

The Presbyterian Banner

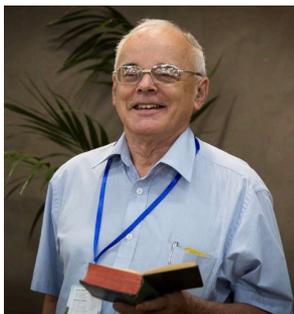
June 2018

SYNOD ISSUE

Confronting today's Problems – The Coming of the Holy Spirit – Testimonial for Trevor Leggott



To him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think...to him be glory in the church - Eph 3:20



FROM THE EDITOR

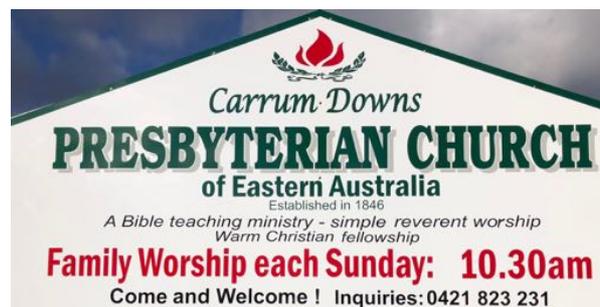
The Royal wedding has been and gone. It was expertly arranged and the colour and pageantry was right up with the best. The Dean of St George's Chapel preliminary address about the nature of marriage set a good note which was let down by Bishop Michael Currey's 13 minute sermon. The bishop, who is the Primate of the generally liberal Episcopal Church in the USA, part of the Anglican communion, spoke about love but essentially on the human plane. If we only love one another what a wonderful world we would have. Indeed. The problem is that when love incarnate walked upon the earth he was crucified.

The real issue is why we are not loving? why we are sinners? what do we deserve? Then we have to face the wonder of redemption in Christ that sets us free to serve in newness of life. But of this we heard nothing.

Certainly the bishop was, shall we say, an energetic even charismatic personality. I don't complain about this although it seemed some of the establishment congregation looked askance, particularly as he departed from his

distributed script and the time allotted. What is sad was the essentially humanistic presentation heard by hundreds of millions of people. Indeed, he is on record elsewhere, as his Episcopal Church, as endorsing same-sex marriage and we wonder about the push for LGBTI by the younger royals. Interesting in a better way is the UK-USA aspect and the multi-cultural dimension with even a Coptic (Egyptian) bishop participating.

This issue has a number of items related to the recent PCEA Synod at Taree. The synod appointed me as Editor of The Presbyterian Banner. I appreciate your prayerful interest and support. In particular I renew my plea for contributions for the cover of our magazine. Age does not matter but some of our younger folk can take a good picture. Please send in contributions.



Note the stylised green burning bush with flame, an unofficial logo used for some 10 years in several of our Melbourne churches.

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Editor: Rev. Dr Rowland S. Ward, 2 Hadlow Drive, Wantirna 3152

T: 03 9720 4871 M: 0421 823 231 E: rowland.ward@gmail.com



Rev. Tut Wan Yoa and Mrs Elizabeth Yoa

CONFRONTING TODAY'S PROBLEMS

Moderator's Address, Rev. Tut Wan Yoa

The Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia is a small church that is declining as are many other denominations. There are a number of causes, some of which I wish to discuss, but the very secular mindset, and the emphasis on individualism in Australia at present are major factors. Many people have shifted away from their Christian roots, hardly 10% of the population are church attenders and only a proportion of these are real believers in Christ. Church membership is becoming less and less meaningful, and denominational commitment is less and less. The current generation shops around until they find what they want - and they are not worried about the denomination providing it. Large charismatic-type churches provide music and a sensory

experience that appeals to the young and restless. This affects us as a small church which wants to maintain purity of worship and to follow what God wants rather than our own desires. In 1999 51.3% of marriages were overseen by civil celebrants; today the figure is over 76% reflecting the reduced church impact on the cultural life of Australia.

I: SOME PROBLEMS

The Sunday or Lord's Day

The Christian church used to be one of the major institutions in Australian life. It shaped the culture of the country. Sunday was a distinctive day of the week because no work could be demanded from workers on it. Now, on Sunday trading is open as they are during weekdays and sports commences at noon. Previously, there was no cable TV or video games; Sunday was a time reserved by many Christians for attending worship services, but new research indicates the extent to which churches today are competing against other activities- the biggest competition being children's sports. Unlike the past, shops are now open, the population at large expect to be at home and sports has staked its claim. With many of our youth participating in some sport or another, parents are adding another item on their to-do list.

