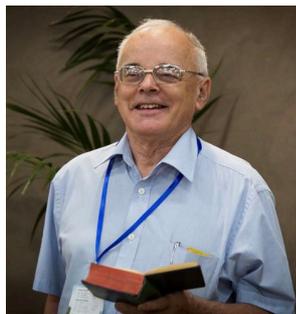


The Presbyterian Banner

May 2018

Mobilised for Mission?



FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Christian Reader,

Are you standing up to the full responsibility that devolves upon you as a

Christian man or woman, privileged with the greatest heritage that could come into the possession of any individual or nation, namely, the custody of the most precious Gospel of Jesus Christ in all its purity and simplicity? Are you pulling your full weight in seeing that future generations are possessed with every opportunity of experiencing and enjoying the blood bought rights and blessings of our Redeemer? No sadder slur could lay charged to the account of any race of people than that they failed to transmit the Gospel of Divine Grace to those who followed them, so that sons unborn who should arise might to their sons then show the glorious works of God.

There never was a time that called for more activity and zeal on the part of Free Presbyterian [PCEA] people than at the present moment. On every side attacks are being made upon the most sacred things of life. Everywhere doubt and uncertainty raise their ugly heads. Error, superstition, and falsity have prominence. It behoves us to be up and doing. This is the day of our opportunity. We have the goods. Shall we fail to deliver them?

We expect every man, woman, and child that has a spark of grace in them to put their shoulder to the wheel, to rise like a solid phalanx around the great and immutable truths of Holy Writ, the integrity and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, the essential Deity and Divinity of the blessed person of the Son of God, and hold them as inviolate and intact, as one has said, "whose foundations are upon earth and whose battlements are in heaven." To so stamp them upon the rising generations that they shall pass unsullied and

untarnished, unfading and undying, to every age to come, indelibly written upon the page below as well as the page above THAT HE HATH DONE THIS.

The above is the Editorial in our church magazine Our Banner in February 1933 written by the Rev. J. Campbell Robinson of East St Kilda. The context was the influence of modernism in the churches of Australia which was having a serious impact. Today, the flowering of that rationalistic and individualistic outlook is seen in our secular post-modern society in which each person does what seems right is his or her eyes. The claims of God and of the conscience that is loyal to the word of God are increasingly marginalised, persecution from the excessively politically correct is on the rise. The answer is not a rush to political activism still less a retreat into pietism. The root answer is the clear presentation and practice of the full-orbed Gospel. The Christian's calling is to be faithful in a hostile environment. 1 Timothy 6:11-16 [NIV] states: 'But you, man of God, flee from all this [false attitude to material things], and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honour and might forever.' Amen.

Cover pic: Canadian Bay, Mt Eliza, Vic
Adelaide Wyrstek, (age 12), Knox PCEA

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Joseph Steinberg's Visit

The CEO of Christian Witness to Israel is visiting Australia this month.

Joseph Steinberg is not your typical Church of England minister. He's big, he's beefy, he's American, he's a born-again Christian and he's Jewish — a rare combination in an Anglican clergyman. He also happens to be a genuinely nice guy. So what's a nice Jewish boy doing in the Church of England ministry instead of the rabbinate? We asked him to explain... My Jewish upbringing implanted in me two basic beliefs. The first was that one day the Messiah would come to bring peace on earth: the lion would lie down with the lamb, all nations would beat their weapons into farming tools, peace and justice would reign forever. The second belief was that a Jew could never believe in Jesus. These beliefs were what made me a Jew and tied me to my people.

What does God expect of me?

During my teenage years I became friends with a neighbour named Mark and I noticed there was something different about him. Mark, it turned out, was a "born-again Christian", someone who truly believed and practised what Jesus taught. Mark asked me what I, as a Jew, believed and I proudly responded that I didn't believe in Jesus, to which he replied that he had asked what I did believe, not what I didn't believe! After our conversation, I decided to begin reading the Bible to discover what God expected from me as a Jew. Soon after I started to read I was confronted with the problem of sin and how we can be forgiven for breaking God's commandments. I found out from the Bible that nothing less than a blood sacrifice can atone for sin. Through the Scriptures I began to understand what God required of me and I began to pray that he would show me how I could please him.

