

the PRESBYTERIAN pulse

Zooming into 2022

on the hope and faith in Jesus Christ's birth: John 1:14



**INSIDE: MOVES FOR CHAPLAINS
DEVELOPMENT GROWTH
THANKS TO OUR COVID-19 WORKERS
APWM, JERICO ROAD
CHRISTMAS MESSAGES**

Editorial

BY KAREN FORMAN

The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth - John 1:14 (NIV)



As we come to the end of the year and a second year of the COVID-19 pandemic which has so affected the way we all live, work and Pulse, people are tired. Tired of lockdowns, of having to wear masks, of considering and being caught up the vaccination debates, dealing with humans fighting against each other and railing against governments, anxiety about catching the virus, quitting their jobs and for so many, actually getting sick.

During this year we saw the development of a vaccination against the virus that has killed and maimed or financially and emotionally affected people around the world and then the result of a high vaccination rate in the NSW and the ACT which allowed for Public Health orders to be lifted in time for Christmas. Joy! Family visits for Christmas.

But then came news of a new variant and as the Pulse went to its online press (yes, we plan to start printing again from our March 2022 edition!), uncertainty about travel and lockdowns began to raise its ugly head. The good news is, however, and there is no better time to be reminded of it, that Christmas IS about hope. Hope in the new birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which makes all

things new again. While COVID-19 is expected to remain with us, we have hope in Jesus, hope for our future, hope for better days ahead.

As we meet our loved ones for Christmas and holidays and perhaps face arguments and angst, let us remember that grace and truth are what we are about and to at all times glorify our God.

On behalf of the Editorial team, I wish all our readers and families a happy, healthy and safe Christmas and hopefully some restful holidays. We also thank Ben Davis, who designed the Pulse for us for several years, but finished up with the October edition and is now enjoying life in the country.

Our next edition of the magazine will be in March, 2022 and the copy deadline for that magazine will be Friday, 17 December 2021. We welcome readers' feedback on The Pulse, so please send your suggestions and comments to Jeof Falls jfalls@pcnsww.org.au

Church Offices will be closed from midday on Friday, 24 December 2021 to reopen on Monday, January 10 2022. Emergency contacts during this period will be:

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Reflecting on 2020-2021 and what the birth of Jesus means to us

BY JEOF FALLS

I love Christmas! I love my family coming together on Christmas eve and then on Christmas day to share gifts of love over Christmas lunch. I love attending Church on Christmas morning and joining with my Church family in singing carols. And, over the Christmas period, I love to take time to relax, refresh and reflect.



Jeof Falls, General Manager

I particularly love reflecting on the wonder of the birth of Jesus, the wonder that God would come into the world through the baby Jesus.

As we read in James 1:17 "Every good and perfect gift is from above".

The wonder of new birth is an amazing gift from above, which we see perfectly expressed in the birth of Jesus.

But, of course, we see this wonder every time a new baby is born - the gift of new life. Through new life, we are amazed to think how God constantly weaves Himself into all human kind.

It has been particularly hard for families during the COVID-19 pandemic who have been separated, particularly at times of new birth within the family, or at times of suffering and despair, or during times of grief at the passing of a loved one. The pandemic has separated families through border closures and through lockdown and quarantine.

Thankfully for many families, people have been able to come together online, which we see expressed in the smiles of the young people on our Pulse cover. To be reminded that Jesus brings 'Joy to the World' through every medium.

While the Pulse eMag has been very successful over the past two years, we look forward to going back to printing the Pulse magazine in 2022. The first printed magazine will be delivered to churches in March 2022 and we will be

contacting every congregation over the next few weeks to 'place their order'. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you don't receive a copy.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Editor, Karen Forman, who has had a particularly difficult 2021 experiencing periodic periods of illness and lockdown. Thank you Karen for your passion and commitment to producing a magazine that helps all congregations and ministries of the Presbyterian Church to stay connected!

I would also like to thank our designer, Ben Davis, who has stepped down from the role. Ben has maintained a high standard for several years, which we will endeavour to emulate.

I thank our regular contributors for their support during 2021, and our readers of the online eMag. To all our contributors and readers, I pray God's richest blessings on you and your families.

The Pulse editorial team and our team of contributors look forward to continuing to serve you in 2022.

Joy to the World
& Merry Xmas

2021: The year that had it all for Jericho Road

BY JANETTE BAKER

It has been another busy and exciting year for all areas of Jericho Road, the PCNSW/ACT's social services organisation – and 2022 is shaping up to continue the trend.

From early childhood centres, CPU (Church Protection Unit) team, chaplains and counselling service to Disability Advocate Jason Forbes and all the staff at Allowah Presbyterian Children's Hospital, the year has seen its challenges - with plans put on hold, teams working remotely due to lockdown and the financial impacts on Allowah.

But the team has had to put its trust in God more than ever, and has been reminded of his great mercies and have been given so many opportunities to show the love of God to people in need. We have also been encouraged by the love, prayers and support of the Presbyterian community. Here is a little overview of some of the highlights from this year.

As 2021 comes to an end, the Jericho Road team would like to thank everyone who has prayed with us, supported us and put their hands and hearts to work in their local areas in order to seek justice, show mercy and make Jesus known. May you know God's rest and peace over Christmas and we look forward to walking with you on Jericho Road again next year!

Flood Appeal

Back in March, huge areas of NSW were awash with flood waters occurring just a year after the same areas had been hit by bushfires. Jericho Road reached out to churches in these areas to

Floods clean up



see what we could do in terms of prayer and financial support. Through the subsequent Flood Appeal, we were able to distribute funds to congregations in the affected areas. The churches distributed to individuals who had lost personal possessions, equipment or needed help with short-term housing. The prayer and support from the PCNSW community were very much appreciated by all the churches and individuals we connected with.

South Coast Bushfire Volunteers

A team of volunteers from Moruya, Tuross Heads and Narooma joined together to help their community after the devastating 2019/20 bushfires. The South Coast was particularly hard hit with hundreds left homeless.

With funds donated from Jericho Road and products donated from companies such as Hello Fresh, Big W and Harvey Norman, the team have been distributing care packs to over 200 families who lost property and possessions in the bushfires.

We held a Zoom Prayer event with Lyn and her team of volunteers back in May to hear about the families they support and the connections that have been made. It was a wonderful time of prayer and sharing.



South Coast Bushfires





Allowah

We have seen God’s great hand at work in 2021 at Allowah. The pandemic has impacted Allowah financially, but we praise God that the hospital has been kept safe from the virus. We were extremely blessed to have a generous donor come forward and match all donations dollar-for-dollar in our end of financial year appeal. The generous giving to this appeal was so heartwarming for all the staff and families to witness. We are also grateful for the doors that have opened politically. The Allowah ePetition was submitted to parliament and we are very hopeful of a positive outcome from these efforts.

Chaplaincy Zoom

The COVID lockdown didn’t stop us from connecting! In August, we held a Zoom prayer event with our Jericho Road chaplains. We heard from Rochelle Wainwright, Chaplain at Westmead Children’s Hospital and Allowah Presbyterian Children’s Hospital, Tim Abbey who is Chaplain at Kirkconnell Correctional Centre and Allan Welch, Police Chaplain in the Port Stephens Hunter District. The stories of lives changed through the gospel and the love of Jesus was very moving and it was a privilege to join together in prayer. It was encouraging to see so many people attend this event and for our chaplains to be supported in prayer during a tough season in lockdown.

Preschool Hampers

Thanks to a government grant, the Jericho Road team put together care packs for the Campbelltown and Tregear preschool families. The packs included food and activities for families to do together and were given at Preschool graduation day. The staff were delighted to be able to give out the hampers and the families were thrilled to receive the unexpected gift as they finished up their year at preschool.



