



the presbyterian banner

December 2015

*But when the time had fully come,
God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law,
to redeem those under law,
that we might receive the full rights of sons.
Galatians 4:4—5*

CONTENTS

Editorial	2
Going to God's House <i>Psalm 122</i>	3
The Past For Today <i>Christianity in Scotland (11)</i>	5
Books in the Banner <i>A Scottish Church Short History</i>	7
The World in the Banner <i>News & Views</i>	8
Life under the Banner <i>Teach Us To Pray</i>	10
Children under the Banner	12
Letter to the Editor <i>Response to Film Review</i>	12
Prescribed Search Work	13
Missions in the Banner <i>Peru 2015</i>	14
Churches in the Banner <i>Ulverstone, Brisbane, Narre Warren</i>	15

ISSN 0729-3542

Editor:
Rev. Sjirk Bajema
44 Prospect Hill Road,
Narre Warren, VIC
AUSTRALIA 3805
Ph. (03) 9705 1505
Email: sjirkb@gmail.com

Subscriptions for 2016
11 Issues per year
Within Australia: \$40 [Bulk \$35]
Overseas: AU \$50 Airmail.

Direct Credit :
Bendigo (BSB) 633000
A/C No. 140124082

Editorial

It won't be long now before the passing of another year. On the evening of the 31st of December many folk will gather together and sing those well-known words compiled as the song *Auld Lang Syne* by Robbie Burns. They will sing together,

*Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and never brought to mind?
Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and old lang syne?*

And then there is sung the chorus:

*For auld lang syne, my dear,
for auld lang syne,
we'll take a cup of kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.*

This is a song that recalls the past. It's no wonder considering its title is translated, 'For the sake of old times.' But while it is of Scottish origin, it doesn't bear anything truly Presbyterian in it. Robbie Burns himself certainly did not convey anything of a Christian lifestyle, much as his portrait may grace many a Kirk Session room.

There is another tradition that will take place that night, though perhaps in not so many places. It is a tradition from a Dutch Reformed background. At the same time that others will be singing *Auld Lang Syne* and so remembering man and women who have passed away, Psalm 90 will be read – a psalm that looks up to the Lord God and acknowledges him as the holder of all things, also of time. The words will be read out,

*Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.
Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the
world,*

from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

*You turn men back to dust, saying, "Return to dust, O sons of men."
For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by,
or like a watch in the night.*

*You sweep men away in the sleep of death;
they are like the new grass of the morning – though in the morning it
springs up new, by evening it is dry and withered (vv1-6).*

This is a psalm that ends with a benediction. It looks up to the Lord expectantly:

*May the favour of the Lord our God rest upon us;
establish the work of our hands for us –
yes, establish the work of our hands.*

While the one song is used to drink to the past, the other looks soberly to the future because there is One who holds the past, the present, and the future in his hands. While we may well end up singing the former, let's live and die in the spirit of the latter.

The Presbyterian Banner is the official magazine of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia. The PCEA was established in 1846 and adheres to the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) as its doctrinal standard. Literary contributions are welcome. Submission by email is preferred. The opinions expressed in signed articles are those of the authors - not necessarily of the editor or the PCEA and may not be reproduced without permission. Articles written by the Editor may be reproduced without asking for permission, although with appropriate acknowledgement. This magazine is available as a pdf file on the Church Website: www.pcea.org.au

‘Let us Go to the House of the Lord’

Psalm 122

This is another psalm used by the pilgrims as they were ‘going up’ to Jerusalem. It’s a meditation on ‘Jerusalem’ - which was a very important place for the ancient pilgrims. It was the centre of Israel’s life: it was where they went up to give thanks to the Lord (4); it was where judgements were made and where justice was dispensed (5); it was where the annual festivals were observed; it was where God had made a home – in his holy Temple. It was where every true Israelite longed to be. His prayer might have been, **‘One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple’** (Ps. 27: 4).

Why do we sing an ancient song like this in the church today? Is it simply for nostalgic reasons; or for history buffs or for antiquated Presbyterians? No. Listen to what two commentators say. **‘What Jerusalem was to the Israelite, the church is to the Christian’** (Kidner). And, **“‘Zion’ and ‘Jerusalem’ stand in the Bible, not just for the whole people of Israel, but for the entire people of God’** (Harman). That’s the key to understanding the psalm and unlocking its meaning. Jerusalem or Zion is code for the gathered people of God. The church is now ‘the temple of the Holy Spirit’. We no longer worship in Jerusalem (Jn. 4: 21-24). Our focus is on the heavenly Jerusalem.

The writer to the Hebrews writes, **‘You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant,**

A Song of Ascents

and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel’ (Heb. 12: 22-24).

As a result we as New Testament Christians can now sing this psalm (and all the psalms) with a much greater depth of understanding and appreciation than any Israelite ever had.

Psalm 122

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

*1 I was glad when they said to me,
“Let us go into the house of the Lord.”*
*2 Our feet have been standing
Within your gates, O Jerusalem!*
*3 Jerusalem is built
As a city that is compact together,
4 Where the tribes go up,
The tribes of the Lord,
To the Testimony of Israel,
To give thanks to the name of the Lord.*
*5 For thrones are set there for judgment,
The thrones of the house of David.*
*6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
“May they prosper who love you.*
*7 Peace be within your walls,
Prosperity within your palaces.”*
*8 For the sake of my brethren and companions,
I will now say, “Peace be within you.”*
*9 Because of the house of the Lord our God
I will seek your good.*

The psalm is about the authors’ experience of worship. How does he describe it?

1. He Looked Forward - with Pleasure (verse 1)

He expresses great delight when friends gave him the invitation to, ‘Come to God’s house’. He responded gladly. He reveals two things about himself: his love for the

George D. Ball

worship of God, and his pleasure in the fellowship of believers. These are things that should still mark a believer (cf. Heb. 10: 25). Can this be said of you and me? Do we look forward with pleasure as Sunday approaches? Is Sunday (‘the Lord’s Day’) the best day of the week? Can you say, ‘I rejoiced when they said to me – come on, it’s time to go to church’? We look forward to so many other things, e.g. – a holiday – a movie – a birthday – a TV programme – even a cup of coffee. But do we look forward with as much pleasure and anticipation to Sunday approaching? This man knew and appreciated the importance of public worship. Of course he could worship at home. He could read his Bible and pray. And I’m sure he did. But it’s not the same. As the writer to the Hebrews might have said, ‘Public worship is **better** than private worship’. Having such an attitude is a good preparation for worship. What an encouragement and blessing for any minister to have a congregation of people who really want to be there and have made obvious preparation for it.