It begins to make sense

Mark continued to tell me about Jesus, but I still refused to believe he was more than a man who had the misfortune to be crucified. Mark was insistent that Jesus was the Messiah whom the

Jewish people were expecting so I read some of the prophecies of the Old Testament to find out what the Messiah was to be like. According to the prophets Messiah was to bring peace to the earth but, surprisingly enough, according to the prophet Isaiah, he was also to die for the sins of the world. To my Jewish mind it was all so strange — why had I never been told that Messiah was to first bring peace to the earth by his death? Not until I stumbled upon a prophecy in the book of Jeremiah did it all begin to make sense:

"Behold, the days are coming", says the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel ... I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

A shock discovery

I had to find out more about Jesus since all I knew about him was what I had been told by other people, and that really wasn't much. I began to read the New Testament and was shocked to discover that Jesus was a learned rabbi and that he was not a weak man, as I had imagined. But he was even greater, for he claimed to be the Messiah!

Peace on earth

He was not caught off-guard when facing crucifixion, but willingly gave up his life for the sins of the world. Three days after his death, he rose from the dead and was seen by many. Later he ascended to heaven, and so the promise of the Messiah bringing peace between men, and between God and men, will find its ultimate fulfilment when Jesus returns.

It all makes sense

This account made sense according to all the Messianic prophecies I had read. Either Jesus was the Messiah and personal sin-bearer or he was not. If he wasn't, then not only should Jews not believe in him, but neither should anyone. On the other hand if he was the Messiah then the most Jewish thing I could do was to accept Jesus and receive him as my Messiah and Lord. I saw the truth about Jesus and put my trust in him. The Bible now makes sense to me, I know that my sins are forgiven, I have the certainty that I will live eternally with God because of Jesus. I challenge you to look at the evidence about Jesus for yourself and you, too, will find shalom in Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

This article is from the CWI website cwi.org.au



New Church in Melbourne

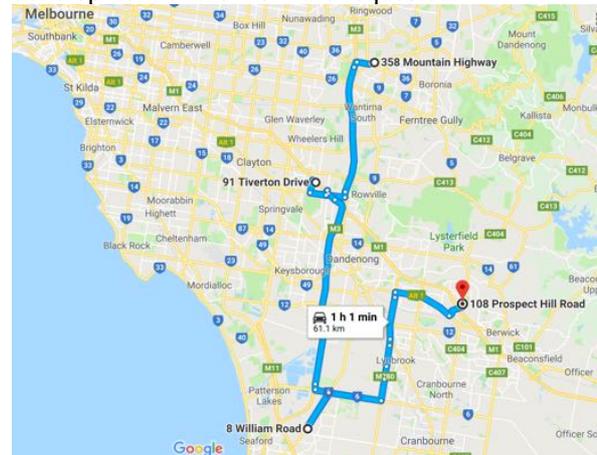
The Knox Congregation in Wantirna, which had planted the Narre Warren Congregation in 1989/90, had a vision for extension of Christian witness in the Melbourne's south-east but, by the time of the retirement of its minister (Dr Ward) on 30 June 2012, suitable land had not been located. Meanwhile, on 22 October 2010 the Rev. David Kumnick, ten other members and three adherents of the Frankston Reformed Fellowship, which had existed since 2004, had been received as a congregation of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia. Mr Kumnick was appointed as supply preacher, inducted as an elder, and in 2012 received as a minister of the PCEA. The work was at first under the care of Knox.

On 20 June 2014 the site of 1420m² at **8 William Road, Carrum Downs** was purchased for \$415,000 with settlement 24 October 2014. (Today it would cost \$600,000.) The old cottage and outbuildings were demolished. Extra funds arising from the re-development of the Glen Huntly church were received in March 2016. After some delay a permit for a 230m² building and 22 car spaces was secured via VCAT on 13 April 2017. Building commenced in September 2017 and apart from some minor cosmetic matters is now complete and was opened debt-free at a service on Saturday 21 April 2018 attended by some 60 or 70 people. The cost (including site) is around \$900,000 and was met by Knox. Furnishings and other contents were met by the Carrum Downs group of about a dozen.