As always, Jericho Road would really appreciate your prayer support. Please consider signing up to our prayer newsletter www.jerichoroad.org.au/pray to stay up-to-date with what is happening on Jericho Road.



From hospital to law: Ian becomes first Pressie senior police chaplain

Jericho Road Senior Chaplain Ian Schoonwater is set to begin a new role as Senior Chaplain with the NSW Police Force – and it is believed he is the first Presbyterian minister to take on such a role.

Sydney-based Ian, who starts the new role in January 2022, will be one of five senior chaplains with each responsible for different areas, yet working as a team.

“It is a great team and I am excited to work with them in ensuring good quality chaplaincy is provided,” he says.

“My area of responsibility takes in the North West Metropolitan area of Sydney and Western Region; this takes in most of western NSW.

“This is a large area geographically and I will have oversight of around 30 honorary chaplains and from my understanding I will be the first Presbyterian Senior Chaplain with the NSW Police Force.”

Pulse: How long have you been heading up the Jericho Road Chaplaincy Team as Snr Chaplain?

IS: I have been a Chaplain with Jericho Road for thirteen and a half years. I started working at Hornsby, Royal North Shore and RPA Hospitals, before moving onto the Children’s Hospital at Westmead. I have been Senior Chaplain since 2014

Pulse: What have been the highlights of serving your team and facilitating the Jericho Road / Christ College Chaplaincy Training?

IS: It has been a real joy to lead a group of such gospel focused and dedicated chaplains. They are men and women who really care for people and want to be people who show that God is there in the midst of the messiness and brokenness of life and can offer real hope.

A real highlight is seeing the team grow especially in the area of corrective services, with Jericho Road now working in more prisons across NSW and also more recently in Juvenile Jus-

tice. It is exciting to see the Presbyterian Church seeking to show justice, love mercy and walking humbly with God in areas where local churches would not normally be able to reach.

I have loved teaching at Christ College. It is a real highlight to see a partnership develop with the College and we are now able to offer training at a range of levels and incorporate chaplaincy training into a number of programs offered by the college. We have had students from a range of backgrounds and denominations trained up and head into a wide range of chaplaincy ministries.

Pulse: You have been serving as honorary police chaplain. What prompted you to apply for the role of Senior Police Chaplain?

IS: I was approached six years ago and asked if I would consider being an honorary chaplain at the local police station. I accepted the offer.

I have really enjoyed the opportunities this presented. Being able to come alongside both unsworn and sworn staff and listen to their stories and pain and to be able to bring the light of the gospel in these situations is a real privilege.

When the Senior Chaplain’s position was advertised in September I was encouraged to apply. I saw it as a place where good work can happen

and provide the opportunity to ensure that quality chaplaincy can grow in the regions I am responsible for.

Pulse: The spiritual welfare of our police force is so important. What sort of opportunities and/or challenges do you expect to encounter?

IS: Police encounter the best and worst in society. They are loved and hated - and like every other person they need the gospel. Some are pretty jaded and cynical and have seen both the best and worst of the church. They can be suspicious of the church. My hope is that through my work I can be salt and light to them. They especially need

Ian Schoonwater



quality pastoral care; their work impacts on them personally and this can flow onto their families. I want to ensure they are well supported and have good chaplains who can support them in all of life.

Pulse: How can we be praying for you as you move into your new role?

IS: Please pray that I finish well in my current role and as I handover to the new Senior Chaplain for Jericho Road. Pray for a restful break so that I can start fresh. I really want to be wise as I take up

this new role and also that I will quickly get on top of what is involved in the position and that I may be able to build a good relationship with those who I am ministering to.

If you would like to support the work of Chaplaincy, please visit www.jerichoroad.org.au/donate and select "Chaplaincy" as your purpose for donation.



Jason's tour for Disability visits Mid North Coast

Jericho Road Disability Advocate, Jason Forbes, set out on the first leg of his long-awaited Imago Dei Disability Advocacy Tour, visiting the NSW Mid North Coast in early December.

Despite the rain, Jason had a fantastic trip up from the Central Coast. He met with Presbytery, telling his story of his journey to faith, entry into ministry and why disability advocacy is Biblical and vital for churches.

Thursday evening, Jason enjoyed dinner out with a men's group from Wauchope Presbyterian which provided a casual time of fellowship and an opportunity for them to meet him and find out about his role.



Rev Scott Donnellan next to Jason in the Carols

Saturday evening was spent attending Port Macquarie Presbyterian's carols service where Jason got the chance of meeting with people and spend time encouraging them.

On Sunday Jason was interviewed at both their morning and evening services, which was well received and used to introduce Jason and promote the two group sessions on Monday.



Jason and Julia Shearsby in the morning interview

The Monday sessions were just over an hour each and provided an opportunity for Jason to tell more of his story and for people to ask questions, either about his story, disability in general, or disability and the Bible. The time was relaxed and unstructured with much of the time used as a Q&A format.



"It was very interesting to hear about his life experience and how we as Christians can interact with people with disabilities, as people, but also keeping in mind their life differences." Helen Roberts – Port Macquarie Presbyterian Church member

A member of Port Macquarie Presbyterian Church, Andrew Hamilton, who attended the event says, "Jason talked about being treated as an object and that's something that I hadn't thought about before. We are all just children of God. We all need to treat everyone the same, respectfully, get to know them as a person, and get beyond the outward exterior".

The events lead to great discussions and Jason says, "I felt really encouraged to see people wanting to know about disability, how the Bible speaks to disability and what they could be doing as a church to be more welcoming to people with disabilities."

When asked if other churches should consider inviting Jason to speak, Andrew Hamilton said, "It's very beneficial, getting to know Jason is great, but learning practical tips for how we can better reach out to people in our church, those visiting, or people in our community who may look and think differently to the way we do".

Why not get in touch with Jason and organise a visit at YOUR church! Visit <https://jerichoroad.org.au/disability-advocacy/>



Passing the baton

Rhonda moves on from 20 years of chaplaincy

Rhonda Daley is retiring from her role as Jericho Road Chaplain at Hornsby Hospital and passing the baton over to Lisa Woolcott. We interviewed Rhonda to find out about her journey into chaplaincy, the highs and lows and how God prepared and directed her path along the way and checked in with Lisa, to hear her plans.

It all started more than 20 years ago, when Rhonda, mother of three was working as a full-time preschool teacher. Rhonda's minister at Wahroonga Presbyterian, shared a book he had read called *'Can the Pastor Do It Alone? A Model for Preparing Lay People for Lay Pastoring'*. This prompted the church to start a pastoral care ministry and Rhonda felt led to take up the opportunity and reduced her work days from five to four.

Every Wednesday, Rhonda would accompany her minister, visiting nursing homes and hospitals to see if pastoral care was a good fit and something she would enjoy. "I wasn't good at it, by any stretch of the imagination. I wasn't a good listener... but I liked it!" says Rhonda. Loving the work but wanting to improve, Rhonda signed up to a course one day a week called 'Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)' at the SAN. The course was helpful, but Rhonda was frustrated with its secular nature. She remembers thinking 'What is the point of just actively listening to people when the power and the hope that people want is in the Gospel'.

With her preschool experience, love of children and the training course under her belt, Rhonda wondered how to put all this together. So, she



Rhonda Daley

phoned the chaplain at Westmead Children's Hospital and asked if they could do with a volunteer chaplain. They said "Yes", and Rhonda started at the hospital one day a week.

Over the next 12 months Rhonda was mentored by the chaplain who, when deciding to retire, encouraged Rhonda to apply for her position, "...and by

the grace of the living God I was employed by the Presbyterian Church to be the full-time Chaplain at Westmead Children's Hospital", recalls Rhonda, still full of joy from that memory 22 years ago.