2. He Looked Back - with Precious Memories (verse 2)

The AV renders the verb in 2 in the future tense, but all commentators and versions agree that a future tense is impossible. It’s a Hebrew perfect. Translating it in the present tense is possible, **‘Our feet are standing in your gates, O Jerusalem’** (as in NIV, NASB, and in the Complete Book of Psalms 1991). But past tense is probably better. **‘Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem’** (ESV). If we accept this reading it means that the psalmist is recalling with fondness the memories of his past visits to the city. Jerusalem for him

was full of precious memories and rich associations. He was full of gratitude. Those memories increased his desire to return. He couldn't wait to get back to the city. How does this compare with your experience? I hope you have happy memories of going to church – so much so, that it has instilled within you the regular habit of meeting with the saints. How important it is to make 'church' a positive experience for our children.

3. He Looked Around - with Praise (verses 3-5)

'For those coming from distant parts of Israel, the sight of Jerusalem must have been overwhelming. It was not just a conglomeration of buildings, but a compact, well-ordered city – the national capital' (Harman). Our pilgrim coming from the bush seems to have been greatly impressed by the nations planned capital. He is filled with pride as he gazes at the well constructed city. **'Walk about Zion. Go all around her. Count her towers. Mark well her bulwarks'** (Ps. 48: 12).

But the real reason for his praise was not for the town planners or the architects or the builders. It was for the number and variety of the people gathered there. The city was merely an architectural metaphor of the tribes that went up there. He was amazed that despite all the diversity of the tribes they were united as 'the tribes of the Lord'. There was e.g. the tribe of Zebulun – from the coast – who were one of the more wealthy tribes. There was the tribe of Dan from the hills. There was the tribe of Reuben from the desert who couldn't claim any prominent members. There was the tribe of Asher who produced tucker fit for a king. Yet they were all united as one body. They were like the city – compactly built together. Only the Lord could have done this. The LXX paraphrases, **'Jerusalem is built as a city whose fellowship is complete where the tribes went up'**. (1) It's true of the church today. Read Psalm 122. The

church is the temple of God which the Lord is building with living stones which are all different. See **1 Cor. 3: 16 and 6: 19, 1 Peter 2: 5 and Eph. 2: 19-22**.

He had another reason for praise: **'for the rule and righteousness of the house of David'** (5). God had established David as His king in Jerusalem. There the worshipper could expect to find law and order; justice and truth. Sadly the system didn't work as it should. We know how Absalom abused it. David's heirs and successors were all failures to varying degrees. But God had promised a king whose throne would be established forever upon righteousness and justice – a promise fulfilled in Christ, as we see in 2 Sam. 7: 12-16 and Heb. 1: 5.

Thus when we meet together today in the name of Christ, we give thanks to the name of the Lord for the King He has given to us. His kingdom is based on justice and righteousness. When the Bible is read we hear the Word of the King. When the Gospel is preached faithfully His everlasting truth and righteous judgements are proclaimed. The end result is that our faith is confirmed and we praise the Lord.

4. He Looked Within - and Prayed (verses 6-9)

He now looks within the city and is led to pray. Can you think of another who also prayed for the peace of the city? See **Luke 19: 41-44**. I wonder if our Lord was thinking of this psalm.

There is however a pun on **'Jerusalem'** which means *'city of peace'*. (Ironic really – since it has never known earthly peace.) He prays that the city might live up to its name. Note the number of times **'within'** occurs in these verses – three times. Note the number of times **'peace'** occurs – three times. He is concerned for the 'shalom' of God within the city. (Shalom includes health, soundness and harmony). Note he doesn't pray that

Jerusalem may have peace with the world. No. When the church is at peace with the world, the world has come into the church.

He prayed for peace within the city. He knew how precious and precarious peace was among the saints. He knew the threats to peace. Some of the greatest threats to peace in the church actually come – not from the world – but from within. Some people can be divisive. Some can be touchy. Some can be obnoxious. Some can be indifferent. Some can be insensitive. Some can be guilty of disseminating false doctrines and ideas. All these things undermine peace. There is much to pray for.

Why did he pray? He prayed, **'For the sake of my brothers and companions'** (8a). It's an unselfish prayer. He prayed for others. Do we pray for others in the church? Do we pray for their good? Do we ask the Lord to bless them with His peace? Do we actively seek their good (9b)? Do we do all we can to help one another?

He also prayed, **'for the sake of the house of the Lord our God'** (9a). He desired the honour and glory of God in the church. A church riddled with factions and strife doesn't bring much glory to God. But where there is peace and unity, there God commands the blessing.

The psalmist wanted everything that was good for the people of God and for the House of God. What a good thing it would be if we wanted only what was best for the church all the days of our lives. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

Footnote:

1 – LXX stands for the Septuagint Greek Old Testament, compiled some two to three hundred years before Christ's birth.

The Past for Today

Christianity in Scotland (11): The Church in the Age of Enlightenment Rowland S. Ward

William Carstares had successfully steered the church through difficult times, but the age of conflict was already giving way to a more tolerant age, sometimes called the 'Enlightenment', where human reason rather than divine revelation came to the fore. The Parliament in faraway London gave Scots opportunities to innovate and to access wider markets without undue interference. Often described as the 'Age of Reason', the 18th century for Scotland was one of remarkable progress culturally, scientifically and economically, but also one of mixed fortunes for the church in Scotland. Even after 1715 its power of independent action was very much subject to powerful political influences.

Of course rational thinking using a scientific method of theorizing and testing to explain natural phenomena did not begin at this time. Earlier centuries has seen the establishment of universities by Christians and by the early 17th century examples of truly scientific work, as by Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) and Galileo (1564-1642), both active European churchmen, were evident. In Scotland the legal system dating from the 13th century was based on Roman law and relied on rational analysis rather than precedent as in England, while the Calvinism that had typified Scottish theology from 1560, encouraged individual accountability and exertion. The Shorter Catechism affirms that the chief purpose of life is 'to glorify God and to enjoy him forever'.

The existing merchant class was no longer hampered by English foreign policy restricting mar-

kets but could trade on an equal basis following the Union with England, so there were new opportunities. Sadly, Scotland was involved in and profited from the slave trade before its abolition in 1807, although in 1777 it was held that slavery was not lawful in Scotland: 'No man is by nature the property of another'. Accordingly, a Jamaican slave brought into Scotland was set free.