This was once not such a nuisance to the church as most sporting activities were allocated to Saturdays or even spread out across during weekdays - the children of Christian parents deciding on creating their own division on Saturdays. However, with the growing passion our youth hold for furthering themselves in the sporting world, parents have now been confronted with something they never expected: Sunday sports. This new rise and demand of higher grade sporting commitments has provided a confrontation: do we of the older generation force them to quit so that they may hear the word of God, or do we allow them to compete and, in turn, leave the church? It is a dilemma best solved. Most parents feel guilty if they push their children to sacrifice their personal activities for the need of their salvation; hearing and learning about the Lord and Our Father - and rightly so. If we are too aggressive in our demands, kids are likely to resent their parents, and even further, resent the Church for being the reason they can't perform in their sport of choice. On the contrary, if we are too lenient, we allow our children to progress in their sport at the expense of their faith and the future of the congregation. After all, a church cannot prosper if there is no one for us to pass the baton

to. Churches generally do not seem to bother opposing Sunday sport or preaching about the importance of Sunday as a day of worship only.

Sexual scandals

Recently, the evidence of sexual abuse in religious institutions has been highlighted. Although sexual abuse is higher in the general community, the extent to which churches have ignored or tried to hide abuse, or shifted perpetrators to other parishes is a scandal. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse revealed 7% of Australian Roman Catholic priests between 1950–2009 were accused of abusing children. All major religious bodies have had cases of sexual abuse, generally not to the extent of the Roman Catholic Church, although that is little comfort. In any case, *all* the Christian bodies have suffered reputational damage because of what has occurred, and a secular media has exploited this moral failure to the full. There is evidence of decline in attendance in some churches due to the scandal which overrides recognition of the good that is done by the churches.

Internet problems

As congregations age, there are few younger people interested in filling the pews and participating in traditional forms of worship and church life. While there is a decline in participation in traditional forms of church, there is a growing interest in the use of the internet to advise oneself. Now and here, the internet has been and is still a source in being a big distraction and challenge to the growth of congregations and the church. An example of this, is the vast and varied information provided about spirituality and spirituality revolution. The term ‘spirituality’, however, is difficult to define and the exploration of spirituality plays out in many forms in popular culture. Where the Christian Church used to be the primary reference point about matters of the spirit, there are now many reference points for spiritual exploration. The church appears to play an insignificant role; Christianity, however, has a rich spirituality tradition and provides a lens through which people can articulate God’s encounter with them and their encounter with God. Without a frame of reference, there is no context for spirituality. It can become whatever people want it to be. Clearly the church is challenged, with its rich heritage and resources, to participate in the dialogue about spirituality.

This in and of itself has presented a major obstacle for the church itself, as with less of the younger generation participating, the demise and

end of generations encountering church nears. Our youth have found themselves researching, teaching and ministering to themselves on matters they are not experts on, and encouraged by the internet. Through the internet, our youth are privy to secular ideologies veiled with false premise. The idea that our children can delve into the world wide web and find missing information regarding spirituality while discarding where, how and by whom the spirit is given to us by, is blasphemous. This leads our younger generation to believe the church is no longer relevant for themselves, and is more likely going to drive them and any future offspring away from receiving salvation from our Lord. The spirituality practice raises the belief that all power, peace and might rests solely within oneself; if only one can achieve it. This intention in turn is very harmful to the preaching of the Word as it allows the minds of the youth to believe they are their own saviour, their hearts to turn away from God almighty and their souls and spirits to be far from redemption.

However, spirituality is not the only detracting information provided to our younger generation through the internet. The ever-growing shift to a digital world has made it easier for all of us, especially our teens, to access anything and everything at the end of their fingertips. We no longer need to go into the library, consult with a neighbour or search through databases for in-depth information; it is all available to us at the touch of a button. Of course, the internet is great for seeking further understanding and differing perspectives to broaden faith, but it also a tool for sinful intent.

One of our biggest problems is free access to worldly advice and instructions far from faith. Pornography, secular teachings and diverting entertainment are only some of the dominating content provided. Pornography, to begin with, is one of the biggest distractions our youth face today. It is almost impossible to not encounter a webpage without lustful ads presented in your search. Such blatant and obvious exposure to sexual stimuli to such young people who are still learning to not be creatures of the flesh is detrimental. It allows our children to become desensitized to not only our instructions, but to God’s command to abstain and not partake in adultery. Our children are misled into believing it is a normal occurrence to watch and become exposed to sins of the flesh. Further, the internet has become a place for cynics and disbelievers to run amuck with their uninformed opinions and incorrect teachings, blaspheming against our Father, freely stating that faith is not only a waste of time, but that it is for nothing. With such a large

majority able to continually provide negative and false content with most of the population in agreement, it becomes easier to influence naïve minds. If our children are not firm and strong in their faith, or even just simply constantly exposed to misleading secular beliefs, it can spark the downfall of our children into questioning their faith, and in turn, give up their faith.