Growing in experience but wanting a solid Biblical foundation, Rhonda applied to become a Deaconess with the support of her church, presbytery and the college. She studied seven years part time and recalls, "...my goodness, there goes my social life I tell you".

When the Presbyterian Church bought Allowah Children's Hospital, they restructured Rhonda's week between Westmead Children's Hospital and Allowah. It was a very good mix as Rhonda would come across the kids who would move between the two hospitals and she loved supporting the children and their families.

On one occasion at Westmead, Rhonda remembers the father of a child with cancer coming into the chapel in tears. Overwhelmed by the situation, he couldn't bear to be in the room with his child. Asking Rhonda, "What sort of father am I, that I don't want to be there?" With God's great wisdom, Rhonda shared that when we have a burden too great to carry, we have a God to run to. Reframing that the father was not abandoning his child, or running FROM the situation, he ran to the chapel so perhaps he was also running TO God.



Like other Chaplains, Rhonda has found that a medical crisis can often lead to an existential crisis of ‘Who am I?’ and ‘What does this mean?’, which is why chaplaincy is so vital. Supporting families, leading funerals, it can all be hard. But she says “...even when it’s hard, it’s a blessing every time”.

After many years in this role, Rhonda moved to Hornsby Hospital which was closer to home and is where she has been working ever since. This new role provided new opportunities as well as new challenges. “Pastoral care to adult patients is quite different to children and teens and needed a lot of adjustments in thinking”, says Rhonda. After conducting many funerals for children, teens and babies, she had to officiate her first adult funeral. Funerals and public speaking are things she finds difficult and draining. She says she learnt to depend even more upon God’s grace whether it’s while supporting families or navigating hospital politics.

During this time, Rhonda says she discovered the value of the single visit. “The small things, like one, two or three visits can have a big impact on someone’s life. I’ve grown to discover the value of pastoral care – it has an enormous value in people’s life. The joy of watching God at work - and He’s been transforming me over the years too”.

Rhonda is about to retire and pass her position as Hornsby Hospital Chaplain over to Lisa. Rhonda says, “Passing on the baton, I’ve been given this amazing opportunity and now it’s my turn to pass it onto Lisa. I hope she has as much joy as I have had. There is a sadness about leaving but there is a joy

Long serving chaplain Rhonda Daley doing what God called her to do: coming alongside hospital patients at a time of need.



that eclipses that, as God has raised up Lisa to take over the role. I will be praying for Lisa and I hope the rest of the church will be generously praying for her too. Wherever God’s got a new fresh outpouring of blessing we have to be praying.”

Reflecting on her years in chaplaincy, Rhonda says the call to this ministry, knowing without a doubt that this was what God wanted her to do, grew stronger and clearer over the years. “This meant I could relax and trust Him to carry me through the challenges. Just like 1 Thes 5:24 says, ‘The One who calls you is faithful and he will do it’, I knew that I was not up to any of this on my own”.

During retirement, Rhonda says she’s going to go deeper and slower with God. She is active in her church, Hornsby Presbyterian Church and teaches scripture two days a week. She has also had her piano tuned recently and is going to take lessons. Rhonda has been mentoring Christian Women in Ministry in her spare time for several years and will gladly continue this through retirement.

“I want to give God all the glory for carrying me through each day of each year of chaplaincy ministry. That is the real faithfulness and power!”

We asked Rhonda if she could share some insights from her two decades in chaplaincy.

Listen well

Approach pastoral care with respect and listen carefully to where someone is at - all you can do is offer. Listen to them so you can tailor your response to their particular circumstance and give people the space to engage in conversation.

Biblical foundation

You need a good Biblical foundation to be able to respond to questions. Explore theological education to get a solid grounding. Even if it’s not for a particular ministry, it’s important that when you come across people who ask those tough questions, you’re ready to give an answer. People will only listen for about 30 seconds, so you need to be concise, ready and clear about your own theology. The Christ College/Jericho Road Chaplaincy Training Courses are brilliant. Even just for personal growth in being an effective member of your own church or community.



Be prepared

If someone asks you ‘Why do you believe in God?’ it’s important to have your response ready so you can say, ‘There are four reasons why I believe in God’, and they can pick up on any of those responses. And then you can turn it over to them using respectful curiosity, saying ‘What do you think about God?’ It is also important to have a clear theology of suffering settled before a tragedy happens.

Pray

Pray for chaplaincy. I know when I’ve been carried in my day, carried by God through prayer. All the chaplains at Jericho Road appreciate your prayers.

Consider chaplaincy

We need more people raised up for positions like this. Chaplains are partners with the local church, respectfully engaging with people of all faiths, at a spiritually strategic time in their lives. Whether it’s in hospitals, prisons, police or sports teams, people need real spiritual help, support and hope.

Give

The thing that often keeps me going when things are hard is knowing that individuals and churches have given generously so I could have this ministry opportunity - that motivates me to do my job well. It reminds me that I’ve been placed here on trust and behind me are God’s people who are generously giving and praying.

Meet Lisa Woolcott

Lisa, what made you decide to become a hospital chaplain?

To put it simply, the work of God in my life. I have a heart for others’ well-being and flourishing. I think this is what drew me into a health career early on.

Over the years my focus has shifted from physical well-being to spiritual and emotional well-being, and my interest in how God works in lives, and ways we can open ourselves to His work has led me to further study in this field, including chaplaincy study at Christ College. This is where I was given the opportunity to try hospital chaplaincy and it seems to be a good fit for my life experience, training and calling.

How are you feeling about your new role?

I am feeling grateful for this opportunity to serve, and to Rhonda for the legacy she has left at HKH, for all the seeds she has planted in this hospital, and for her encouragement and teaching in preparation for this role.



Lisa and Rhonda

I feel a sense of weightiness. There are so many needs and I still have so much to learn. I am grateful for the support of Ian, Jericho Road Senior Chaplain and the Jericho Road team, along with supportive staff at the hospital and all those who hold me in prayer.

I am also feeling anticipation and peace. I do not know what each day holds but I trust that God is with me in all that unfolds, and his goodness will always shine through.

It’s quite a challenging time to be moving into a new role in the hospital. How can we be praying for you?

- Please pray that God will place me in the path of those who most need support, especially during lockdown.
- For energy and clear communication. As a cochlear implant recipient, I am incredibly blessed to be able to communicate through face masks, but it can be tiring.
- For discernment, diligence, courage, and safety around visiting onsite in pandemic conditions.

LESSONS FROM LOCKDOWN

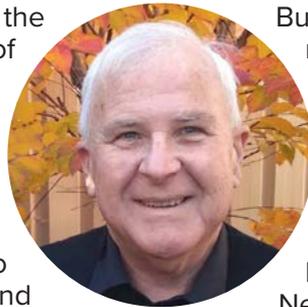
By the time you read this, NSW and the ACT should be on their way out of many weeks of “lockdown” with its various restrictions and limitations.

Throughout the past months, despite the difficulties churches have faced, it has been enormously encouraging to hear how churches across the state and the ACT have been adapting as best they can to see that congregations are being taught, encouraged and pastored, usually without any face-to-face interaction beyond the home. From my point of view, it has also been good to be able to join in with Sunday gatherings from my own study.

One thing has been very clear: our pastoral teams have adapted cheerfully and creatively to use whatever resources work so that they can continue to shepherd and build the body of Christ through the work of our churches.

Some options are fairly obvious. Churches are choosing to live stream pre-recorded services. I managed to have a Bible talk recorded at our own church and sent interstate to be incorporated into a local Sunday gathering. That was in addition to a pre-recorded interview with the minister. Visiting other churches online I've been taken on a virtual tour of a greenhouse in an elder's backyard (part of the “Kids' Talk”), “sat” by a river for the beginning and end of a service and joined in the musical offerings from people's living rooms as they have led in praise from their guitars and pianos.