People were present from each of the Melbourne congregations. Rev. Andres Miranda and Rev. Tut

Yoa led in prayer, Terry Buck (elder at Narre Warren) read the Scripture and Dr. Ward, the Interim-Moderator, preached on 'How to Build a Church' based on 1 Corinthians 13. The singing was most hearty with good fellowship afterwards including with a number of Reformed Presbyterian members whose public services in South Frankston have recently ceased. A Bible was presented to our conscientious builder, George Chaia.

The inaugural service the following day attracted 22 persons including a number of local residents. Mr Kumnick's present ill-health precludes active ministry and the Interim-Moderator is supplying the pulpit and providing pastoral care. The initial sermon series is the Book of Acts. Your prayers for development of the work are requested.



Our four centres (see map) give good coverage of the burgeoning east/south east of Melbourne although at least one other centre in the future is desirable, perhaps south of Pakenham. Suitable land is hard to come by and expensive, while special gifts or bequests will be needed to fund such work. #

By Night When Others Soundly Slept

*Anne Bradstreet (1612–1672) of
Massachusetts*

1
By night when others soundly slept
And hath at once both ease and rest,
My waking eyes were open kept
And so to lie I found it best.

2
I sought him whom my soul did love,
With tears I sought him earnestly.
He bowed his ear down from above.
In vain I did not seek or cry.

3
My hungry soul he filled with good;
He in his bottle put my tears,
My smarting wounds washed in his blood,
And banished thence my doubts and fears.

4
What to my Saviour shall I give
Who freely hath done this for me?
I'll serve him here whilst I shall live
And love him to eternity.

THE ROLE OF THE ELDER

[Contributed by an older member.]

Regardless of the number of ministers, the church works best when she has committed, active elders.

A. Personal attributes

1. His primary responsibility is his own spirituality.

Before the elder can care for anyone else, he has to watch his own life and maintain a close walk with the Lord, with personal devotions and daily prayer, also leading his own family in family worship.

2. Team spirit

The elder must be able to work well in a team.

3. His personality

He needs to relate to people. This does not prohibit the shy or the awkward from eldership, but he will need to work at developing this.

4. Status

Following on from that, in today's PCEA most elders seem to be middle class professionals. This is a change from the past when the church was rural- based and elders came from all walks of life. The upside is that higher income means they contribute more financially, may have managerial skills and can more easily take time off work if need be. The down side is that they may understand less of the struggles of the poor and the disadvantaged. In this, they must make a real effort to connect.

5. The elder's wife.

She does not need a high profile in the congregation but must be seen to be actively supporting her husband and apart from exceptional circumstances, should be regular at both worship services, studies and functions. Without this, it is hard for an elder to discharge his role.

She must also have a close walk with the Lord and watch her tongue (and what she puts on Facebook).

The elder's wife should get to know the ladies to help them spiritually in a way that the men might find hard. She needs to be able to manage the children on her own and be willing to let her husband fulfil his duties – eg evenings and Saturdays on the Lord's work and using holiday leave for church business and activities.

The elder should not discuss Session business with his wife and she should not probe.

B. In the congregation

1. Spiritual care

His main role is to care for the spiritual well-being of all in the congregation. To do this he has to be actively involved in its life in all facets - Lord's Day services, prayer meetings and other functions as well as visiting. The elders need to meet regularly (?monthly) as a Session to pray, review and plan the work.

2. Serving

While elders are leaders they are there to serve, not to dominate. They need to know what is going on in people's lives so they know best how to help them. What are their struggles? Their concerns? Ministers and most elders are better off today, and most can afford to send their children to Christian schools. Not all are in this position and elders need to know what is going on in their local schools and communities.

3. Supervising

The Session is responsible for the appointment of leaders of groups within the congregation such as Sunday school, study groups, youth groups etc and the ongoing oversight of all the activities of these groups. To do this requires getting to know everyone in the congregation, assessing their gifts and aptitudes and ensuring that their gifts and spiritual life fit the needs in the different areas in the congregation.

