practising Hindu to a servant of Christ**

He said, “Why don’t we ask God in prayer if this is where He is calling you.” We prayed every Monday for a few months and finally I took the step of faith and resigned from my work and enrolled full time at Christ College.

Camden Presbyterian Church family encouraged, prayed and financially supported Charmie and me during the four years of study as did many other Christian friends. The Lord brought in other mentors, among them being Jim Elliot,

Frank Stootman and Steve Davis.

By God’s grace I finished the Bachelor of Theology degree in 2020.

God paved the way for the next step, church ministry. Presently I am working as Assistant Pastor at Gracepoint Church, Granville (Indian Special Interest Ministry). My focus is to reach out with the gospel of Jesus Christ to Indian subcontinental people.

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**Continued from p.10**

## **Planting a church in France: étonnante!**

At this very beginning planning stage of a new church plant, this hasn’t been a bad thing at all. One of the few exceptions to our isolation was the ability to get together in our work team regularly, to pray and to plan.

And the plans are so rich, and so exciting. Without this time of consolidation, of prayer and planning, we might try to run ahead in our own strength and enthusiasm, rather than first abiding in Him.

I hope you will pray with me for this new church

in France (Perspectives: Île de Nantes). For the pruning to be useful for the preparation of a huge harvest in the coming years.

For the people in our local network to mature and reach out to the friends and family around them, sharing the hope in Christ. We’d also love for you to pray for the church in France to mature more globally, and for the many other churches that are springing up in this season of deliberate planting, so that all in France might have the opportunity to respond to Christ.

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**Continued from p.11**

## **In the midst of the storm**

In such circumstances, it would be easy to be discouraged or even driven to despair but, in the same way that there is often spectacular beauty in the midst of storms, I have seen spectacular beauty in the midst of this devastation.

On her family’s request, my family had the joy and privilege of looking after Mahima for a week shortly after her mother died. We were able to obtain a few of her textbooks and she made a really good start on her studies. She also took the opportunity to read her Bible.

In that one week she re-read a number of the books we had previously studied together. Not only did she enjoy reading and notice that she was able to understand it, she said, “It seems like God is talking to me when I read it.”

I have also watched in awe as people from around the world have responded quickly and generously to the needs they are seeing on the news broadcasts.

They are watching on from a place of relative safety and comfort yet they are moved by compassion to do what they can.

From my vantage point, the response has felt like that of the global community to the Boxing Day tsunami of 2004.

The response has allowed hospitals to purchase specialised equipment such as oxygen generators, oxygen concentrators, and ventilators. This has allowed many people to receive treatment without first worrying about whether they can pay their bill at the end. This generosity is saving lives and is spectacularly beautiful.

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## The value of camps for youth ministry

It's one of the reasons Ignition Youth has created a discipleship hour before Friday night youth begins, with small group mentoring with older members of the church family, and workshops on the church's mission to 'connect, grow, serve and go.'

It's in the group's regular meeting that Kent is convinced God works over time to build people in the faith and draw others to him. But he's also grateful for the role camps and conferences play in energising and captivating Christian youth.

At the end of this year, many youth and their

leaders will pack their own suitcases – this time with warm weather clothes – and head again to a camp. They'll sing praises to God, learn from his word, and enjoy fun and fellowship in Christian community. Will you be joining us?

The annual Presbyterian Youth Summer Camp is taking place at Stanwell Tops from December 27 2021 to January 1 2022.

Expressions of interest are open now:

<https://pynsw-sc2021-eoi.paperform.co/>

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## From student to teacher: Amelia's back in the classroom

Sometimes there are challenges in managing a classroom or answering tricky questions, but Amelia feels her training prepared her well to respond to any issues and keep the class focused on the Bible.

"I'll sometimes not realise until later that I used a strategy that we talked about in training and then I'll think 'Oh, that's where I learned that!'"

Amelia's classes are full of acting out stories, songs and looking at pictures. She likes to get the kids up and moving so they have fun and find learning about the Bible engaging.

And when Amelia feels nervous, she doesn't worry too much, because "You don't need to be

afraid to look silly, because they like it! They love when I'm not just sitting there and reading a story – they like to have fun and make it creative."

To other prospective SRE teachers and supporters of SRE, Amelia wants us to remember: "This might be the only opportunity that the kids get to explore questions about God, if they don't go to church or their family doesn't go to church or they don't know anybody who knows God." Parents choosing SRE might be the only opportunity kids have to get their questions answered.