Other congregations have opted for meeting on the Zoom platform, or something similar, and I have really enjoyed chatting with people in “breakout rooms” in suburbs and cities far removed from my home in Newcastle. It has been a privilege to lead in prayer at some of these meetings too, and I've enjoyed singing along privately to the songs which have been played – although I misunderstood one minister's invitation to sing as being actually to “unmute” and join in! He quickly switched me back to silence!



But for other congregations, where technological options haven't been as accessible for members, I've been really pleased to hear of ministers who prepare their Sunday Bible talk and take printed copies around to homes and leave them, contactlessly I'm sure, in letterboxes. One church, of mostly elderly folk in a very regional part of New South Wales, couldn't meet for several weeks so an elder (there is no minister at present) prepared a series of daily Bible readings, with notes, and delivered them to homes. As he said, this was a way to get people who had not been in the habit of reading the Bible regularly, to do so for themselves. Some were doing so for the first time. Isn't that great?

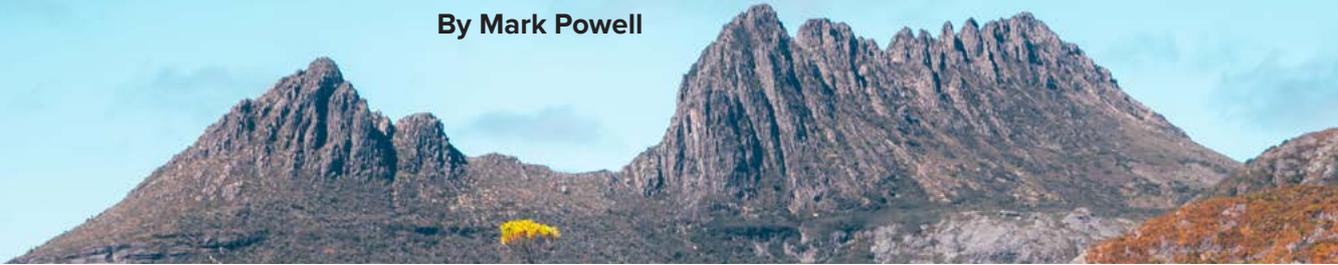
As we reflect on past weeks, I hope that, like me, you have stopped to give thanks to God for the technology that has made so much possible. I hope, too, that you have given thanks for the many, many people who have worked extra hard and tirelessly to see that their congregations are being fed and pastored through new and often time-taxing measures. Bible Study groups have continued to meet, and Sessions, Committees of Management and Presbyteries, have continued to conduct their business and pray very much as usual, despite being “on-screen” rather than “in-person”.

Lockdown has taught us much. It has certainly taught us that the fellowship we share in the Lord Jesus is not limited to walls, buildings and physical gatherings. Yes, it will be wonderful to be able to meet again but let us not forget the opportunities that have been given to us in the last months, as well. I hope you've been encouraged!

Let me express here my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to ministers, elders, tech teams, musicians, “Kids' Talk” leaders, those who have prepared online lessons for children, and all others who have worked in whatever way they can to see that the Church, as it is represented in the PCNSW, is continuing to be equipped “for every good thing for doing His will” (Heb 13:21). Let us thank God for His continued goodness to us.

Rev Mark Powell's journey: Farewell NSW, hello Tasmania

By Mark Powell



I

have been blessed to have been part of the Cornerstone network of churches in Sydney during the past 15 years.

Led by the Senior Minister, Rev CS Tang, Cornerstone was planted over 25 years ago out of the Chinese Presbyterian Church in Surrey Hills and has now grown to seven distinct congregations under one pastoral charge.

Cornerstone is one of a growing number of multi-site churches within our denomination. While each one is in a different geographical location and has its own elders, there is a single session and committee of management. Not everyone is a fan of multi-site churches, but I believe that it's the key to not only church planting, but also to denominational renewal. Here are my reasons why:

Theological Vision

Every church has what Tim Keller refers to as a “theological vision”. Not just a set of doctrinal distinctives as outlined in say the Westminster Confession of Faith, but a way of blending Biblical convictions with pastoral ministry. Some examples are: the blend of every-member ministry, style of music and an understanding of the roles of men and women. Obviously then, when churches share the same “theological vision” it makes it a lot easier to join together in planting a new one.

Cornerstone Sydney



Shared Resources

Church planting is expensive, in terms of both money and people. Being part of a multi-site church means that all of the other churches contribute with both. This is especially helpful when it comes to ministries such as youth groups, overseas mission trips and church camps. Being part of a larger network means that each of these areas punches well above its weight.

Pastoral Support

Each week I would spend the greater part of a day in meetings with the other pastors and paid staff. This would be comprised of a pastors' meeting, staff meeting, staff lunch, and then informal fellowship time. While this sometimes felt like an imposition of my time, it was always beneficial and edifying. Indeed, it is what is greatly lacking in so many of our churches today and not a small reason for why many ministers burn out.