4. Encouragers

The elders need to encourage the weak, the downcast, the struggling and be good mentors of the young.

5. Hospitality

They must be hospitable, not just to those they know, but caring for visitors between services, hosting those at meetings such as Presbytery etc, or opening their home to SS teachers' meetings, Youth Groups etc.

6. Using his gifts

The elders are in the forefront of leadership, and things work best if they are using their natural gifts. Eg some elders can preach, but some cannot. In any case, even those who can preach will probably only do so a few times a year unless there is a vacancy; but they are ruling elders week in and week out.

Preaching is not a prerequisite for eldership, but it helps if the elder is able to speak in public and more importantly, he must be able to pray in public.

Those who cannot preach will have other gifts, perhaps running a Youth Group, organising a camp, or leading a team in evangelism, or visiting the sick at home or in hospital. While in a small church like the PCEA without enough elders to be devoted to one role, these jobs often have to overlap, so as far as possible elders should develop their gifts in a variety of areas.

7. The wider church

The elders need to keep up to date with the needs of the wider church and the missions that we support, so they can raise awareness in the congregation and give practical assistance where needed.

They need to be willing to attend Presbyteries, Synods and camps, which may entail using annual leave or taking unpaid leave from work.

A final suggestion

Suitable younger men should be elected to the eldership, rather than, as often seems to happen, holding elections only when securing a quorum is threatened. In this way younger men learn from the more experienced and are able to contribute their understanding of the upcoming generation.

Eldership is an onerous but an honourable task given by the Lord Jesus. Pray constantly for our elders. #

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Rowland Ward

The closing verses of Matthew's Gospel (28:16-20) are well known:

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." [NIV]

This paragraph heading in my Bible is The Great Commission and that is how we commonly speak of it. I want to consider it under three headings: an awesome affirmation, a clear commission and a precious promise.

1. An Awesome Affirmation – 'all authority'

The Great Commission is given in Galilee whereas the Ascension occurs further south near Jerusalem where also the Great Commission begins to be carried out (Luke 24:50). Galilee for bordered many other countries and was subject to many influences from the people in surrounding lands. It was far from the centre of Jewish religious life and culture. As Isaiah had prophesied (Isaiah 9:2), the people walking in darkness were to see a great light. And so it is here that Jesus delivers this awesome affirmation. It is likely that the Sermon on the Mount and the Mount of Transfiguration, both of which were in Galilee, are one and the same with the Mount of the Great Commission. It is in Galilee that is honoured as Jesus anticipates the Gospel going from Israel to the other nations.

When the disciples saw Jesus they worshipped him. These monotheistic Jews give Jesus the honour that is due to God alone. They share Thomas' conviction: "My Lord and my God!" There is no conflict in their minds. They accept his true and essential deity. We further read "but some [Greek: *hoi de*] doubted". That's how it's usually translated but it may be questioned. A verbal construction following *hoi de* in Matthew

always refers to the entire group of people previously mentioned, while the word for doubt [*edistasan*] in its only other occurrence in Matthew (14:31) means 'little faith'. So it is better to read the text as: *they worshipped him but with little faith*. The point is of value for us. The disciples don't understand everything but they worshipped Jesus despite weakness in their faith. We too should acknowledge Jesus although we have but little faith. Don't focus on your little faith; despite it God can use you.

Jesus does not say to them, 'Your faith is still weak, I'll choose others.' Rather he makes the awesome faith-building affirmation: *All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me*. Of course, in one sense this is ridiculous but it is also staggering: Here is someone who has been crucified, yet has been raised from the dead. It is a statement fully acceptable and right because Jesus is who he says he is. He is God in the flesh. He has been raised by the Father in the power of an indestructible life. He lives! But he also reigns as the soon to come ascension will make clear. This rule is not just in heaven but also in this evil and confused world where we live. All lesser authority is under his authority (compare Daniel 7:13ff; Ephesians 1:20-23). The Gospel is not under-resourced. This awesome affirmation leads to greater worship and stronger faith but it is not faith considered in itself that saves, but the object of faith, our Risen, Reigning Lord.