Education

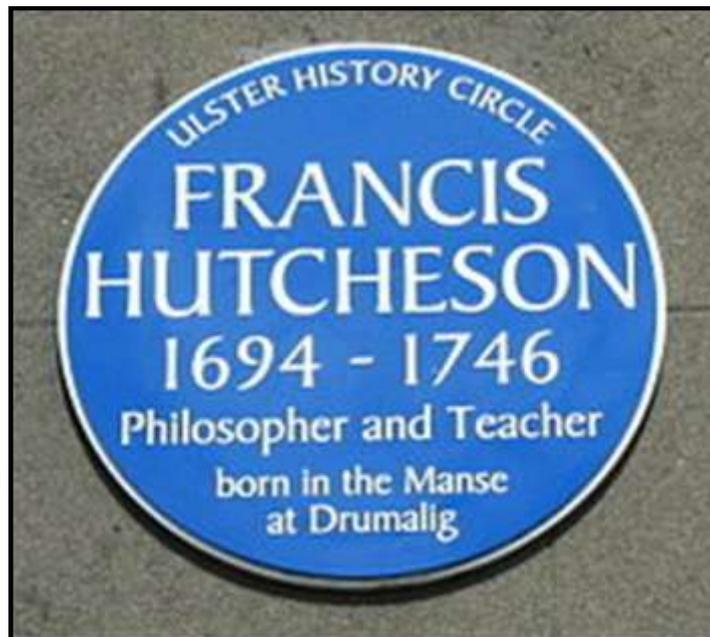
In 1696 an Act for Settling Schools had been passed by the Scottish Parliament establishing a school in every parish. Already as early as 1583 the Assembly had laid out the curriculum for grammar schools utilizing Latin, and other steps had occurred subsequently.

and continued ahead of England until the last quarter of the 19th century. The use of English rather than Latin in the Scottish universities after the example set about 1730 by Rev. Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746), who lectured in philosophy in Glasgow, is also significant. The reaction from the times of conflict and trouble corresponded with the rise of deistic ways of thinking in Europe and England and this impacted Scotland to a degree. In the church there was the influence of a legal strain of teaching, often associated with Richard Baxter, which, in reaction to antinomianism, made the Gospel a kind of new law.

Moderates and Evangelicals?

It is traditional, particularly in the light of the events of the 19th century, to see the Scottish church of the 18th century as divided between Moderates and Evangelicals, the former tolerant of patronage, the later opposed to it, with the Disruption of 1843 the culmination of the conflict. However, this is simplistic and one must be cautious about accepting at face value the often highly prejudiced accounts by advocates of this view on either side. In fact, as the pre-

ceding history suggests, there were a number of attitudes in the early 18th century church ranging from a strict stand on the Confession of Faith and admiration of the Covenanting past, through those less enamoured of the covenanting history but content to abide by the Confession of Faith, through those who were



The 1696 Act went a good way to fulfilling the aim expressed in the First Book of Discipline in 1560. Education was important so that the Bible could be read by the common person and superstition avoided, but of course it also enabled wider studies and literary pursuits. Scotland became the most literate country in Europe,

impacted by neo-nomianism and so saw the Gospel as a new law and thus as of a rather formal and legal nature, to those impacted by a rationalistic approach arising from the prevailing intellectual climate. Even so, the different attitudes were not always so neatly distinguished and could shade into each other or overlap on particular issues such as patronage.

Among the educated elite the importance of reason and good order were stressed. This does not necessarily mean users of the language of this approach were deists or rationalists. Carstares' brilliant young nephew, the able and orthodox William Dunlop (1692-1720), deliberately used arguments from 'the common principles of Reason and the natural inalienable Rights of Mankind' to rebut arguments from some of that approach in England who denied the unique deity of Jesus and who opposed subscription to creeds. (1) Robert Walker (1696-1771), pro-establishment leader in the 1740s, preached against deism in 1731.

Leading ministers often owed their appointment to political influence, and the political pressure to avoid disruptions was strong. The pro-establishment supporters in the early 18th century became the Moderates in its second half. They insisted on order and used patronage to ensure ministers were 'politically correct' and establishment oriented. In 1780 approximately one third of the parish livings in the Church of Scotland were in the patronage of the Crown, others held by town councils or universities and the rest by landed proprietors. Patronages were bought and sold like other property to gain political influence or to secure a comfortable position for a friend or relative. Opposed to the Moderates was a loose

grouping, lacking tight unity, of varying shades of evangelical opinion. Described as the Popular party, since they opposed patronage and prelacy, it is misconceived if viewed as a monolithic bloc.

Moderates and Evangelicals, to use the traditional labels, both found the approach of Thomas Reid (1710-96) attractive in dealing with David Hume's scepticism. For a century or more from the publication of Reid's *An Enquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Commonsense* in 1764, 'Scottish common-sense realism' was highly influential. Carried to America in 1768 by Rev. John Witherspoon (1723-94), President of Princeton and a signer of the American Declaration of Independence in 1776, this approach was the staple of most Presbyterian theological colleges for generations.

There were interesting situations. One leading Evangelical, Dr John Erskine (1721-1803), was for 26 years the ministerial colleague of Dr William Robertson (1721-93) at Old Greyfriars Church. Robertson was the undoubted leader of the Moderates 1752-80, and was succeeded in this role by George Hill (1750-1819). In general, the Moderates tended to deliver polite discourses, to be given to literary pursuits related to social issues, and to be tolerant or formal in doctrinal matters while not officially contradicting the Confession of Faith to which they were pledged. Hill's *Lectures in Divinity* were orthodox enough in a dry sought of way, but viewed missions as dependent on the leading of God's providence in opening up the way for civilizing agencies to prepare the way for

the Gospel. In general, the Popular or Evangelical party preached Gospel sermons, wrote chiefly on spiritual topics, gave more emphasis to divine revelation and supported revivals such as those at Cambuslang and Kilsyth in 1742. George Whitefield (1714-70), the great evangelist, visited Scotland fourteen times. Nevertheless, in 1752 an organised Moderate party gained the as-



Thomas Boston (1677—1732)

curacy in the Assembly and were undefeated for more than fifty years.

Some of the leading Evangelical ministers in the Church of Scotland were John Willison (1680-1750), John McLaurin (1693-1754), Alexander Webster (1707-84) and John Erskine (mentioned above), but it was Thomas Boston (1677-1732), a country minister, who was among the most popular theological writers judged by books printed in Scotland. Boston was noted for his presentation of the Gospel as influenced by the hitherto little-known Puritan volume *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*

(1645), and for his excellent *Human Nature in Its Fourfold State* (1720) as well as other writings. The Marrow does contain some expressions that may be questioned but on the whole was very helpful in furthering free grace preaching, especially given the legalising trends at the time. Most evangelicals did not support it and some actively opposed it. The Assembly of 1720 condemned certain passages lifted from the book. Boston and a few others protested but to no avail. The Assembly was also troubled

by the teaching of Professor John Simson (1667-1740). He taught divinity in Glasgow and was twice charged with heresy. The second occasion (1726) resulted in his suspension. Boston thought Simson was treated too leniently and should have been deposed, but he was the lone protester in the Assembly of 1728. Growing disenchantment with church procedure in doctrinal matters as well as patronage disputes, stimulated the idea of popular election of ministers as the answer.

