

the presbyterian banner

February 2013



Go the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise!

It has no commander, no overseer or ruler,

yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.

Proverbs 6:6

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Editorial

The lady sitting on the seat next to her hospital bed was very spritely for a 93 year old (94 next month, she let me know). The unfortunate thing was that she had broken a major bone which meant she had to go into a care facility, leaving the unit she had had at the Retirement Village. Her name had been passed on to me by someone who knew her as someone with a Presbyterian background, suggesting that maybe I could go and visit to encourage her. I had been told, though, that she wasn't sure if she was a believer or not.

Well, one thing I found out very quickly – she was a Presbyterian! Her parents had been married by a Presbyterian minister in an inner city Presbyterian Church – the same minister who baptised her and the same church where she was baptised. Perhaps I had met him – but then she thought that might have been a little bit before my time. She'd always been Presbyterian – her husband had even served as an elder for many years in a country congregation. She told me of those difficult times. And she told me of the good things she, he and the kids had done. Prizes won, sporting awards, work achievements, and so on.

I drew her back several times to what the Lord Jesus meant to her. But to no avail. There was no indication of a saving faith. And over the last twenty years she hadn't missed not being able to go to church – didn't even bother with the Sunday Christian meeting at the Village.

It makes it hard when somebody has a form of religion but not its substance. It's not easy to talk with a person who thinks that because they've been brought up in a church, that they must be basically all right. They know the Bible, they know all the traditions, but they have no faith. I remember meeting two people once who knew the Anglican prayer book off by heart – but the gospel was far from their hearts.

Mind you, this kind of person is a dying breed in our society. Now we have a generation which didn't go to Sunday School, and for whom the Bible is a completely foreign book. Perhaps that's a good thing. But it is bad in the sense that those who grew up in a Christian framework at least had its moral guide to set the boundaries. Now, the only guide is whatever suits one at any particular time. Feelings have replaced facts. And don't feelings quickly change!

Perhaps the Lord might put us in their lives when they are feeling really down. Then they might get to look up – and see the Light! Let's pray and work that we will live lives shining that Light. And if we meet any of those of the old school let's pray that what they have been taught, and can so easily recite, might go a bit further than their minds and strike their hearts.

*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart,
O God, you will not despise.
Psalm 51:17*

Cover Photo: "Collecting his food for winter," by Alex Steel

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The Proof That God Is For Us

Considering Romans 8: 31-32

The message of the Gospel and the message of this book of Romans is that: 'God is for us!' The triune God is on our side. He is working on our behalf. He is graciously inclined toward us. Is this not a most amazing thing, that God, the One who is almighty, glorious, holy and eternal, is for us? That's the conclusion that Paul comes to here at the end of chapter 8 of Romans. Don't be misled by Paul's 'if.' It is not the 'if' of doubt but rather the 'if' of inference, to express a fact, an assurance. It might be expressed as 'since' or 'seeing that.' There is no doubt that God is for us!

How do we know that God is for us? How can we be sure? Where is the evidence? Where is the proof? Does it lie in the fact that your Christian life is one of unbroken happiness? Does it lie in the fact that as a Christian things are always going well in your life? Does it lie in the fact that God always answers your prayers? Does it lie in the fact that now as a Christian, you no longer struggle with sin? Does it lie in the fact that since you are a Christian, the Devil no longer tempts you? Does it lie in the fact that now that you are a Christian, you have no more opposition or enemies or trials?...

The answer to all these questions is a resounding 'NO'. Indeed, at times we might wonder 'is God indeed for us?' It seems at times that everything is arrayed against us! **The world is against us** (John 15:18-19); **the flesh is against us** (Romans 7); **the Devil is against us** (Eph. 6: 10-12 and 1 Peter 5: 8-9).

How can we be so confident that that God is for us? We need to remember that when face to face with almighty God, all these things are limited and finite. The world is limited: it has an expiry date. The flesh is limited: one day we shall be like Christ. The Devil is limited: he is doomed and defeated. That's the perspective we need to maintain.

The ultimate proof however that God is for us is found – not in our feelings or circumstances or experience – but in the Cross (v.32).

Romans 8:31-32

What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

We can be sure that God is for us because this God, the God of the Bible, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up to the Cross for us all.