II: CONFRONTING PROBLEMS

Biblical teaching

First and foremost we need to ensure adequate Biblical teaching. Our congregations need to be well instructed. Expository preaching is normal among us and that is good. However, we must not neglect adequate and relevant application of God's word to life in the 21st century, nor in stressing faith neglect repentance. Preaching styles may need to be reviewed so that we may capture the minds and hearts of the congregation without changing the substance of the contents of worship. Further, we need to provide systematic teaching as well. This is where our Confession and Faith and Catechisms have a very important role. At my church in Melbourne we include these in what might otherwise be called a Children's Address. We have gone through the Shorter Catechism, the Confession of Faith and are currently half-way through the Larger Catechism. Obviously, this segment of the service is at a fairly basic level but with everyone repeating the answer and given a brief explanation, exposure to the great truths of the faith occurs. It needs to be supplemented in other ways, but its value in anchoring the people is important.

Family worship/relationships

Just as important is a healthy family life including time for family worship which can include opportunity to discuss questions the younger ones may have. Pastors need to be alert to the needs of families and give guidance on helpful Christian literature. It is difficult in migrant communities as the children are thinking in English at school and parents can be holding on to the ways and language of the country from which they have come. This contributes to the alienation between the generations. It is a challenging issue in my own congregation and your prayers are valued as a means through which God helps us.

The internet, however, is and will remain a prominent tool in not only our children's lives, but our own. One cannot simply ban internet use or remove all computers, that would only become counter-productive. Parental block is a great tool which allows parents to choose which content

their kids can view, as well as blocking all ads and web page content that disagrees with our Christian beliefs. Nonetheless, parental ad block is simply not enough. If we do not warn our children about all the malicious material available through the wide web, their curiosity could simply get the better of them when they are not under our watchful eyes or away from home. Emphasis on the high call of Christ on our lives is important. Educating our children to know the consequences of viewing such vile activities online, will not only allow them to be better informed in their decisions, it will further warn them against wishing to partake in the sins of the flesh and to better discern what is, and isn't right to view or believe when they come across opposing opinions and acts. Even more so, teaching our children the difference between Christian faith and practice and what is commonly called 'spirituality' is important: that one stems from man's need to fulfil their ego and pride and the other a gift from the Holy Spirit, allows for a lesser chance of them being persuaded.

Encouraging involvement

As already mentioned, the decline in many churches is mostly among the young people who are engaged in sport which then becomes their prime principle of life. This suggests weakness in spiritual teaching and a lack of appreciation of the importance of the organised church. More attention to this aspect of God's Word is needed. We also need to encourage ministry involvement. Many members become less frequent attendees especially among the young adults, because they are not encouraged to recognise that they have a ministry role as members of the body of Christ (1 Cor: 12).

Participation is attached to preparation so we must become intentional about building relationships. Too often, our insecurity leads to micro-management expressed in such terms as, "if I want something done right, I have to do it myself." This can overburden ministers at the same as members gifts are under-utilised. But under the overall wise care of the elders opportunity needs to be given to church members. The saints need to be equipped for their work of ministry (Eph 4:11).

Small Groups

Emphasis on small groups may be one of the most neglected areas of our church life. Groups of all kinds, including home groups, youth and young adult groups. Such groups are perhaps one of the greatest influences for commitment to the local church. The importance of groups should begin

with the pastor and all the other key leaders in the church. There should be a clearly defined process or strategic plan for multiple groups so that they contribute to building up the body of Christ. As well as the midweek study and prayer meeting common in our churches, a Pastoral Care group of suitably qualified women members can assist in mentoring the young and visiting lady members who are on their own. Another group can visit in nursing homes or be involved in community help. There are many avenues of service. A church organised along these lines glorifies God and already conveys to children the importance of the Church as a community of Christians serving the Lord, where they too have a valued place.

The difficulty of mid-week meetings in our cities, given long working hours, may also suggest a better use of the Lord's Day for spiritual fellowship. The unique calling of believers needs to be clearly evident so that the claims of Jesus are seen as indeed more precious and valuable than sport.

We must always have heart for individuals, because each person is precious and unique in the sight of God and needs to be given a role in the church appropriate to their gifts before they wander off. In our cities especially, the church needs to follow the movement of the people to

newer suburbs and regions and not the people follow the church, otherwise, declining numbers will continue to be a reality in our own congregations if only because of distance.