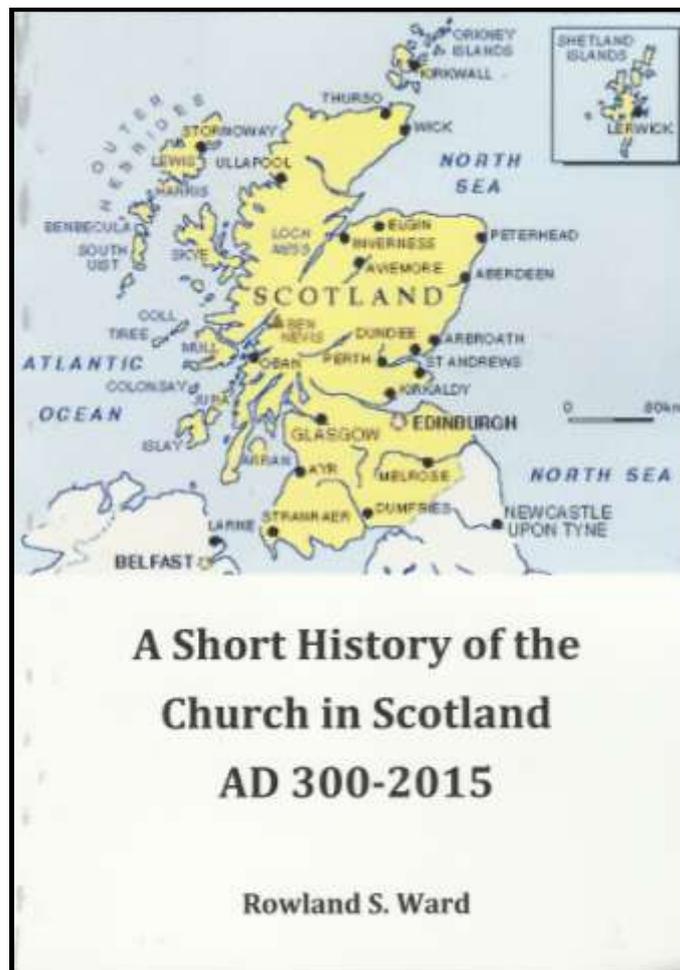
Footnotes:

1. W. Dunlop, *A Collection of Confessions of Faith, Catechisms, Directories...* (Edinburgh: James Watson, 1719) Preface, lii, x, cix.
2. For a summary of the diversity of theological and social views within 'the Popular party' see John R. McIntosh, *Church and Society in Enlightenment Scotland: The Popular Party 1740-1800* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1998) 458ff. Dr McIntosh is a son of PCEA minister A.D. McIntosh.

Books in the Banner

A Short History of the Church in Scotland AD 300-2015 Rowland S. Ward

For regular readers of *The Presbyterian Banner* there will already be a certain familiarity with the Rev. Rowland Ward's latest book and what they have been reading on these pages. As Rowland has done a number of times before, in his inimitable style he has produced a well presented and self-published book drawing together a number of articles he has been writing. In this case, the genesis for this book was a conference in South Korea where the author gave a series of lectures on Scottish Church history. From that and further adaptation for *The Presbyterian Banner* there has come 120 or so well spaced out pages where you can more than catch a glimpse of a valuable part of our history in Scotland. Over seventeen hundreds years of church history are covered and provide a glimpse into the devel-



opment of Christianity not only in Scotland but also much of Europe and the world.

For me there were a lot of

connections with the history of the Reformed Church in the Netherlands and particularly so when looking at the chart outlining the Presbyterian Divisions in Scotland from 1690 – 2015, found on page 103.

While much of the book is written in a plain, easy-to-follow style, there are times when the author becomes overly academic and technical. This is not to take away from the book as a whole, however—it is worth persevering through those passages.

There is a useful index at the back and altogether this would make a helpful primer for anyone wanting to consider a key part of reformed-presbyterian history and its influence on our world today.

This book is available now from the author at 2 Had-

low Drive, Wantirna 3152, Australia, for the price of \$15, postage paid.

Reviewed by Sjirk Bajema

The World in the Banner

Pro-Death Lobby Caught Out

Euthanasia advocates who claimed to be “independent”, have been caught out promoting a Government-funded study among doctors and nurses. TV One (NZ) broke the story in its 6 o'clock news on 19th October, the only news media outlet to do so. The study is being led by two University of Auckland researchers, Dr Philippa Malpas and Dr Pam Oliver, who told participants “we are independent”. But they didn't reveal that they were members of the Voluntary Euthanasia Society. Before the study began, a reviewer questioned their links with the pro-euthanasia lobby, but those links were not revealed in the questionnaire. The survey is part of a three-year project which received \$109,000 from the Government. It is meant for doctors and nurses only, but TV One News accessed it online and found it easy to submit fake responses. Anti-euthanasia group Care Alliance featured in the TV One report saying it was shabby research. A palliative care doctor believes the findings will be used as a political tool to influence the public that most doctors and nurses support legalizing assisted dying and euthanasia.

+ www.voiceforlife.org.nz

Violence Escalates As Hindutva Takes Hold In India

Hindutva (Hindu nationalism) arose in the early twentieth century primarily as a response to British colonial rule. India has been independent since 1947, but ambitious politicians in 'democratic' India now foster Hindutva for political gain. Instead of uniting Indians against the British, Hindu nationalists are uniting Indians behind a Hindu elite keen to preserve their own power and privilege. By demonising non-Hindus as disloyal and a threat, Hindutva has turned India into a sectarian tinderbox. Violent persecution is escalating and will certainly get considerably worse when the ruling Hindu nationalist

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) introduces an anti-conversion bill during the winter sitting of parliament (expected to commence 20 November).

The Indian Church is growing precisely because it is a mission-focused church. Please pray for India and its Church. (Ephesians 6:12-18)

+ *Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin | RLPB 334 | Wed 04 Nov 2015*

The Asia-Pacific Conference of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC), 13-16 October 2015

As agreed at a meeting of the delegates from the Asia Pacific region at the ICRC meeting in Cardiff, UK in September 2013, the 5th Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of the ICRC was hosted by the Independent Reformed Church in Korea with the theme of the Sacraments.