2. A Clear Commission

It is most apt to read the commission as: *Therefore as you go make disciples*. The implication is that since Jesus is Lord disciples go, they live in a certain way; as a result there is the response of discipleship on the part of others. *Of all nations*. This going is not limited to Israel any longer, as by and large it was before, but is to all nations beginning at Jerusalem. The universal lordship of Jesus means a universal call to acknowledge him which involves repentance (a change of mind and direction) so as to become a disciple of Jesus. As was promised to Abraham, all the nations of the earth are to be blessed in Jesus.

Baptizing them. Baptism is a rite involving the application of water as a picture of cleansing beyond the power of the water. It is in some sense emblematic of the work of the Spirit as is clear from John the Baptist's statement: 'I baptise with water; he (Jesus) will baptise with the Holy Spirit'. You belong to the one in whose name you are baptised. In 1 Corinthians 1 Paul deals with the party spirit evident in the church. "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptised in the name of Paul?" he asks. The

argument runs, “If you were baptised in my name you would belong to me”. The baptism of those who acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus is the reception of the sign and seal of God’s covenant promise. The young children of believers are also to be baptised. Baptism is like a marriage marking what is now official. It is saying ‘Yes, I belong to Jesus’. My primary allegiance is not to my family and not to my tribe or country, but to Jesus Christ and his new society.

In the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. This name in effect is the unpacking of the redemptive name of God in the Old Testament which we translate as LORD in capital letters (as the pronunciation of that name in Hebrew is not certain) although sometimes it is rendered Jehovah or, probably more accurately, Yahweh, ‘I am that I am’. This is the name that as a word was known to the patriarchs but whose meaning was only revealed in the sovereign and gracious deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 3:13-15; 6:2). This provided a picture on the earthly level of the redemption from sin accomplished by Christ. (Note Moses and Elijah, the representatives of the Law and the Prophets, talk with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration of the departure (literally, *the exodus*) he is about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem, Luke 9:30-31.) So the Triune name is the distinctive name of God under the new covenant.

Note that the name is singular. If it was plural we could imagine some distinction of status might be conceivable, but the singular means we must understand equality. Clearly, the Father is God, thus the Son and the Spirit must also be God. Yet at the same time we must maintain some distinction between the three. Matthew himself records the baptism of Jesus at which the Father testifies to the Son and the Spirit is seen in the form of a dove (Matt 3:16-17). Jesus does not pray to himself when he prays to the Father (Matt 26:36ff), while the Spirit is distinguished from Jesus in Matt 12:33. The Son has been given authority by the Father, and Jesus promises the Spirit after his ascension. So we conclude there is but one God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is each God, and the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is each a distinct person, using ‘person’ here because the relationship between the three suggests that language even though it has its limitations. (God is not a committee but a unique and eternal fellowship of love.)

In the Old Testament we have anticipation of the rich life of God in his redeeming purposes but only in the fulfillment of the promises do we begin to see more clearly God’s way of redemption in

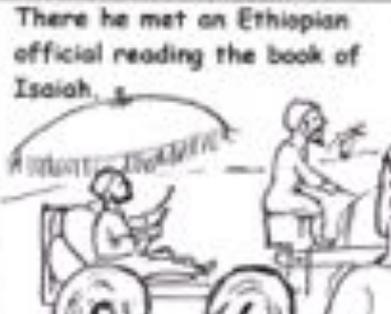
that he gives himself for us in the person of his Son. In the Old Testament God committed himself to a sinful man, saying to Abraham, ‘I will God to you and your children after you’ (Genesis 17:7). There is nothing greater than this in the New Testament except that we see the amazing length God goes to, the amazing love he shows, to redeem and save sinners so that he is their God and they his people.