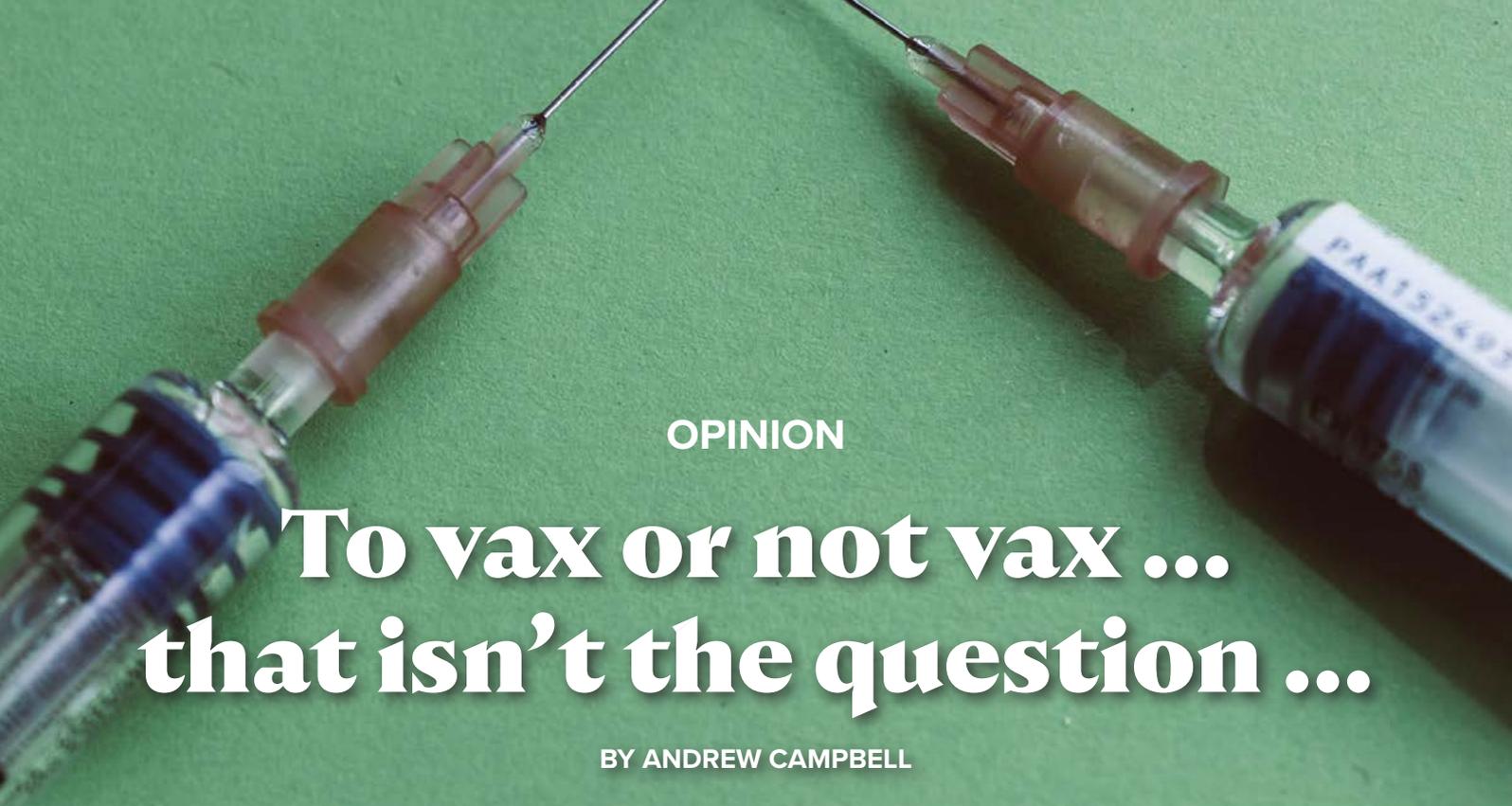
Mission Minded

Let's face it, one of the greatest challenges in pastoral ministry is slipping into a “maintenance mode”. Meeting budget, filling the rosters and just keeping everything going can become all-consuming. But being part of a multi-site church means that you're always focused on growth. Not necessarily about growing bigger than the other congregations—pride is also an insidious temptation—but to see the kingdom of God being extended.

Human Weakness

One of the things which CS Tang has reminded us all repeatedly is that we are the “C-Team”. That is, the church grows not because of our giftedness, let alone our own personalities, but because of the Lord's grace.

CONTINUES ON P.22



OPINION

To vax or not vax ... that isn't the question ...

BY ANDREW CAMPBELL

She was upset. And with good reason. Her husband, the main breadwinner in the family, had concerns about the available vaccines. So, as a matter of conscience, they were resisting vaccination.

However, he had just received an email from his bosses, 'no jab, no job.' Sure, he could get other work, but there would be a big drop in the family income and his job security. With a mortgage, it's no wonder that she was upset.

In her distress, she turned to an older lady for comfort. They embraced and talked quietly for some time.

Sure, they broke the 'rules' about social distancing. And the older woman has multiple and significant health issues. But she put her concerns and her safety aside, to give my distressed friend comfort. It was a beautiful moment.

For the question we're facing is not to vax or not to vax. Nor to wear a mask or refuse. Nor even whether we are going to refuse the unvaccinated entry to church.

The more significant question is whether we are going to, despite Covid, '... make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification (Romans 14:19)

This virus is dividing us; men and women who love Jesus are maintaining different views. Both sides present compelling arguments from Scripture.

Did you know that the early church had a similar problem? We read of it in Romans 14.

The Christians who had once been pagans were quite okay about going to the market for their

food. They liked their pork, seafood, and blood sausage. They knew idols were nothing, so if the meat was offered to nothing, so what? They had sound Biblical reasons for their position to buy and eat anything.

But the Christians who had once been Jews were scandalised. This was rejecting their tradition and culture. Besides, didn't the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) rule against meat not properly killed and meat offered to idols? And not only that, idols are deeply demonic, so eating such food invites satanic control.

Lights, camera, action! Bun fight! Bibles drawn at 20 paces! Well, in Romans 14 Paul challenges both sides to see something, someone bigger. Jesus! He tells them to stop judging one another.

He encourages them not to do anything to cause a brother or sister to fall.

Paul invites them to consider the 'weak' (ie those with a different opinion - whatever that is!). He challenges them to live in love like Jesus and not just to please themselves.

And then Paul pulls it all together: Romans 15:7: 'Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.'

If I am accepted by Jesus, forgiven, justified by grace, then how can I not accept another brother or sister? How can I not, like my older friend, put aside my own safety and 'rights', my opinions and convictions for one for whom Christ died? And accept them for the unity of the fellowship, the church and the honour and glory of our God?

The question isn't to vax or not to vax. The question is whether we will let this divide and even destroy us. (Romans 14:20)

2021: Development

BY JOHN ISHAK

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to cause disruption throughout 2021, but the PCNSW/ACT's development projects were able to continue.

We caught our breath following the completion of The Terraces Paddington project in mid-2019 and thankfully project financing it was repaid within six months of project completion in December 2019 and just before the world would need to get its mind around an altogether different challenge early in 2020.

The breath was brief, as we ramped up again following Trustee approvals to proceed with the manse construction on behalf of Gladesville-Hunters Hill Presbyterian Church at Massey Street Gladesville and the redevelopment of the Siloam Korean Presbyterian Church at South Street Rydalmere.

Although much smaller construction projects, it was a welcome return to building a new church facility and see ministry grow under God's leading. As we are reminded by the Psalmist in 127:1 "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain."

The church redevelopment was approved by Trustees in late 2018 with construction work commencing late 2019.

The Gladesville manse renovation commenced the month before the pandemic reached our shores in March 2020.

Managing both projects during restrictions and public health order mandates was unfamiliar territory but focussed the construction and project teams to get creative and in dealing with peculiar challenges.

Pleasingly, contractors on both projects were exceptional in their dealings with us and went above and beyond their legal obligations to help deliver good outcomes. I've never conducted site meetings remotely before, so this new format along with managing ever changing site restrictions was interesting to say the least.

As an integral part of the economy, it was a relief to see the construction industry spared a lot of the restrictions in the health orders, and being allowed to operate for most of the first and second lockdowns in Greater Sydney.

However, the increase in home renovation and

general building activity across all sectors did put a strain on supplies, but in the main, other than the usual site challenges and scope creep on jobs, both projects were completed successfully.

In addition to these two active projects there was increased enquiry and interest from many congregations seeking development advice and direction. These were timely discussions whilst churches were in lockdown: seeking solutions to issues as they were unable to gather face to face or restricted due to the capacity limits imposed and the limitations of their current facilities.

The General Office is always ready to assist local congregations work through improvements to their church buildings so that our facilities are not a stumbling block to hearing the Good News of our risen Lord Jesus and the claims he has over our lives.

Recently, we received encouraging news on the rezoning of the rural 5.5-acre (2.23ha) Leppington site purchased by the Property Trust, M&M and the proceeds from the closure of Helensburgh Presbyterian Church in 2009, for the establishment of a new church in the Presbytery of Sydney South.

The site is now zoned for low rise residential development and the establishment of a place of worship.

Early discussions with Presbytery about possible development proposals have been encouraging. We are seeking, through prayer and advice, God's plan for the site, after many years of patiently waiting for direction on how to best use the site.

Many faithful members from surrounding churches, who are having their own challenges, have been the most earnest in their prayers for God's hand and direction, and hopefully a new church plant soon.

There are a number of church projects underway or close to commencing that are managed locally.

It's great to see the rejuvenation of the temporal affairs of the church for the cause of Christ. For some, it has been a long time coming and for others, a little more patience needed to endure before His plans are revealed.

It's a privilege to be serving the church in this way for His glory and our good. "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." (1 Cor 15:58)



PROGRESS: clockwise from top left: before the work, the work underway, Gladesville before, kitchen after.

Siloam Korean Presbyterian Church Ryadalmere conversion: Clockwise, from left: Before, workers on the job, the finished product, the official opening



Mission possibilities

– going rural for the Gospel

By John Greig

H

ave you ever wanted to do something really useful with your life, but don't know where to start? There are so many possibilities for service in Christian Mission that are worthy and good, but maybe you've never found something that's quite the right fit for you?

Here is another somewhat different suggestion.

There are lots of small country churches that are really struggling. Why not consider using your employment as a means of rural mission?