Delegates were accommodated in the Hoam Faculty House at Seoul National University, which is on the bus route direct from Incheon Airport. Each day the delegates were conveyed the 18kms to the facilities of the Riverside Church at Anyang south of Seoul where also most meals, including breakfast, were provided by a happy and capable staff of volunteers.

Each of the ten ICRC churches in the Asia-Pacific region was represented. Observers were also present from several other churches along with representatives of ICRC member churches in The Netherlands, Canada, USA and South Africa, who have mission interest in the region. Including about 70 delegates from the churches, the total number attending the Conference was about 170.

The Conference was opened with welcoming greetings by the Convener of this regional conference, Rev. Prof. Heon Soo Kim of the IRCK, and followed by worship conducted by Rev. Byoung Kil Chung, minister of the Riverside Church. Farewell greetings were

then brought by Rev. John Goris, who had been the Convener for Missions Committee of the ICRC for many years and facilitated the past four Asia-Pacific Regional Conferences. Rev. Dr Rowland Ward, the Convener for Regional Conferences of the ICRC appointed in September 2013 by the ICRC Cardiff, expressed appreciation for Brother Goris' long and faithful service given unobtrusively and beneficially since 1997. Dr Ward outlined the aim of the Regional Conference to benefit the wider church, particularly through producing useful materials for village pastors following the meeting. We need to remember we are here to serve the church.

While the major papers had been provided in electronic form before the Conference, all participants were provided with two properly bound volumes of these along with the text of most devotions and church introductions. These documents had been translated into Korean. This was of great benefit for the Korean brothers, and the translations were also projected on a screen for the benefit of the significant number of men and women from the Independent Reformed Church who were present during most sessions.

The theme was the Sacraments and this was addressed in several ways: through three devotions at the beginning of each day, ten devotions during the sessions by those representing their church federation, three evening lectures (by Rev. Professor Dr Mohan Chacko, Rev. Dirk van Garderen and Rev. Professor Dr Hae Moo Yoo) and three bible studies, prepared by Rev. Professor Heon Soo Kim, and group discussions on these. These, especially the last paper, stimulated considerable discussion. Clearly, the programme was very full but it worked very well, and it is hoped that the aim of the Con-

ference mentioned above will be fulfilled.

The organization of the Conference by the Independent Reformed Church in Korea has set a fine benchmark for the future. As well as valuable opportunities for net-working, there was a visit on Thursday to Holy Covenant Independent Reformed Church and Press in central Seoul, where a wonderful lunch was provided. A visit was also paid to Yanghwajin Foreign Missionaries Cemetery in Seoul and a closing festive meal and concert was held on Friday evening. A wonderful team of helpers has ensured smooth run-

often illegal protest, it was hypocritical of the Greens to be seeking to ban peaceful and non-threatening protest outside clinics where pre-born babies are killed, according to the Australian Christian Lobby.

ACL's spokesperson on women's issues, Wendy Francis, today applauded LNP Senator Matt Canavan's Senate motion aimed at upholding free speech. The motion was defeated after it tied in the Senate at 29-29, when Labor joined the Greens in voting against it.

"The Greens are all for protest except when it is conducted

them just because they disagree with them."

Ms Francis said there were 300 Victorians alive today because their mothers chose not to abort them after talking with sidewalk counsellors over the past 20 years. "Surely even the Greens could celebrate the gift of life and love granted to these children thanks to the peaceful witness of non-violent protestors."

Senator Canavan's motion followed a Greens' bill in the ACT banning prayer outside abortion clinics.

+ *Australian Christian Lobby, 10 November 2015*



Delegates and observers at the ICRC Asia-Pacific Regional Conference

ning throughout the Conference. New relationships have been made and old ones renewed and strengthened. We give thanks to the Lord who blessed the gathering and gave us the privilege of learning and praying around his Word.

The next Asia-Pacific Regional Conference is scheduled for Melbourne, Australia in 2019.

+ *ICRC Press Release*

Greens need to show tolerance for those with whom they disagree

For a party founded on violent and

peacefully against their ideological beliefs," Ms Francis said. People protesting in the non-violent tradition of Ghandi and Rev. Dr Martin Luther King junior are not to be tolerated by today's Greens, it seems. No one supports screaming at women entering abortion clinics but there is no evidence this is happening and lawyers advise there are other provisions in the law to prohibit this without banning freedom of non-violent political protest. The Greens don't have to agree with those who silently protest and pray outside abortion clinics but they shouldn't seek to ban

Uganda: Intense Persecution Continues

Morning Star News (MSN) reports that the mutilated body of Samson Nfunyeku, a long-time evangelist, apologist and convert from Islam, was found on 23 September not far from his home in Kalampete village, Kibuku District, Eastern Region. After Samson was killed, his brother, George Mwanika, also a convert to Christianity, started receiving death threats. On 19 October Muslims came to George's house, intending to kill him.

George was not home, so they dragged his wife, Mamwikomba, out of the house threatening to kill her if she didn't divulged her husband's whereabouts. When George arrived home, he found Mamwikomba unconscious in a pool of blood. Neighbours helped George rush her to hospital, but she was dead on arrival. Three of the couple's eight children were home at the time of the attack. The whole family is at risk. 'We really need prayers,' George told MSN.

+ *Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin | RLPB 333 | Wed 28 Oct 2015*

Life under the Banner

Teach Us To Pray

If there was anyone who has ever lived who really knew how to pray, it was Jesus Christ. No one could pray like him.

Mind you, he could pray so well because he had a special relationship with his heavenly Father. He was the divine, incarnate Son of God, the second person of the Trinity in human flesh. And so, he experienced a closeness with God that can never be matched.

His perfect, ultimate communion with his heavenly Father was expressed in his praying, making him the best practitioner of prayer who ever lived.

Is it any wonder then, that his disciples, watching their teacher pray perfectly, would seek his guidance in this area? Is it any wonder that they would ask, "Lord, teach us to pray"?

We can be eternally thankful that Jesus heeded that request. He did this by providing them with the ultimate model of prayer. He gave them the perfect prayer: the Lord's prayer.

This prayer has been used by Christians throughout the centuries, teaching Christians around the world how to pray.

Let us look at what Jesus taught us about how to pray. We will look briefly at the Lord's prayer as a whole in this article, expanding somewhat on the individual partitions in coming articles.

The Essence of Prayer

But before getting to the prayer itself, we should point out a couple

of things Jesus did NOT say when responding to the request, "Lord, teach us to pray."