Teaching them. Those who have repented and put their faith in the Risen and Reigning Lord may know very little. They need to be taught, both by exposition of Scripture and by systematic instruction in the faith. They are to be taught *to obey all that I have commanded*, that is, no more and no less than Jesus has taught, whether in regard to the Old Testament Scriptures or to the New Testament. This means teaching doctrine, the truth as it is in Jesus, but it means also practice arising from doctrine. The two go hand in hand. *All nations are to be taught all Jesus has commanded.*

*‘...the Triune name is
the distinctive name of
God under the new
covenant’*

3. A Precious Promise – ‘all the days’

And surely I am with you all the days, to the very end of the age. This promise was addressed to the Apostles, but elders succeed them in respect of leadership in the church as Acts 20:17-35 shows. Still, even if there is a primary responsibility for mission (as well as maintenance) on church leaders, all Jesus’ disciples are involved in prayer, godly living, giving. It is to the mission-oriented church, the going church, that the promise of Christ’s presence is given. Christ’s presence is through the Holy Spirit sent from the Father and the Son. This is not a second-rate presence alternative to Christ’s physical presence but a real and empowering presence for every believer and for the going church. Leaders are certainly challenged as to whether they have this mission focus. At the same time they have the direction not to look to their own resources but to the one who promises to be with them in their mission to the very culmination of history until the return of Christ. Are our churches mobilised for mission? What are we doing for the furtherance of the Gospel at home and overseas? #

<h1>Philip's Desert Encounter</h1>	 <p>An angel told Philip to go to the desert road from Jerusalem to Gaza.</p>	<p>There he met an Ethiopian official reading the book of Isaiah.</p> 
 <p>He didn't understand what the prophet meant. "Is he talking about himself or someone else?" he asked Philip.</p>		 <p>He invited Philip to come up and sit in his chariot with him.</p>
<p>When they came to water Philip baptised the man.</p> 		 <p>When they came up out of the water the Spirit of the Lord took Philip away somewhere else.</p>

SEARCH WORK

MAY 2018

SENIOR and INTERMEDIATE

Intermediate omit questions 6 and 8

ROMANS chapter 11

1. What was the answer of God to Elijah when he said he was left alone?
2. What benefit had come to the Gentiles through the fall of Israel?
3. Why are we told not to be high-minded [haughty] but fear? (2 verses)
4. Why has God concluded all in unbelief [committed all to disobedience]?

Chapter 12

5. Instead of being conformed to this world, what should we be?

Chapter 13

6. Why should every soul be subject to the higher powers [governing authorities]? (2 verses)
7. What is the only thing we should owe one another?
8. Why is it high time to awake out of sleep? (2 verses)

JUNIOR

GENESIS chapter 8

1. When Noah sent the dove out the second time from the ark, what did she bring back?
2. What did the Lord say when he smelled the sweet savour [aroma] of Noah's sacrifice? (2 verses)

Chapter 9

3. What would the Lord remember when he looked at the rainbow in the cloud?
4. What blessing did Noah give to Shem and Japheth? (2 verses)

CHURCH AND NATION

This is a section of the Church and Nation Report to Synod 2018 to meet 1-3 May 2018 at Taree. The Committee Convener is the Rev. George Ball.

The church landscape: We are thankful for those in other churches who share with us the convictions of the reformed and evangelical faith. Four of our ministers and one elder attended the recent Banner of Truth Conference in Collaroy, Sydney. The poet John Donne said, 'no man is an island'. We might

paraphrase, 'no church is an island'. We are a small part of the whole. We therefore have an interest and concern for the well-being of Christ's church in this land as Jesus himself prayed, 'that they all may be one, just as you, Father are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me' (Jn. 17: 21).

As we survey our own 'vineyard' there are surely many reasons for concern. We see the number of vacancies, the difficulty of obtaining competent ministers and elders, the declining and aging membership, the lack of organised evangelism and apparent unconcern for the lost. 'What can the righteous do'?

Mercifully, 'the LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD's throne is in heaven' (Ps. 11: 4). We must at least begin with prayer. 'Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?' (Ps. 85:

6). We must encourage a spirit of love and care at Synod and Presbytery and congregational levels. We must seek to develop a strategy of evangelism that is appropriate to the local gifts and resources. We must instill a sense of confidence in our pattern of worship. We must encourage personal and family worship.