The need is extremely demanding for the ministers, elders and deacons. Office-bearers need to take time to reassess priorities and to work together as a team. Sessions need to plan together sharing the same vision on how efforts at church revitalisation and growth will be carried out. We need to focus on the vision, mission, values and shared teachings of the church. That means what we do must be God-centred, holding to the whole counsel of God but being much in the main things. We can too readily be preoccupied with our own status and putting others down. This should not be, must not be. Rather, we need to acknowledge our failures, and open our minds fully to the work of the Lord. Proverbs 16:9 reminds us: "The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps." But we cannot use God's sovereignty as an excuse for failure in faithful obedience to the Gospel.#

Mr Yoa has served the Sudanese community in Melbourne since August 2005 and pastors All Nations PCEA, Mulgrave.

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

Rowland S. Ward

Pentecost was the 50th day after Passover and was the feast of the first fruits of the barley harvest. After this feast the subsequent harvest was assured and could be enjoyed. It was on this day near 2000 years ago that the events of Acts chapter 2 took place, and the Holy Spirit was poured out. The three supernatural signs are deeply significant to any careful student of scripture.

First, the sound like a mighty wind that brought people together. It reminds us of the powerful, energising work of God whether in creation – the Spirit of God moving on the face of the waters (Genesis 1) and God breathing the breath of life into man (Genesis 2:7); or in recreating work – the breath of God entering in to the lifeless army in

Ezekiel's vision of Israel's restoration (Ezekiel 37:9). Life from the dead!

Second, the sheet of fire that separated and rested on each of the disciples, speaks of the presence of God, the God who is a consuming fire in the purity of his holiness, and yet the disciples experience not harm but blessing. The bush Moses saw that was not burnt up (Exodus 3) points to the miracle of divine grace. God was present in grace so that his sinful Israel was not destroyed but redeemed from slavery in Egypt. Similarly, Pentecost means God the Holy Spirit is with his people in grace. Their deliverance from spiritual slavery to sin is assured.

Third, the speaking in other languages. The Babel builders sought to build a city with a tower whose top would reach heaven as if to pull God from his throne. 'Let us make a name for ourselves,' they said (Genesis 11:4). At Pentecost the outpouring of the Holy Spirit makes for praising the mighty works of God (Acts 2:11): for a time the division of language is overcome. These languages also point to the world-wide dimension of the Spirit's work in line with the promise to Abraham: 'In you all nations will be

blessed' and the Saviour's direction to his disciples that they be his witnesses 'to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8).

Let us consider five new things in Acts 2.

1. A new man

Look at Peter in this chapter. He was always bold, but also impetuous and concerned for his safety when under threat. Thus, despite warnings from Jesus, he denies the Lord three times, even with cursing and oaths: 'I don't know the man' (Matt 26:72). Look at him now! The resurrection of Jesus and the instruction he had received before Jesus' ascension, and the indwelling Spirit (John 20:22) means Peter is a new man. His original name was Simon but Jesus gave him the name Peter which means a rock. It is not on weak vacillating Simon that the church is built but on Peter, the rock man, because of the transforming power of God's grace (Matt 16:17-18). Not Peter alone of course (cf. Eph 2:20) but Peter is an eloquent demonstration of God's grace as was Saul/Paul later (1 Cor 15:8-10).

2. A new era

Peter explains what has happened by quoting from the prophecy of Joel centuries earlier which begins, *And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people*. In the original context the prophecy is about what will happen after God restores his people and repays them for the years the locusts had eaten. Peter infallibly interprets 'afterward' as 'in the last days', an expression found elsewhere in the Old Testament (Isaiah 2:2; Micah 4:1; Hosea 3:5) referring to the period of the Messiah. We are thus taught to see two great eras – the first era of promise followed by the era of fulfilment which stretches from Christ first coming to his return at the close of the age. The promises are generally clothed in the language drawn from Israel's earthy existence but point beyond this to the fulfilment in Christ. Thus 'in these last days God has spoken to us in his Son' (Heb 1:2). There is a finality and completeness about the Christian revelation.

The scoffing in 'the last days' (2 Peter 3:3) and the 'terrible times' of the last days (2 Tim 3:1) are not circumstances of a period still future to us just before Christ's return, but belong to the whole period. These things existed in New Testament times as in every age since. Indeed, in this world we will have trouble (John 16:33). All you need to know of events preceding Christ's return is that you are to be faithful in what is often a hostile environment. In so living you will not suffer loss when Christ's comes again.