Jesus does not say anything about whether or not we should pray kneeling down or sitting or standing. Jesus does not say anything about whether or not we should pray with our hands clasped together, or if we should close our eyes. Jesus does not say anything about the times of the day when praying should be done, whether when waking up or when going to sleep or before meals or all of the above. Jesus doesn't say anything specific here about whether we should pray out loud or silently.

This is not to say that these matters are completely irrelevant. There can be a place for considering such questions. Still, when it comes right down to it, these matters are peripheral when it comes to the actual essence of prayer.

You can have all those things just right, but if you don't have the right attitude in praying, then your prayer is meaningless. You might be in a quiet spot, at your regular time for praying, with your hands nicely folded and your eyes shut tight, but if you start praying that you might win the lottery and that your favorite professional sports team might win their next game, then you are missing the boat.

Prayer that has the proper technique but the wrong attitude is useless, if not worse than useless. Jesus does not focus on technique, but he focuses on what should be focused on: the essence of prayer.

Jim Klazinga

And that is also what we should focus on first and foremost.

Who Do We Pray To?

Okay then, let's move on to considering the essence of prayer. Question and Answer 117 of the Heidelberg Catechism is very useful for helping us to understand what the Lord's Prayer is getting at. The first part of Answer 117 says this: "First, we must pray from the heart to none other than the one true God, who has revealed himself in his Word, asking for everything he has commanded us to ask for."

There are two basic ways we can pray: we can either pray to the real God, or we can pray to a false God. We can either pray to the true God who reveals himself in Scripture, or we can pray to some false image of God that we made up in our own imagination.

As sinners, if we pray at all, we're naturally inclined to pray to a false image of God that we set up in our own minds. Perhaps we think that God exists only to meet our own selfish needs. And so we pray to such a God, demanding what we want from him. We imagine that he should listen to us, because he exists to serve us. This is not true prayer.

We must turn to the Word of God if we are to know who to pray to. We must look to what the Holy Spirit is telling us in Scripture about the God who hears the prayers of his people.

When we read the Lord's

Please note your subscription renewal for 2016 is due

Due to postage increases the prices are now \$35 per annum within a bulk order (5 or more), \$40 per annum for an individual subscription within Australia, and \$AU50 for individual overseas subscriptions.

Donations are also gladly received to enable mailing to theological colleges and libraries.

Please send your subs in as soon as possible to ensure continued reception
If you send it via our Bank Account please put your name with the deposit

prayer, it becomes obvious that God wants us to address him as "Our Father". God reveals himself in his Word as the Father of his people. God is the Father who watches over his children, who cares for them, who loves them and who elects them to salvation.

This Father is unlike any other Father we have ever known. This Father is the Father who has made all things in heaven and on earth. And this Father is the Father who has been watching over and ruling over creation ever since the beginning of time.

Also, this Father is the Father who hates sin, and who promises to punish sin.

And this Father is the Father who has sent his Son Jesus Christ to die for the sins of his children, so that they would not have to experience his wrath against sin.

This Father is the Father who will draw all his children to himself, so that they will experience his fatherly love for all eternity.

Without God's Word, we would not have the foggiest idea that this is the God to whom we are to pray. God's people are to worship him in Spirit and in truth, and it is through the Bible that God's Spirit reveals the truth about who God is. Without that truth we would only have ourselves to lean on, and that would mean our sinful nature would corrupt our prayers, and we would end up praying to false gods.

Who Do We Pray With?

By the way, one of the implications of all of this is that only Christians can truly know how to pray, since only Christians are the true children of the heavenly Father who know him as such. Others may know how to meditate. But this does not at all mean that they know how to truly pray. Only the true Christian recognizes the truth of the way in which God has revealed himself in his Word. Only the Christian can pray to God as he is meant to be prayed to.

Can you pray with folks who practice Eastern religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism? No. You

can never really pray with non-Christians. You can only pray for them. You can't pray with them, because they do not recognize the one true God for who he is.

Pray With a Penitent Heart

The Heidelberg Catechism also says in Answer 117: "we must acknowledge our need and misery, hiding nothing, and humble ourselves in his majestic presence." We must confess how undeserving we are. We must confess our unrighteousness and unholiness to the righteous and holy God.

In the Lord's Prayer we recognize that God is righteous and holy. "Hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done." You, O Lord, are the majestic God who alone deserves to have his will done.

Also, in the Lord's prayer we recognize how unrighteous and unholy we are. We do this when we ask, "forgive us our debts." We can only truly pray this if we first believe that we have debts that need forgiving. If we are to confess our sins, then it stands to reason that we would first believe that we are sinful.

When you enter into the presence of the Almighty, you are bound to recognize how weak you are. When you enter into the presence of the God who is love, you are bound to recognize how little love actually lives within your heart.

In Isaiah 6, when Isaiah had a vision of the glory of the Lord, the first thing he said was, "Woe is me, I am ruined, for I am a man of unclean lips." That's what happens. If you try to pray as someone who has gotten his act altogether, then you are not really praying at all. You cannot help but be humbled when truly praying because the greatness of God is a humbling thing.

Pray With Assurance

Answer 117 of the Heidelberg Catechism also says, "Third, we must rest on this unshakable foundation: even though we do not deserve it, God will surely listen to our prayer because of Christ our Lord. That is what he promised us in his Word."

Here is one of the beautiful aspects of true Christian prayer: we can pray with confidence.

We are called to pray with assurance. We are to pray knowing that our God is watching over us. We are to pray knowing that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus. There is comfort to our prayer.

While we recognize that we cannot help but be humbled in the presence of God because of our sins, we also realize that Christ has already done what was necessary so that we could be cleared of our shame.

We do not approach a God who says, "Well, I might listen to your prayers, but then again, I might not, depending on what kind of day I'm having." That is not the nature of our God at all. Instead, we approach the God who has said to us in John 14:14 – "You may ask anything in my name, and I will do it."

This is assuming that what we ask is in conformity with the will of God. And of course, we don't always know what the will of God is. There may be times when God answers our prayers in ways which we might not expect or even want. So sometimes we may have the appearance of unanswered prayer.

But we still have the promise that God will send his Spirit to dwell in our hearts. And we still have the promise that God hears our prayers, regardless of what it takes to have our prayers answered. And the promise of our God is an unshakable foundation.

When we look at the Lord's Prayer in this light, we can see that it is a prayer that can be prayed with confidence. Father, your name will be hallowed. Your kingdom will come. You will give us each day our daily bread. You will forgive us our debts, because of the blood of Jesus Christ shed for us. We can pray to God this perfect prayer, this model for all true prayer, knowing that our God will hear us.