Central in our worship services are the Bible and the Psalter which ideally ought to be in the 'common' language. It's very disheartening to see old faded, stained and tattered Bibles and Psalters still in use. What kind of impression does this convey to our own people – to our children – to our visitors – and to the Lord?

The Psalms: I assume that we are all persuaded of the benefits of singing the psalms. Rosaria Butterfield says, "Psalm singing is Gospel dynamite, and sadly the best kept secret in today's evangelical church". Robert Godfrey writes, "one obvious effect of psalm-singing was that Reformed worshippers had the psalms well planted in their minds and hearts. If we should hide God's Word in our hearts that we might not sin against him (Ps. 119: 11), singing the Word is one of the best ways to do that. Early Reformed leaders did not so much argue that we may sing only psalms as they argued that the psalms are the best songs to sing because they are divinely inspired. The principal argument used to promote hymn-singing from the eighteenth century on has been that hymns are more clearly centred on Christ than are the psalms" (An Unexpected Journey. P&R Publishing. 2004. P. 144). But is this true? I don't believe so, but it could well be believed given the way we [may] have traditionally read, explained and sung the Psalms.

That's why it's heartening to see a renewed scholarly interest in the psalms. A number of very helpful and useful publications have been produced more recently that help us to see more clearly how the psalms (not just the traditional 'messianic' psalms) connect to Christ.

Such a book is Christopher Ash, **Teaching Psalms – From Text to Message**, Christian Focus (2017). It's a book aimed at Bible teachers and preachers. Ash writes, "Although I love the Psalms, my love is tinged with frustration at the prevalence of Christ-less handling of them; or readings to which Christ is a somewhat arbitrary 'add on', tacked on the end to make it feel 'Christian'. I want first to persuade you that the Psalms are filled with Christ, that Christ does not have to be 'glued on' to the Psalms to make them 'Christian', but that Christ emerges from the warp and woof of the Psalms themselves. Then I want to equip you to read them Christianly, to pray them in Christ, and love them in Christ." We might also add 'and sing them with Christ'. I have been waiting for over 30 years for such a book. This is it.

Another very helpful book is, W. Robert Godfrey, **Learning to Love the Psalms**, Reformation Trust (2017). Godfrey writes that one of the attractions of the psalms is that they are full of Christ. "They not only explicitly prophecy the coming of Christ (e.g. Psalms 2, 22, 110), but the message of the Psalms always pulls the soul to Christ and His great saving work. The Psalms intensify our fellowship with Christ". This is a book not only for pastors but also very suitable for Christians of every shape and size.

Another book that ought to be known by every pastor and elder is, Michael Lefebvre, **Singing the Songs of Jesus**, Christian Focus (2010). Lefebvre writes that we must relearn why the psalms are composed with so much agonising and 'awkward' language. We have to discover how the apostles and the early church fathers, and the Reformers saw Christ in the psalms in such glory that they esteemed them as the ideal praise book of Christ-centred worship. He strikingly makes the point that the psalms are 'king-led'. The New Testament church saw in Jesus the ultimate song leader for the churches praises. When we sing the psalms, we are actually singing the songs of Jesus, with Jesus as our song leader. Singing the Psalms means we don't just sing to our Saviour; we get to sing with Him. Another helpful little book that would be a great addition in every home is, Bradley Johnston, **150 Questions About the Psalter**. Crown and Covenant Publications (2014). It is the prayer of the author, "that the Psalter may become a powerful glue that binds the church of Jesus Christ together in God-centred, gospel-driven, and word-saturated worship. May Christians throughout all the ages and all the nations of the earth discover the Christian use of the biblical Psalter."