There are shortages of various kinds of professional and tradespeople in many country areas. The general trend is that people leave the country to go to the city for tertiary education and training, and the result is that they make friends, marry, and settle down in a city. This trend was made much worse by the millennium drought.

With the drought now over that means that there are lots of jobs available in the country, and lots of small country churches that are really struggling.

Why not consider using where you live and work as a means of mission?

Many country churches are now doctrinally sound and evangelical, but made up of mainly older people. As these people age there is a danger of these small churches dying out, leaving large parts of country Australia without local Christian witness as we know it now.

And for younger generations in particular, this can be a problem.

In our town, Condobolin, when the Presbyterian church was liberal in its teaching, the children of church attenders mostly stopped coming when they grew up. Now with a generation of sound teaching, most of the children that have grown up with this have been converted, which is good news...as they are still serving in churches elsewhere, having moved away for work and study.

That means we don't have enough energetic, enthusiastic leaders, particularly for kids' and youth ministry. Our church doesn't have a youth group,

and there are no SRE teachers in any school in the town.

Maybe you can help?

I want to invite you to consider moving to a rural area for work, and getting involved in a less resourced church.

As I have lived in the country all my life, to me there seem lots of good reasons to "escape to the country" if you live in a major urban area. How does a five-minute commute to work sound? Condobolin has no traffic lights, with the closest set being over 100km away along with the closest Macca's. Housing is also much cheaper and generally provides more space for gardens than in the cities.

The work environment may be different, but you may gain a wider range of responsibilities and more independence, which many people value.

As a side note, the Local Government Area that Condobolin is in has not yet (Oct 2021) had a single case of COVID-19!

There will be challenges in moving from the city to the country, as in any change, but if God is leading you in this direction, He is able to provide for you in these.

And if you do choose to move to the country, I can pretty much promise you there will be a grateful church community keen for you to jump into ministry – especially ministry to young people. Your choice could be a great gift to them.

Why not prayerfully consider if this is a good option for you?

• *John Greig attends Condobolin Presbyterian Church in the Central West region of NSW.*



Presbyterian Youth

FROM MODERATOR, ADRIAN LAMROCK

Christmas Message

When I was asked to write a Christmas greeting for this edition, there was the feeling of “what can I say that hasn’t already been said?” But then it doesn’t really matter if what I write has been said before. Because this Christmas is a very good time to stop and, in the midst of all that has been happening, ask ourselves what we are celebrating.

My thoughts in recent days have been revolving around the response to God’s plan by Mary and Simeon. Their actions and words are carefully recorded, respectively, in Luke’s Gospel and have, in some church settings, formed a part of regular worship, known as the Song of Mary (Luke 1.46-55) and the Song of Simeon (Luke 2.28-32).

Both of these people speak with certainty about God working out His purposes among His people.

We can easily forget how terrifying the news of the forthcoming pregnancy might have been to Mary, but she gives no sign of anything but a trust that God was working His purposes out. She speaks in terms that would have been extraordinary for a young girl in the backwoods of Roman Judea.

She is moved to sing of the mighty God who shows mercy on generations and generations of people who fear Him. Reassuring indeed. While she faces possible social disgrace and ostracism – and let’s face it, social media probably had nothing on wagging tongues in first-century Judea! – she is able to trust that future generations will call her blessed, and she can trust God to bring about His good purposes.

She is able to see that, somehow, she is a part of God’s promises to Abraham all those centuries ago. She shows extraordinary understanding about what is to happen, in its wider sense, at least.

Similarly, Simeon, who had waited faithfully in the temple for the coming of God’s Messiah, takes the young Jesus and announces that God’s time for salvation has come. He is able

to recognise, through the inspiration of the Spirit, that this salvation will not only be for Israel but for all nations. Here is another idea that turned the thinking of his day on its head. God was breaking into time in a special way.

Both Mary and Simeon, and like them, Zechariah and Anna, knew that God was working. How good it is to read these accounts, and we should read them and marvel at how God reveals His plans to the ordinary.

And yet, we, today, who read these accounts, are much more blessed than they were, because we know how that salvation was worked out. We may not have been visited directly by one of God’s special messengers, we may not have been promised special length of life while waiting to see God’s salvation worked out, but then, we need neither of these things. We can see how God’s words to these faithful people have been worked out, and perfectly worked out, in Jesus. I don’t think that Mary or Simeon foresaw the cross. We wouldn’t have either. But we can see it now and we can rejoice that the Baby, miraculously born, would grow in perfect obedience to His Father and, through that obedience all the way to the cross, give us the greatest hope of all – eternal life in His presence.

Mary and Simeon both had to trust God for the end result. They didn’t know the details but they were content to let God work these out. That’s a good challenge for us as Christmas arrives. It’s also a great cause for rejoicing. We don’t know the details of 2022 or beyond, but we know that

God knows them and is controlling them. I hope that we, too, can trust in His unfailing plan to bring salvation to all of His people in every generation and every nation. What’s not to rejoice about?

May you have great joy and a fresh awe this Christmas as you reflect, again, on what God was doing back there in Bethlehem and continues to do to this day.



A TASTE OF FREEDOM: Moderator Adrian Lamrock with wife Kerrie and their six grandchildren, the day that restrictions were lifted.



Kingdom Investment

For the past few years, Vijai Tagore has been undertaking PhD studies at Christ College. Vijai is a lecturer at the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Dehradun, India.

We are grateful for the partnership with Christ College and particularly Dr Ian Smith, Vijai's doctoral studies Supervisor. The final day will reveal the fruit of this 'investment'.

APWM is grateful to those churches and individuals who have provided the financial partnership to make Vijai's studies possible. Vijai, Suchitra and the children will be returning to India in early April 2022.



Vijai and Suchitra Tagore

However, between now and April we need more financial partners to assist in this ministry. If you would like to make a donation or become a regular supporter then please email finance@apwm.org.au or make a Direct Deposit:

Bank: Westpac
 Account Name: Australian Presbyterian World Mission
 BSB: 032 260
 Account Number: 151207

Please send an email to finance@apwm.org.au so that a receipt can be sent.



Dan and Jen Cooke and family at their farewell in Vanuatu

Danny and Jen Cooke

Danny and Jen, together with their four children have just concluded two and a half years of ministry in the village of Sulphur Bay, on the island of Tanna, in Vanuatu.

We are very grateful for Danny and Jen's willingness to serve and to the Orange Presbyterian Church which was willing to release them for service. Please pray that God would keep on raising up people for such service.



Rob and El Falls and family on their first day at Talua

Rob and El Falls

After many COVID-related delays Rob and El Falls are now serving at the Talua Theological Training Institute in Vanuatu. We praise God for their willingness to serve with our oldest Partner Church and for the partnership of the many who made this possible. Please pray for them as they commence what we pray will be many years of fruitful service.



Gospeling Australia

Why do so many Australians either dismiss any belief in the existence of God or even consider the idea of God unnecessary? What leads so many Australians to think they can happily live without God? Why do we hear people talking about the need to be 'authentic'?

These were some of the questions raised by David Williams at the September NSW ReachOut missions conference. The theme of this year's conference was 'The Sacrifice Factor'.



David Williams, CMS Australia

In recent years there has been a move toward using some of the tools and strategies traditionally used in overseas cross-cultural mission to help us in our mission field in our own backyard.

David serves as the Principal of the Church Missionary Society's St Andrew's Hall mission training college in Melbourne. He delivered three thought provoking talks that can be accessed for free here.

<https://reachoutmissions.com.au/resources-1>

Pray for More

Many in Australia will not know this man. He is Pastor Kalsakau Urtalo from the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu. He recently went to be with Christ.