Children under the Banner



Letter to the Editor

For background information to this also refer to the November 2015 Editorial (p.2)

Dear Editor,
I would like to present a different view from that of Andrew Bajema's review of the film "War Room" (The Presbyterian Banner, November 2015 p.14f).

Considering that the film was marketed overtly as a Christian film, and being a Christian myself going to see this Christian movie, I did feel hesitant about how prayer would be depicted, but I was encouraged.

I thought the film addressed an endemic problem in all classes and groups of our society- marriage break down and family issues which result from these. I saw the producers grapple with the way in which Christians view these issues and how Christians are to address these issues. In both the society at large, and in the Christian community, too often couples are not able or willing to resolve their arguments or differences. The film depicts that our sinful heart dictates sinful responses: anger and bitterness at those nearest

to us who do us wrong, with our responses or reactions causing an even greater rift. The characters, Tom and Elizabeth, even seem like enemies of one another, when they are meant to be lovers! The film portrays the way of love, of prayer for the one with whom there is strife, an appeal to God to protect the loved one and themselves from sinning against each other, and for God to work mightily in bringing about a change of heart. This strength to love is shown to be seated and grounded in love for God because of what Jesus has done, and is received through prayer. This was clear from the movie, I thought. I also thought there was a clear presentation of true repentance, a heartfelt sorrow for sin, humility before God and people, and the acceptance of the potential and actual consequences of acknowledging wrongdoing, lies and deceit.

The desire for restoration of human relationships through faith working in love, and for the Name of God to be given glory through the prayers and consecrated lives of his people throughout the world, was the mes-

sage I took away from the film.

If the film had been marketed as a presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ in a sermon-like manner, I would agree that it failed to meet its goal, but maybe that wasn't the producer's goal? I do believe, however, that the Christian message the film brings across, does not disagree with the teaching of the Bible, albeit limited in its scope. In saying that, I would agree, that the portrayal of the restoration of the relationships in the family and its happiness, including the blessings they receive needs a note of caution. The life of the Christian continues to be a life of struggle against "the world, the devil and the flesh".

May the message that the prayers of God's people are powerful as they depend on the Almighty God of the Scriptures, be that which the Spirit teaches the people he has chosen to eternal life, even with the help of this medium which entertains.

Sincerely, your sister in Christ,
Connie Dekter.

Prescribed Search Work

DECEMBER 2015

Senior Section 12 years and over; Intermediate 10—11 years; Junior 9 years and under

SENIOR and INTERMEDIATE (Intermediate omit questions 4 and 7)

ACTS chapter 22

1. How did Paul describe himself in his defence to the people? (1 verse only)
2. At his conversion, what had been the Lord's answer when Paul asked, "What shall I do, Lord?"
3. What did Ananias tell Paul God had chosen him to do? (2 verses)
- 4(x). What was the response of the audience when Paul mentioned his being sent to the Gentiles?

chapter 23

5. What did Paul cry out in the council when he saw one part was Sadducees and the other Pharisees?
6. What did the Lord say to Paul on the night following?
- 7(x). When told of the Jews' conspiracy, what did the chief captain [commander] tell the two centurions to do? (2 verses)
8. What did Felix say when he heard that Paul was from Cilicia, and where was Paul kept? (2 verses)

JUNIOR

JOHN chapter 13:1--30

1. What did Jesus do after rising from supper and laying aside his garments? (2 verses)
2. What was Jesus' answer when Peter told him he (Jesus) would never wash his feet?
3. If their Lord and Master [Teacher] had washed their feet, what were the disciples to do for one another?
4. To whom did Jesus give the sop [piece of bread] when he had dipped it?

Please send the answers to:
Mrs I Steel
PO Box 942
Epping NSW 1710
The questions for the whole year
are available from the above postal
address or by email at:
iesteel@gmail.com

Missions in the Banner

Perú 2015 – a Report

Submitted by Ian Conley

Mr Hugh Varnes, a member of St Georges' congregation, Sydney, taught in one-teacher schools in the Wauchope District from 1957-1961. It was in the Wauchope Church in 1961 that he heard a sermon preached by the late Rev. Joseph Harman on Acts 16:9: '...come over to Macedonia and help us.' This led to his going in 1965, with his wife, to the Free Church of Scotland Mission in Perú, where he remained until 1974.

Early in 2015 Hugh was able to return to Perú for five months, where he was overjoyed to meet many friends and members of families of days long ago.

Hugh spent two months doing volunteer teaching in Colegio San Andres in Lima, where he had taught in 1966 and 1967. He also did volunteer teaching in the Annie Soper School in Moyobamba for one month. Using long distance coaches, Hugh was able to visit Cusco, Machu Picchu, Puno and Lake Titicaca. Lake Titicaca is the highest navigable lake in the world. From the city of Arequipa he took a further four hour bus trip to the deep Colca Canyon, which is home to hundreds of condors – giant birds with a wingspan sometimes over three metres. Watching these magnificent birds in flight is one of Hugh's great memories of his journey. After this he travelled up into the north of the country where he formerly lived and worked. He went to Trujillo, Cajamarca, and on through Chachapoyas by road to Moyobamba in the jungle area. Geographically, Perú is divided into three distinct areas. First there is the narrow desert coastline in which Lima, the capital, is situated. Then there are the majestic high Andean mountains running from north to south, and on the east of the mountains there are the jungle areas.

The Free Church of Scotland (FC

of S) Mission commenced with the arrival of Rev. and Mrs John A. Mackay in 1916 and the founding of the Colegio Anglo-Peruana, later Colegio San Andrés, in 1917.

Today the college is an independent evangelical (protestant) institution whose principal is a Peruvian (Señor Jesus Guzman) with a total staff of 136 and a co-educational student body of 700.

Mr Varnes was enormously impressed with the changes evident in the school premises – every square metre seems to have been wisely used, even to an underground area for several offices.

The building which formerly housed missionary flats is now part of the school and used for early education classes, science laboratories, music rooms – and a cafeteria with an area for school memorabilia. Control of the school now rests with the Asociación Educativa Colegio San Andrés, a local committee.

While in Lima, Hugh was able to take the Lima to Huancayo Andean train journey with its spectacular 69 tunnels, 58 bridges and six long zig-zag switchbacks. The journey takes 12 hours, with the highest point being 4781 metres above sea level.

The founding of the national Presbyterian Church did not occur until 1963 (the first Assembly of the Iglesia Evangélica Presbiteriana del Perú, IEPP), some 46 years after mission work commenced. Rev. David Ford, at one time Pastor of the IEPP congregation in Celendin, has noted that the FC of S Mission from its earliest days engaged in interdenominational work of great importance – the establishment of the National Evangelical Council, and the Lima Evangelical Seminary (1933). The Scripture Union movement in Perú was also established by the FC of S Mission. All of these were of great benefit to all evangelical missions. However, Ford noted that perhaps this de-

tracted from the establishment of a strong Presbyterian church.