The Psalter: The Psalms are, of course, not only for reading and praying. The Psalms are the Bible's songbook. They are intended to be sung. The more recent published Psalters include; *The Book of Psalms for Worship*, Crown and Covenant Publications (2009). *The Psalms for Singing*, Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland (2004). *Sing Psalms*, Free Church of Scotland (1994). *The Complete Book of Psalms for Singing*, R.S. Ward (1991). We understand the OPC and the URCA churches will (or have?) also produced new metrical psalms for singing. It would be desirable if we could all sing from the same psalter, using tunes that are familiar, or are at least easily learned. Singing psalms, a capella is strange enough in today's evangelical culture. Singing psalms to unfamiliar tunes only creates unnecessary barriers for the people we want to reach outside our church buildings. #

Brisbane Congregation News



L to R: Irene, Aimee, Jessie

Three young ladies, Irene Klazinga, Aimee Carswell and Jessie Carswell, in the Brisbane Congregation celebrated their 18th birthdays in February, so it was suggested that the ladies in the congregation marked the special occasions with a High Tea, which we catered for ourselves. We had great fun digging out the old, or even antique, bone china tea sets, starching and ironing the linen table cloths and napkins and polishing the silver, in preparation for the day. About 20 of us met on 17th February in Julie Schmidt's recently acquired home and enjoyed a truly sumptuous spread of delectable treats, that the great cooks in the congregation had made. We had a very enjoyable time of fellowship and celebration and prayed for God's blessing on the 3 young adults.



A sumptuous spread

A month later we had a reason for another time of fellowship, when we had a Baby Shower for Bonnie-Anne Richards, who is expecting baby number 5 in April. Young-Hee Carswell went to a lot of trouble in setting up decorations and

organising baby-related games for us to play. We enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea and Bonnie-Anne was given a bassinet and disposable nappies in preparation for the new baby. We are remembering Bonnie-Anne in our prayers; for a safe delivery and that both mother and baby will be fine.



The Richards family: Taylor and Bonnie-Anne, with (L to R) Enoch, Keziah, Valentina, and Jerusha.

CARRUM DOWNS



Opening service 21 April 2018

PCEA Youth Camp *Report by Julie Schmidt*

Over the Easter long weekend, the teens and young adults of the PCEA were fortunate to once again have the opportunity to meet for a Youth Camp at the home of John and Judy Greensill in Maclean, NSW. We all arrived on Friday afternoon, tents and sleeping bags in tow. Some of us had travelled only a few hours, while others had come a much greater distance but we all made it safely, and didn't have any major problems setting up tents!

Our speaker for the camp, Rev. Robin Tso, had prepared a series of talks and discussions based around the question, "What does the Church mean to you?" This was broken down into several topics: Loving the Church's Lord as the Chief Cornerstone; Heeding the Church's call among many voices; Embracing the Church in the Post-Modern era; and Serving the Church in exile.



During these talks camp attendees were challenged to think about how they live their Christian lives in this current society, where the beliefs and morals of those around us are so radically different from God's Law. We were also led to examine the effect that technology in this day and age has upon our Christian lives. Robin challenged us to consider our roles within the church and the importance of membership in the church. He particularly encouraged the young men to consider what role God has called them to take up, as part of the church, not just in the ministry, but to consider a role as an Elder or a Deacon in the church.

During the camp we also had the opportunity to participate in a number of Psalmody classes, where we learnt to sing a number of new tunes, as well as the harmony parts. It was very encouraging to hear such wonderful singing from the youth of our denomination – even when we were just singing in a shed! In our free time on Saturday, some of us went to the Highland Gathering in Maclean, to enjoy witnessing the celebration of the town's Scottish heritage. The Northern Rivers Congregation had a stall set up at the Gathering, and this was used as an opportunity to witness to the community. We were blessed with beautiful weather over the weekend, which made for a wonderful time for those who went to the beach, went kayaking or just spent time basking in the sunshine!

On Sunday, we joined the Maclean congregation for their two services and for fellowship during the church luncheon. It was encouraging for the Maclean congregation to have so many young people with them. This camp would not have been so successful without the hard work and commitment of John and Judy Greensill. They have put so much time and effort into ensuring that our youth camp was as good as it was. Thank you to Robin for leading us in our studies, and also to David Kerridge, who assisted us through our studies and discussions. Thank you to the Northern Rivers congregation for your support and to Matt Schmidt and Stewart Carswell for organising this event! To the cooks – you are amazing! Thank you for all your delicious meals!

Thank you all for an amazing weekend – we all had a wonderful time studying God's word and spending time building relationships and making new friends. This was certainly a youth camp to remember!