3. A new king

The Hebrew Scriptures had recorded God's unconditional covenant promise to the house of David that his line would continue for ever (2 Sam 7 cf. Psa 89:19-37). Yet it seemed from one perspective that this promise had been broken as in the time of Babylonian invasion (Psa 89:38-46). Yet there is another angle to consider. Around 754 BC God had given a special sign to unbelieving king Ahaz and the house of David. A virgin is envisaged as giving birth to a son called Immanuel, which means *God with us* (Isa 7:14). The land is said to belong to Immanuel (8:8,10) and when he is born he will be a ruler called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father (ie: the one who cares for us for ever), Prince of Peace. There will be no end of his government and peace and he will reign on David's throne... (Isa 9:6-7). Clearly this is Jesus Christ.

'...the New Testament emphasis falls on heart-repentance and acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Messiah'

From the prophecy it appears that, despite the failure of the house of David, undergirding the dynasty is God's Son. He will enter this world only at a later time but in the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 he is envisaged as about to be born, and that of a virgin, and his infancy is the measure of time for the predicted political changes in Ahaz's day to occur. When they occur, as they did a few years later, they will serve as assurance that God's promise of Immanuel, the true Davidic king, will also be fully realised in due time.

Jesus is the true subject of Psalm 16. He dealt with death by his death and has not only been raised but exalted and enthroned as the true and everlasting successor of David. King David himself had recognised his son was greater than he (Psalm 110). Joel 2:21 had specified, 'Whoever calls on the name of LORD (Jehovah/Yahweh in Hebrew) shall be saved'. The call of Peter is that his hearers acknowledge Jesus as Lord since he has been raised and exalted and the pouring out of the Spirit evidences this. In evangelical circles we tend to speak about Christ as personal Saviour, and so he is to all who believe, but the New Testament emphasis falls more on the demand of heart-repentance and acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Messiah, the One having all authority in

heaven and on earth. Is that your response? And those who truly ‘call on the name of the Lord’ are ‘as many as the Lord our God calls to himself’ (Acts 2:39). A beautiful harmony of human responsibility and divine sovereignty is found in these words as also in the death of Jesus at the hands of wicked men (Acts 2:23).

4. A new life

Peter’s call to repentance is set in the context of the people’s rejection of the Lord of glory. He could have mentioned their particular sins, whether of thought, word or deed, but he gets to the heart of the matter in his approach. If we compare ourselves with others we may look pretty good, but comparing ourselves with God’s holy requirements shows us up for what we really are. Yet only as we see our sin in the light the cross do we see it adequately and see it in all the magnificence of divine grace and love to sinners which means a no condemnation, peace with God and a living hope for all believers.

Those who believed were baptised. Baptism signifies a new relationship with the one in whose name you are baptised (cf. 1 Cor 1:13). In the context, being baptised ‘in the name of Jesus Christ’ means acknowledging the Father who sent his Son, and the Spirit sent from the Father through the Son (Acts 2:33), and therefore is essentially trinitarian (cf. Matt 28:19). Through the life-giving Spirit those who were spiritually dead are made alive. Their lives are now characterised by the ethics of gratitude and love to the one who has saved them, as we will see in a moment.

5. A new Israel

In Acts 1 we note that, based on scriptural requirement, the vacancy in the Twelve apostles is filled with the election of Matthias: twelve sons of Jacob; twelve Apostles of Christ. With the outpouring of the Spirit a new community is created with 3,000 converts that day out of a probable population of Jerusalem at the time of about 190,000. They are all Jews and from every nation where they had been scattered. Gender, age or mixed ancestry are not important as Joel had predicted. They form the true remnant Israel, the community of the Messiah. To quote Joel 2:32b: ‘for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, even among the survivors whom the LORD calls’.

Look at how they conduct themselves! They continue in the apostles’ teaching (now found in the New Testament) and the sharing (‘fellowship’ nowadays is too weak a translation for the Greek, *koinonia*). The apostles were to teach ‘all that Christ commanded’ (Matt 28:19), no more and no

less. The sharing was an expression of the new relationship brought about by the apostles’ teaching. They devoted themselves also to ‘the breaking of bread’ and to ‘the prayers’. The term ‘breaking of bread’ is the standard Jewish one for an ordinary meal (cf. Luke 24:35; Acts 20:11). Some may have involved observing the Lord’s Supper. Signs and wonders were performed by the apostles although we are not told what they were. Verses 44-47 elaborate the statements in verse 42. A readiness to help their brothers and sisters in need, their regular meetings and table fellowship are characteristic. It’s like a new humanity, a true Israel.

“Here at Pentecost is not an Israel replaced by the church, but a true remnant Israel...”