Praise God for SRE teachers like Amelia who are continuing to provide kids with this opportunity at school.



Continued from p.22

## Lonely because of the Word

Ever felt so isolated, that you know something of what Jeremiah complains about? (15:18a). To become a Christian is not to flee from reality. Because the world is fallen and resents God, it resents those who point it to God.

### **We must repent of self-pity.**

Jeremiah is doing it tough, but he crosses the line in verse 18b where it looks like he is accusing God.

The NRSV even reads this as a statement, not a question, and a number of conservative commentators agree (Dale Ralph Davis, John Mackay). Calvin ducks for cover here, and thinks that Jeremiah must be referring to others, and is repeating what they are saying.

But Jeremiah is accusing God of being a deceitful brook, which runs dry and fails. God will not take that, so He rebukes Jeremiah.

The Psalmist just pulls back from crossing the line in Psalm 73 (see Ps.73:1-3, 15). 'Ah,' says Asaph, 'I felt in my heart that I was thinking destructive thoughts, and I held my tongue.'

God calls on Jeremiah to repent just as Jeremiah had called on his fellow Judeans to repent (15:19-21).

God had to recommission Jonah after he tried to flee to Tarshish, and Christ had to recommission Peter after he had denied Him three times.

Jeremiah has spoken out of turn here, so God calls on Him to repent and speak as he should.

God does not tell him anything new. When we have wandered from God, we may deceive ourselves that we need to hear something new, but that is not the solution.

God simply repeats to him what He had told him back when He commissioned him (1:18-19). If you know the Lord, you do not need new promises, but somehow the old promises can come to you in a fresh way.

From what follows, it does not seem that Jeremiah sprang to his feet, and went on with his prophetic ministry.

### **Restoration is not necessarily instant.**

This is a prophet, a man of God, one who loves God's Word, but he feels how isolated he is. It is not a case of its being lonely at the top, but lonely because he believes in God's revelation.

When you feel an attack of self-pity because of the way you have been treated as a Christian, go back to this.

Go back to what God has already said, and rest on that. In the end, it is hard to contemplate the cross and resurrection of Christ, and to be full of self-pity.

# LONELY BECAUSE OF THE WORD

JEREMIAH 15:15-21

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oday we will see again why Jeremiah is called the weeping prophet. He struggles, and we get a clear glimpse of the toll that his prophetic role took on him.



**We must be prepared to face isolation.**

Yet there is a cost to this. It is precisely because Jeremiah ate God's words that he was isolated from the rest of the community (15:15, 17).

Loneliness can lead to self-pity, and even to such extreme self-pity that it is sinful before God.

**We must love God's Word.**

Jeremiah 'ate' God's words and they were his joy and delight (15:16). He digested them and made them his own. They delighted him more because he was a believer rather than a prophet.

He felt like a person feels who is a long way from home, but receives a letter from someone he loves. He is delighted because of who it comes from. Ezekiel went through the same experience (Ezek.3:1-30).

It all looks like an illustration of Psalm 1:2. It is there also in the long Psalm on the Word of God (Ps.119:103).

How can one profess to be a Christian and yet be indifferent to God's Word. You may struggle with some of it, but surely you cannot be careless about it. In my house if something is left lying around unused for too long, it is likely to end out in Trash and Treasure or the tip.

The Word of God ought not to be left lying around unopened and unstudied.

We must be people who want to know what God has said in His book. These pew Bibles – now restored - are not meant for decoration.

He even complains to his mother back in verse 10.

He is a man of strife and contention, not because he is selfish and opinionated and hard to get on with, but because everybody is hostile to him. It is not because he lends and borrows and does not pay back. The people curse him because he speaks God's words.

He had no one to turn to – no wife or family (16:1-2). Isaiah had Mrs Isaiah (Isa.8:3), but there was no Mrs Jeremiah, and no children to play games with.

Jeremiah was filled with indignation against sin because God is filled with indignation against sin.

That meant he was isolated from the community.

David experienced the same thing (Ps.69:12). The New Testament Christians knew what it was to be rejected (1 Pet.4:3-4). The world has always responded that way.

In Geneva, some people called their dogs 'Calvin'. George Whitefield had a squint and he was even mocked in a play as Dr Squintum. Spurgeon had newspapers portraying him as an ape on the loose. What if you are the only Christian in the staffroom, or at work, or in your neighbourhood, or in the tutorial at university?

**Continued on p.21**