Pastor Kalsakau Urtalo

He was once the Principal of Talua and Assembly Clerk. He gave wise counsel and leadership to many in the Church and stood firm for the gospel. Ian and Jeni Smith served under him during their time at Talua. Ian writes:

"On rare occasions in life, one comes across someone who is a mentor, a leader and a brother - to me Kalsakau was all three, as well as a dear friend. The impact of his ministry at Talua is felt in every church on every island of Vanuatu every week. He embodied a commitment to the gospel of grace, servant-hearted leadership and a desire to see the next generation of Christian leaders well prepared to minister the truths of the Scriptures in ways that are culturally appropriate. I have learnt so much from him. He will certainly not be forgotten."

Praise God for men and women such as Pastor Kalsakau. Please join us in praying that God would raise up more like him. Pray the Lord of the harvest.

A Memoir: Granville Pillar

APWM missionary Granville Pillar has just published his memoir "From Doing it My Way to Following His Way". The book can be purchased from Amazon. From the book:



Granville Pillar

"This evocative memoir sketches the dramatic first thirty-one years of baby boomer Granville Pillar. He pursues a college education and graduates as an electrical engineer, seeking more stability for himself and his new family. Then, while undergoing hospital treatment for a back injury, he comes face to face with his demons and experiences a Damascus Road moment that radically transforms his life."

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The excitement of a new MAF arrival

Rick Rempel works at the Prairie Aviation Training Centre, in Three Hills, Alberta, Canada as a flight instructor and safety manager and is part of the management team. Tracey works at the Prairie College and is currently helping to organise week-long centenary celebrations for 2022. Here, he reports on an exciting new arrival at the centre.

Many of us are super excited when a new little person (baby) is found to be coming, being uniquely put together. The arrival is eagerly anticipated. This was the atmosphere on Friday afternoon January 29 2021, when Prairie Aviation Training Centre (PATC) in Canada was the recipient of a brand-new Citabria plane.

The plane was purchased with the generous donations of Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF - <https://maf.org.au/>) supporters for the specific purpose of training the next generation of aviators at PATC.

Despite the quite cool conditions at the time all the staff and students (as well as a few extras - Tracey, Matt, Josh and Drew to name a few) headed outside to see its first touchdown at the small airport of Three Hills.

It all began over a year ago when the PATC management team was trying to standardize the fleet. It started with the Cessna 172s. Funding came in from both MAF Canada and Prairie Institute to upgrade the Cessna 172s with new paint and interiors and

to upgrade the instrument panels so that all three planes were the same for the students to easily transition between them.

Next were the Citabrias. PATC has two of them, and they are different. One has flaps; the other doesn't. One has a 150 horsepower engine and the other has a 115 horsepower engine, each with different fuel burns per hour. The PATC team decided a new Citabria was needed.

A call went out to the supporters of MAF Canada, and through God's great provision, the funds were raised to purchase a brand-new Citabria. The plane was ordered with the expectation that it would be built by September 2020. Communication began with the manufacturer and over the next several months, photos and regular updates made their way to the team at PATC. With each new update, the anticipation of its arrival increased.

While the builders were crafting the new aircraft, the team at PATC began pulling together all the required paperwork for the plane to enter Canada from the US, and to operate in Canada.

Among the questions that need to be answered when registering a new aircraft is, what name and what registration number? Once again, the greater MAF Canada family was given the opportunity to have input.

CONTINUES ON P.23

NEW DELIVERY: Rick Rempel and his family with the new addition.





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

Sam and Jesse: a tale of a full circle

As we continue our series of ‘Where Are They Now?’ (looking at past METRO apprentices) we have a unique interview. Not only do we have a previous METRO apprentice, but he is currently training his own METRO apprentice! An example of the fruit of much prayer and support. Please pray for Jesse and Sam.



Jesse and Sam

Jesse (Trainer and previous Metro apprentice)

When did you do METRO?

I did METRO over two years full time in 2006/07 at Cronulla Presbyterian Church in Sydney. My trainer was Rev Russell Stark.

What’s your strongest memory from METRO?

Tough question! Probably walking from church down to Cronulla mall to have coffees and chats with Russell and sometimes the other student ministers. They were good times of encouragement, sharpening and guidance, and Russ was always very wise!

Why did you decide to train METRO Apprentices? How many have you trained?

I would always have been happy to train METRO apprentices. God in his grace gave me an apprentice (Sam) in my eighth year as a senior pastor. Earlier on in my pastoring, I had the opportunity to preach at the METRO conference, which was a good time to sharpen my thinking about ministry training as I prepared for those talks.

Paul says to Timothy in 2 Tim 2:2 “the things you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable people, who will be able to teach others also”. This is the ministry training verse. The Lord calls us to entrust the gospel to the next generation, so they can then do the same with others. Ministry Training is intentional discipleship, investing in the trainee to train them, so then they will be equipped to ‘go and make disciples of all nations’. Doing METRO or becoming a METRO trainer is a great opportunity to get involved in the gospel mission, and for trainees, a two-year opportunity to test the waters of ministry, and to seek to discern how best to give up your life for Jesus.

How can we be praying for you?

Pray for more apprentices that I can pass the baton on to, and for a METRO training culture/pipeline/progression to develop at church. I have always admired places like Southern Cross Presbyterian Church and other similar churches that have been METRO training centres and I would like to emulate that in my church. Please pray for me with this!

Sam Koster (Current METRO apprentice)

How has Jesse helped you grow throughout METRO? What do you enjoy about working with him?

There are many ways, but one particularly that Jesse has helped me grow in is teaching me how and when to deal with the more difficult/sensitive issues that can arise in ministry. I can be a bit of a knee-jerk-reaction kinda guy and Jesse has been very patient and loving in guiding me in dealing with my own emotions, and then engaging with the situation lovingly and tactfully.

I love working with Jesse because I get to learn from someone with nearly a decade in the field. And so I am able to learn from someone with experience and practical everyday understanding of the field of work I want to go into. Jesse is very caring and thoughtful so it’s a pleasure to be working under him.

What’s been a challenge during METRO?

Most of my METRO experience has been in some variation of a lockdown. In itself COVID hasn’t been the issue but the ever changing nature of events that have been cancelled/postponed/moved and so on. The biggest challenge has been accepting that, when a ministry I think is invaluable and a great opportunity for the Gospel to be preached to non-Christians is cancelled, submitting to God that this must be a part of His plan, even though I cannot fathom why or how. So, I guess overall learning to submit to God when I don’t agree with the decisions has been challenging, and also by contrast quite freeing.

CONTINUES ON P.23



SAFETY SPOT

BY HAZEL NESBIT

Ladder Safety

We have had a number of falls from ladders in our churches. SafeWork NSW reports that one worker was killed and four were seriously injured in falls over the past two months from heights of less than three metres.

For this reason, our church policy is that only appropriate trained and experienced people are engaged to work at heights at greater than two metres.

SafeWork NSW recommends businesses only use ladders for simple access or short periods on flat, stable surfaces and workers should take only small items.

They should maintain three points of contact when climbing or descending the ladder, that is, two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand on the ladder, and never lean or reach away from the ladder while using it.

Also consider other safer alternatives, for example, purchasing a ladder with a platform and use of scaffolding and elevated work platforms.

HAZEL NISBET

WHSE Manager

hnisbet@pcnsw.org.au - 0414 463 976



Falls from ladders

Falls from ladders have resulted in a significant number of serious and fatal injuries, even when working at low heights.

Falls from any height can be dangerous, so be aware of your WHS duties.

swa.gov.au/heights

Staying safe when using a ladder:



1. maintain three points of contact on the ladder at all times
2. use a tool belt or side pouch
3. ensure only light work is carried out on the ladder where tools can be operated safely with one hand
4. make sure that no-one works underneath the ladder
5. do not allow anyone else on the ladder at the same time
6. do not straddle the ladder
7. wear slip-resistant footwear.