Yet this remnant Israel will expand beyond Jewish people. David’s fallen tent is to be rebuilt and restored so that the Gentiles will be embraced as the prophets had predicted (eg. Amos 9:11-12 quoted in Acts 15:16). Here at Pentecost is not an Israel *replaced* by the church, but a true remnant Israel into which Gentile believers will be grafted (cf. Romans 11) – an *expanded* Israel. The sound like a mighty wind and the tongues of fire do not reappear again. The gift of languages does appear again, particularly at significant points – presumably at the conversion of the Samaritans (Acts 8:17), certainly on the occasion of the conversion of the Gentiles (Acts 10:46; 11:17; 15:12) and the disciples of John at Ephesus (Acts 19:7). By this the Holy Spirit showed that these previously alienated peoples were on the same footing as Jewish believers, one body of Christ, one Israel of God.

*

The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost is a unique stage in the history of salvation. Yes, it was necessary that the Holy Spirit have visible signs of his presence as the gift of the Father through the Son. Always active in the Old Testament period, the Spirit is now more powerfully and more widely active to bring about the recovery of the nations from their sin, to work not so much through outward things as before but through the love shed abroad in our hearts and the greater advance of holiness of life. The Spirit does not draw attention to himself but takes of the things of Christ and makes them real and precious to us (John 16:15). Is Christ precious to you? #

Testimonial for Trevor Leggott

The Synod Missions segment this year was devoted to recognition of the Rev. Trevor Leggott who completes his work with Australian Indigenous Ministries this year. Trevor, who is Clerk of Synod vacated his desk. The Synod record reads as follows:

Mr Ward was appointed Clerk *pro tem*.

The Convener of the Missions Committee introduced Trevor Leggott and invited him to address those gathered, given his intended retirement.

Mr Leggott spoke of how the present was a good time and a sad time. A good time because he was completing some 21 years of service with AIM; a sad time because there was still the unresolved dilemma of a successor to him as CEO/General Director. There was however an indigenous man with potential as CEO and the AIM Board was to meet next Tuesday to consider the matter. Prayer was solicited for this. He was continue assisting on a transition basis. He never the less was looking to the future and entrusting things into the Lord's hands.

John Keane, Chairman of AIM Council addressed the Synod at some length. He spoke of how he had interviewed Trevor at the beginning of Trevor's AIM service. He spoke of the tireless work of Trevor in administration and visiting communities including in remote areas and the great affection the indigenous people have for him. His was effective as Minute Secretary and getting things done. His communication to the field was done in a gentle and understanding way which gained wide respect. His faithful testimony to the Christian faith is notable. Trevor's work has been demanding but rewarding and done as to the Lord. He mentioned examples of the changed lives of indigenous people through the Gospel, as well as the tough times related to the Retta Dixon Home where he gave clear testimony, despite abuse and provocation. He sought to walk in step with Lord. The encouragement and support of Pamela in Trevor's work is notable. Their labour in the Lord has not been in vain. May the blessing of the Lord continue upon them.

Stephen Bignall, past Field Director of AIM for eight years and currently pastor of Wee Waa PCA, spoke as one who had known Trevor for 33 years. He spoke of Trevor as a man who had the grace of the doctrines as well as the doctrines of grace, and could see and encourage the potential in others. He persevered prayerfully serving the Lord as he humbly and in a conciliatory way sought to serve. This facilitated self-determination and positive developments in indigenous Christian communities and he gave his life for them for the sake of Christ.

Henry Louie, AIM pastor at Gilgandra and Pilliga, spoke of how Trevor has taught him how

to trust in Lord to bring change; that it was worth persevering in the communities. He was confident that though Trevor was retiring his heart was still in the work and he would help as he could in the days to come. He was really thankful for the encouragement Trevor has given him and the wisdom and strength God had given him

Ki-Ok Jong, pastor of Antioch Korean Presbyterian Church in Sydney, spoke of his respect for Trevor and AIM and the work of church planting and care for indigenous Australians. He expressed thanks to God for Trevor whom he had first met at a Banner of Truth Conference about 2004, when Trevor had introduced himself to him. Through that contact he gradually became involved with AIM and introduced indigenous ministry to Korean Christians. Mission Awareness tours were undertaken and a Korean Christian Mission Organisation for indigenous people was formed. It was always a pleasure working with Trevor whose sense of humour was infectious and good counsel. The hard part of mission can be getting people involved. Trevor never ran out of patience in engaging in this cross-cultural endeavour. It had been a real blessing to work with Trevor, his fellowship delightful. He prayed that the blessing of the Lord would rest upon his future endeavours in retirement. He concluded: "Well done. May the Lord bless you." He made a presentation from his congregation to Trevor.