From the 1960s missionaries and finance from churches in Holland, Korea and the United States also came to the FC of S Mission. Furthermore, there was a long established North American Presbyterian Church in the province of Ayacucho, well to the south of most of the FC of S work. In 1995 there was a union of this Presbyterian Church and the Iglesia Evangélica Presbiteriana del Perú (IEPP), established by the FC of S Mission.

However, this union lasted only one year and in 1996 two Presbyterian churches emerged. The grounds of separation revolved around the issue of purity of worship and some areas of church government. Other areas of contention were the training and examination of elders as well as the pre-eminence of the Word of God over culture.

The larger denomination of today, Iglesia Evangélica Presbiteriana Reformada del Perú (IEPRP) has approximately nine thousand members. It has the large Presbyteries in the city of Lima with work also in Moyobamba, Amazonas, Chiclayo, Huancavelica, Ayacucho, Apurimac, Arequipa and Cuzco. Its pastors are mostly trained in the Lima Evangelical Seminary, although a small Presbyterian Seminary (Seminario Evangélico de Los Andes) has recently been commenced in the province of Ayacucho, mostly training men for work in Quechua speaking congregations. Hugh was asked to lead the morning devotions when he visited this Seminary and also to preach in the local church. This church uses instrumental music (sometimes large bands), a wide variety of hymns and a limited number of Psalms and Scripture choruses. In some

areas there have been Pentecostal influences.

The smaller denomination, Iglesia Evangélica Presbiteriana del Perú (IEPP), has perhaps 800 members. It has three congregations in the city of Lima, two of which have schools each with enrolments of just under 400 students. One of these congregations also has an extension work in an outer suburb called Pachacutec. There are also congregations in Cuzco, Trujillo, Cajamarca, Amazonas and in Piura, in the far north. This denomination has five pastors and uses a mobile seminary with workshops (on the job training for pastors and elders). They believe that the Lima Evangelical Seminary is largely influenced by Baptist and Pentecostal denominations and hence is not very Reformed.

Hugh lived previously in Cajamarca for seven years (1968-1974) and was thrilled when there this time to see that the Christian bookshop he established in 1968 is still in use, now under the auspices of the Peruvian Bible Society. He was also impressed with the extension work going on, with a second congregation in the city. When he lived there, the population was about 40,000. Now it is 200,000, due to the development of the mining industry. In the Cajamarca IEPP, Psalms are sung along with a few

portions of Scripture, and work is being done to complete the translation of the Psalter into Spanish.

The aim now is that church plants be Reformed from the very beginning. Whilst there Hugh was asked to preach at the 87th anniversary of the large congregation in Hualqui,



Hugh Varnes wearing a Colegio San Andres shirt

about two hours drive from Cajamarca. This is probably the oldest Presbyterian congregation in Perú, having been commenced under the ministry of the Rev. Calvin Mackay, one of the earliest missionaries. Following Cajamarca Hugh journeyed through Celendin and

Chachapoyas to Moyobamba, where he taught in the Annie Soper School for one month. The Principal is Señora Mariquita Chumbe de Tomanguillo. The school has nicely appointed buildings and large grounds with about 300 students. From there he went on to visit the inland port of Iquito on the Amazon River.

In all his travels Hugh had no moment of anxiety and never once felt unsafe. Of course, speaking the Spanish language was a great asset.

Asked if volunteers are welcome in the schools here, he replied, 'Most certainly!' However, he added that the view had been expressed to him that the skills of volunteers are not always fully utilised.

After leaving Perú, Hugh was able to visit his granddaughter in the USA and the Iglesia Reformada Presbiteriana del España in Barcelona, where he had worked for a month relieving the minister in 1980. While in Europe, Hugh was able to visit seven of his ex-students in Prague. They had studied English in Sydney with him 20 years ago.

Hugh travelled back to Sydney via Vietnam and Cambodia. To use his words: "God has graciously blessed me – it was the journey of a lifetime."

Churches in the Banner

Ulverstone

The Athletes Camp on Friday and Saturday was blessed with a very happy event. It was great to have a number of new people present with Luke and Tessa from NZ, Sam and Joanna from Victoria and Zoe from Elliot. Highlights included the devotions from Shaun (Jeremiah 29:11-13) and Ben (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8), a group quiz competition organised by Briony and a morning walk to take in the magnificent surrounds of Gowrie Park.

Brisbane Sunday School Sponsors Indian Student in Chhapara Mission School

For the past few years the Brisbane Sunday School children have taken up a project to support children less privileged than us. Previously, we have raised money to provide desks for the new classrooms in the school in Chhapara, India, and filled shoeboxes for Samaritan's Purse. This year, after the visit to the congregation of Mr. Pradeep Kumar and Rev. Samit Mishra, it was decided that we would support a needy child with their education in

the Chhapara Mission School. We learnt that \$240 a year was needed to support a child with their education and, after discussing how we could raise some money, it was agreed to hold a garage sale. This proved to be a good opportunity for folk in the congregation to have a clear out of no-longer-required stuff. Plants were potted, cakes baked and eggs collected, all in preparation for the sale.

We were up bright and early on the morning of 24th October and before 7a.m., bargain hunters

were at our door. The young people manned the tills and answered the questions, and things were sold steadily all morning. When all was packed up and the proceeds counted, we were very happy to learn that we had made a total of \$490, which will be sufficient to sponsor our child, Sanjiv, for 2 years. We pray that God will bless this sponsorship scheme for the children receiving their education in a Christian school and for the staff who teach them.

Barbara Schmidt

Narre Warren
On Sunday 25 October we were blessed to be able to ordain into the office of elder,

including the minister, with one deacon. We thank the Lord for making this all possible, particularly after some years of depending on assessor elders—one of whom was Stewart's Dad!



Brisbane SS Garage Sale for student at Chhapara



Clockwise from above: Participants at Ulverstone Athletes Camp; Boys Quiz Group; Girls Quiz Group; Fellowship scenes at Narre Warren after Stewart Louden's ordination into the office of elder; Stewart with brother Peter, wife Eileen and his parents, John & Lorraine; Office bearers present at the ordination; Stewart answering the questions for ordination from the Rev. Sjirk Bajema.

Stewart Louden. Stewart and his wife, Eileen, have been members at Narre Warren for some years, Stewart having come from the Knox PCEA, where his father, John, is an elder. It brings our elders up to three,