CONTINUES FROM P.12

We are a living, breathing manifestation of the truth that Christ's strength is made perfect through our weakness (See 2 Cor. 12:10). Being part of a broader ministry team reminds you of this. Especially as you see God's hand of blessing at work in ways which are completely outside of your control.

World Vision

One of the aspects for which I have been the most thankful for has been Cornerstone's partnership with the James O'Fraser Centre in Northern Thailand.

Each year—before COVID—a group of us would travel overseas for a short-term mission trip. This was strategically focused on being involved in the teaching and training ministries of the college. Indeed, I think I worked much harder over there than I did in ministry here! But it only worked because of the numerous resources we shared across our multiple congregations.

At the start of next year, I plan to move to Cornerstone Hobart. No, we're not planting a church in Tasmania - this was started about the same time as Cornerstone Sydney by the Rev David Jones. But I hope by God's grace to see a similar model adopted there. Not because I want to build an empire, but because I want to see His kingdom come.

I'm going to really miss living in NSW, and I am deeply thankful for the brothers and sisters I have worshipped alongside both at Cornerstone Sydney and before that for seven years in Wee Waa. A good friend of mine would often say that if you can't leave your church because it would fall apart without you, then you really need to leave. Because it's not your church, it belongs to Jesus.

I leave knowing that the LORD is going to do immeasurably more than I could ever imagine or ask, both at Cornerstone Strathfield as well as at Cornerstone Hobart. For that's what our LORD is like. He is generous, full of grace, and most of all, faithful (Eph. 3:20-21).

CONTINUES FROM P.20

After looking through the suggestions and finding out from Transport Canada what registrations were available, it was decided the new Citabria would have the registration MFQ.

P2-MFQ was the registration of a former Twin Otter that MAF operated in Papua New Guinea. In 2004, P2-MFQ was involved in an accident. The two MAF pilots did everything they could and ultimately gave their lives to protect the passengers in the back. Thus, MFQ was chosen to honour God for those who have chosen to live a life of service in mission aviation and for all He has done in the world of MAF

The other aspect of its name is a tribute. When the registration is spoken phonetically, it is said as Mike Foxtrot Quebec.

Mike Fox was the first student of the Prairie's Aviation Program and has continued throughout the years and is the longest-serving member on staff. Thank you, Mike, for your dedication to the program.

After a few delays, the plane was finished, and test flown by mid-January.

The next obstacle was to move the plane from the factory in the state of Wisconsin USA to the PATC base over 2400km away, in winter!

A former student of PATC flew to Wisconsin to collect the plane and after four days of travelling arrived at Three Hills, 29 January 2021. Because of this new aircraft, PATC will be able to continue to provide advanced training to the next generation of mission-driven aviators.

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What's a lesson you're learning?

To be effective in ministry, I need to always have the focus of my work on God's reputation, not my own. My ministry will not survive the strain of serving my own ego. God deserves the glory and the praise for anything he calls me to do.

How can we be praying for you?

I would love prayer as I finish METRO this year and look for other work for the next. Changing pathways in life can be a bit stressful and I am doing that with a bub due in Dec. I would also love prayer as my wife and I wait to find out if we will be going to Bible College in 2023 hopefully to study at Christ College for Pastoral Life.

CONTINUES FROM P.24

Christ is our righteousness.

This opens up how sinners can be saved. The Messiah would have the divine name (23:6). This is Jehovah Tsidkenu. Zedekiah, the last king, also possessed this same divine name, but it did not mean anything. Jesus, however, fulfilled this name. The righteousness of the Christian is found in Christ, and only in Christ.

When Jeremiah looks at the kings of Judah leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., he sees only oppressors and idolaters, men of the line of David, but men who failed to be what they ought to have been. But when Jeremiah looked further ahead, He saw the Messiah, one of the Davidic line, who came when it looked just about finished.

Yet He is the one with the divine name, the divine character, and the divine saving work. The point is, when we look to men, even the best of them, we see failure. But in the Messiah, there is justice and salvation, there is majesty and lowliness, there is God and man in the one person. We

all need righteousness before God. Christ is that righteousness because ours is not enough.

Here is one of Martin Luther's letters: 'Therefore, my dear brother, learn Christ and Him crucified; learn to pray to Him despairing of yourself, saying, "You, Lord Jesus, are my righteousness and I am Your sin; You have taken on Yourself what You were not, and have given to me what I am not.' Henry Venn was an Anglican clergyman about 1758 when Lady Huntingdon wrote him a letter on 'the Lord our righteousness'. Until then he was not clear about this, that Christ takes our unrighteousness and by faith we take His righteousness.

Robert Murray M'Cheyne put this into a poem, called *Jehovah Tsidkenu: 'The Lord our Righteousness'*. He spoke of when he 'a stranger to grace and to God' and 'Jehovah Tsidkenu was nothing to me'. As he came to faith in Christ, that all changed, and 'Jehovah Tsidkenu was all things to me'. You are a Christian if you can say of Christ: 'I have no righteousness, but He is my righteousness.'

The Lord Our Righteousness

JEREMIAH 23:5-6

J

esus tells us that the prophets looked ahead to His coming (Luke 10:23-24). Jeremiah was one of those prophets who foresaw the coming of the Messianic shepherd. He also saw the apostasy of the kings of his time. God says what He expects of Judah's kings, that they would be righteous and compassionate, keep the covenant, and worship only the true God (22:3-5, 9).

Jeremiah mentions the last four kings by name - Shallum (Jehoahaz) who ruled for about three months before he was exiled to Egypt in 609BC; his brother, Jehoiakim, took over and reigned for over 10 years, until 598BC; Jehoiachin (Jeconiah or Coniah) who ruled for three months in 597BC before he was deported to Babylon and died as an exile; Zedekiah succeeded him but was killed before him.

So Jehoiachin was the last surviving king of the line of David.

There were no other kings of the line of David, until the coming of Jesus the Christ. So, there was a gap of about 600 years when Israel had the promises of the line of David but no king of the line of David sitting on the throne.

These last four kings are all condemned (23:1). The Messianic promise comes through the line of David, but these kings are all spiritual and moral failures in God's sight.

The true Shepherd-King.

By contrast, we have the promise of the true Shepherd-King: 'Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land' (23:5).

This greater Davidic king would be a lowly man of the line of David. He would be of the line of King David, but we need to link this up with other verses (see Isa.11:1; Amos 9:11). Great David's greater Son would come just when the tree was chopped down, and all that was left was a stump.



Turn to the New Testament, and that is what you find.

Pilate was a Roman governor, and Herod Antipas was an Idumean, not a Jew. Where is the Davidic king on the throne? He is not there. The booth of David was fallen, the tree of Jesse was laid low. It was in

such unpromising yet promised circumstances that the Messiah came.

Is that not how God so often works? All through Scripture God brings victory to His people when they are weak, and almost dead.

So, for example, He uses weak Gideon with only 300 men to defeat the Midianites. Victories are always His, never ours. The other kings have failed miserably. Israel cannot save itself.

The King will be righteous.

Jeremiah tells us three things about what this coming king will be like.

(a) He will act wisely (23:5). Not one foolish word will fall from His lips, not one unjust act will He carry out, nor one evil thought be entertained by Him. The last few Davidic kings were disasters. The true Messiah would go about doing good, and be able to challenge His enemies (John 8:46).

(b) He will execute justice and righteousness in the land. Psalm 72 prophesies the king to come (Ps.72:2). The other kings will be idolaters, despots, cowards, and the like. There will come one Shepherd-King from the line of David who will always act righteously.

(c) He would save His people: 'In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness' (23:6). His people, Judah and Israel, will be reunited and be saved. True Israel is the Church (Gal.6:16; Rev.2:9). 'Jesus' means 'Yahweh saves' - He came to save not the world, but His people.

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