The Missions Convener (Mr Muldoon) spoke on behalf of the church, noting that Trevor was not put off by discouragements but pressed on in line with the vision that included the change of name from Aborigines Inland Mission to Australian Indigenous Ministries, the restructuring of the mission including divesting Missions Publications of Australia and legal incorporation of AIM in 2005, developing training programmes, the beginning of Mission Awareness Tours, the gradual development of local leaders, self-sufficiency in a number of communities, their endeavours in evangelism and outreach to their own people, and self-government of AIM churches in Queensland. The translation of Scripture also received attention. Grace, diligence and perseverance are marks of Trevor's work. We give thanks to the Lord for his upholding grace as well as various positions in the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia including as Clerk of Synod since 2005.

Anna Ward then presented a card and gift to Trevor and Pamela.

The Clerk resumed his chair.

Please see picture on back cover.

SEARCH WORK

JUNE 2018

SENIOR and INTERMEDIATE
Intermediate omit questions 4 and 6

ROMANS chapter 14

1. For what purpose did Christ both die and rise and revive [live again]?
2. Of what does the kingdom of God consist?

Chapter 15

3. What verse in Psalm 69 does Paul quote to prove that Christ pleased not himself?
4. What four quotations does Paul make from the Old Testament to prove that the Gentiles would glorify God for his mercy?
5. What was the duty of the Gentiles who had partaken of the Jews' spiritual things?
6. Why did Paul ask the Romans to strive together with him in prayer? (3 verses)

chapter 16

7. In what two respects were the Romans to be wise and simple respectively?
8. What had been kept secret since the world began but was now made manifest? (2 verses)

JUNIOR

GENESIS chapter 11

1. Why was the city and the tower built in the land of Shinar called Babel?

Chapter 12

2. What did the Lord promise Abram if he left his country and his father's house? (2 verses)

Chapter 13

3. What part of the land did Lot choose when Abram and he decided to separate?
4. What did the Lord say to Abram after Lot separated from him? (3 verses only)

CHURCH REVITALISATION

We need more space made for prayerful, thoughtful, intentional efforts at revitalisation. Synod 2016 resolved as follows but have we heeded?

1. Mindful of the serious decline in vital Christianity and in Christian standards in public life, Synod acknowledges our many failures to live and serve him as we ought. We also acknowledge that despite this the good hand of the God of all grace has been upon us and others in proclaiming the Good News. We resolve afresh to act in the assurance that, since Christ has gained the victory and has all authority in heaven and earth, the future is bright with the promises of God for those who go forth in his name to evangelise the nations.

2. Synod urges all Presbyteries to ensure they are meetings of encouragement, spurring office-bearers and the churches to effective Christ-like ministry. To this end Presbyteries should aim to meet at least three times a year, at least two of these meetings in person, and at the personal meetings endeavour to include a theological or pastoral and/or training paper as well as a presentation on what Gospel ministry in the 21st century should look like.

3. Presbyteries need to keep well in view the importance of church revitalisation and extension, as well as on-going training for office-bearers which should include ministers attending a suitable conference at least once every two years. Sessions should be meeting regularly, including by electronic hook-up where a local quorum is not available, with particular attention on pastoral care, outreach strategy and mutual encouragement.

4. Prayer for local mission (ie Australian congregations) should be included in the Prayer Notes prepared by the Missions Committee and congregations are encouraged to provide relevant material. #

SYNOD 2018

Synod 2018 was held at Taree 1-3 May and commenced with worship conducted by the retiring moderator, Rev. Dennis Muldoon of Mt Druiitt. Rev. Tut Wan Yoa, of All Nations PCEA, Mulgrave was the new Moderator and delivered an appreciated address printed in this issue.

Most business was relatively routine. **Law and Advisory** always seems to have something given the increasing civil legislation affecting churches. Synod already requires mandatory reporting to police of sexual abuse and has in place protections for interviewing children and vulnerable adults. A Policy and Code of Conduct was adopted as an Interim Act and will be further considered in Presbyteries in the coming year. **Training of Ministry** also had attention. Our only student Duncan Hickey has done very well indeed in his MDiv studies but the issue of practical and pastoral preparation for him and future students received significant attention with both the Committee and the Central Presbytery having important responsibilities.

Two **retirements** were announced. Mr **Alex H. Steel** has been Treasurer of Synod since 1991, and has been meticulous in discharge of his duties. He was warmly thanked for his work. He retires on 30 June and Rev. **Peter Smith** replaces him. Rev **Trevor Leggott** who was ordained in Melbourne in March 1989 and served at Narre Warren and Armidale, joined Aborigines Inland Mission (now Australian Indigenous Ministries) in November 1986 and has been supported by Synod ever since. Trevor has done a marvelous job and is the ideal example of multi-cultural engagement as the report elsewhere in this issue shows. We hope for a further report on AIM's future in the next issue.

Inter Church Relations was a highlight this year. Rev **Jack Sawyer** from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in the USA was with us, a most encouraging presence he was too. We were sorry that Rev **David Torlach** of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Brisbane had to leave before his opportunity to speak arrived. We should have picked this up, but we were delighted at this first visit from our EPC brothers. Rev **David Lachman** from the Southern Presbyterian Church in Hobart was a new face and it was a pleasure to meet him. Rev **Graeme Hart** from the Reformed Presbyterian Church gave a detailed update of their work in Victoria and much encouraged us to pray for increase in our congregations. Last but not least was a return visit from Mr **Graeme Mitchell** representing the Presbyterian Reformed Church with seven congregations, mainly in NSW. The evident desire for greater unity among the smaller Presbyterian

bodies was encouraging.

Our Synods used to be quite lengthy extending over a weekend. My first was 1976 which ran the then normal period from Wednesday to Tuesday. The period was gradually reduced as procedures were simplified and Committees re-arranged and we got down to (parts of) four days and then from 2010 to three. However, it was felt that there is need of more opportunity for fellowship and perhaps visiting speakers as was the case in Melbourne 2009 (Mike Raiter) and 2010 (Peter Adam) or a Strategy Session as in 2011. Accordingly, an extra day is scheduled for 2019. The difficulty will be working elders who have enough difficulty getting time off as it is. Issues of flight times for those from interstate are also relevant. This year those from Melbourne had to get a flight at 6.15am to arrive by start time! – Ed.

TRUEMAN LEAVES WESTMINSTER

Grove City College in western Pennsylvania has announced the appointment of Dr Carl Trueman, who they describe as 'one of America's foremost Christian voices and an accomplished church historian'. He will commence on 1 July 2018 as Professor in the Department of Biblical and Religious Studies. Trueman, who held the Paul Woolley Chair of Church History at WTS, has been the William E. Simon Visiting Fellow in Religion and Public Life at Princeton University in the past year. Grove City College was founded in 1876. It is a private Christian university independent of government funding enrolling some 2,500 students and regarded as one of top conservative Christian liberal arts colleges.



Trueman lecturing at PTC Melbourne

Of recent years some of those holding views that undermine the classic Reformed orthodoxy for which Westminster is known have left the Seminary under pressure, including from Trueman when he was Dean. Trueman, an Englishman married to a Scot from Lewis, is a minister of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. He hasn't changed his colours. A combination of the greater openness of students in a non-theological college setting, the impact of Hard Right views that narrow the faith unduly, and discomfort at some of the teaching on the doctrine of God which has emerged among WTS faculty of recent years, likely explain his departure. #

PRESENTATION TO TREVOR LEGGOTT

Left to right: Anna Ward, Pamela and Trevor Leggott, Dennis Muldoon.



CUBAN PLANE CRASH

The Church of the Nazarene, which has worked 70 years in Cuba, lost twenty pastors and spouses in the crash of a Cuban airliner on Friday 18 May 2018. About 110 people died when the 40 year old Boeing 737 owned by a Mexican airline crashed shortly after taking off from Havana Airport. The majority were Cubans. The evangelical church has been growing in Cuba of recent times. The Church of the Nazarene, which belongs to the Arminian Holiness tradition, has about 100 congregations in Cuba with a following of 9,000. Our hearts go out to our brothers and sisters.

ULVERSTONE NEWS

On 20 May the congregation was blessed in receiving three young persons into full membership. **Paul Keast**, **Tahlee Briggs** and **Simone Hamilton**.

Paul transferred from Canberra Christian Reformed Church and is engaged to Tahlee and plan to wed in October. Tahlee was baptised and she and Simone were received on profession of Faith. Interim-Moderator, Rev Andres Miranda took his text from John 5:1-14 emphasising the need for a committed and focussed response to the Gospel message evidenced by a new walk with Christ that leaves behind the old ways. The Lord's Supper followed the sermon. It was great to see the young members sitting with our oldest member Mrs Jean Hearsy (95).

RETIRING TREASURER

Mr **Alex Steel**, Synod Treasurer 1991-2018, (below) retires on 30 June but continues as Convener of the Finance Committee.



SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY

Southern Presbytery is holding a Psalm-singing event on 16 June at Knox Church, Wantirna.

CAMPS

The **Brisbane Family Camp** is at Camp Drewe, Lennox Head Friday 7 to Monday 10 December 2018. Registration from \$40 per night.

The church-wide **PCEA Family Camp** will be held at Elanora Heights, Sydney 1 to 4 January 2019. Approx \$240 (adult) \$210 (child) The Speaker will be Rev Andres Miranda.

Family rates are available for both camps. Details from Stewart Carswell scarswell@optusnet.com.au 07 3397 1138