1. God Did Not Spare His Son

This is how we know that God is for us; '**He . . . did not spare His own Son.**' **The gospel begins with God.** '**God so loved the world that He**

George Ball

gave . . .' (Jn. 3: 16). **He loved. He sent. He gave. He did not spare.** Perish the idea of a grumpy, grudging, reluctant god who had to be dragged by a compassionate Christ to get involved in the redemption of His people! He didn't have to be coaxed. It was His plan. The gospel begins in eternity, in the heart and mind of God. The saving initiative begins with Him. Bethlehem and Calvary were always part of His eternal plan. Hence He did not spare His Son.

From the cradle to the grave He did not spare His Son. Even though the Father shared the same nature with the Son; even though they shared an eternity of love; He did not spare His Son a life of humiliation and a death of suffering and shame.

Shorter Cat. Q. 27: '**Christ's humiliation consisted in being born, and that in poor circumstances; in being subject to God's law; in undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the curse of death on the cross; in being buried; and continuing under the power of death for a time.**'

He was born in a stable in an obscure village in Palestine, his parents were poor, he had brothers who misunderstood him and rejected Him, and His own people rejected Him. He was betrayed by one of His own and denied by one of His closest friends. He was condemned, beaten, spat upon and ultimately exposed to public shame and crucified; to the extent that '**at last His identity was totally obscured and all that could be seen**

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was a man disgraced, disfigured and damned' (Macleod). The glory and the relationship with the Father were obscured. If you and I were there at the Cross we would have seen a criminal; a thief; a rebel; a law-breaker. Scarred; marred; bruised; beaten; bleeding. There was nothing outwardly to indicate that this was God's own Son.

This was unnatural and unfair. It is natural for parents to spare their (guilty) children (e.g. David wanted Absalom spared). Judges are known to spare the (guilty) criminal. The police officer will often spare a (guilty) motorist. But Jesus, who deserved to be spared, was not. He didn't deserve the poverty and the pain, the shame and the suffering, the malice and the cruelty. He had served His Father as a son should serve his father. He had preached about the Father; He had introduced a whole generation to His Father in Heaven. He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, even brought the dead back to life. His words were pure; His life was impeccable; He did no wrong. He deserved to be spared. He even prayed that He might be spared. **'Father if it is possible, let this cup (i.e. the sufferings of the Cross) pass from me.'** What father could possibly fail to grant such a cry? **God spared Isaac (Gen. 22). But His own Son, the Son he loved, was not spared.**

'This is the greatest mystery in the universe... But Paul puts the message of the gospel like this for one obvious reason. If what he says is right, we can draw only two possible conclusions: either God is utterly arbitrary and whimsical, impossible to understand and unworthy of trust; or (as Paul was convinced) God was doing something that is breathtaking in its significance.' (Ferguson). God did not spare His Son, because He is for us.

2. God Gave Up His Son

'God the Father did not spare His Son – but gave Him up.' In other words, it was God Himself who delivered Christ into the hands of men to be treated as if he really was the blasphemous offender they accused Him of being. **Although Judas betrayed Him, and the high priests and the council condemned Him, although Pilate handed him over, and the**

Roman soldiers were guilty of putting Him to death, there was a hand above theirs; God was the ultimate cause of Christ's suffering and death. God was the actual conspirator, righteous judge and executioner. Peter declared, **'This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you with the help of wicked men put him to death by nailing Him to the Cross'** (Acts 2: 23). Who delivered up Jesus to die? **'Not Judas for money; not Pilate for fear; not the Jews for envy; – but the Father, for love!'** (Winslow). Behind Judas and Herod and the priests and Pontius Pilate – stood the purposes of His Heavenly Father handing Him over to the Cross. **'It was the Lord's will to crush Him and cause Him to suffer'** (Isa. 53: 10). Jesus death was divinely ordained. It was no accident or mishap. God did it. God gave up His Son because He is for us.

3. God Gave Up His Son for Us All

Jesus death was substitutionary. In His condemnation and death, Jesus was taking our place. **'That is why the charges brought against Him were blasphemy and treason. For these are the very charges that we face before the judgement seat of God. We have made ourselves into gods, and thus blasphemed his holy Name; we have rebelled against His rightful rule over our lives, and we are guilty of high treason against His gracious majesty'** (Ferguson). Jesus died FOR us. He was made sin FOR us. He was pierced FOR our transgressions, crushed FOR our iniquities, punished FOR our peace, wounded FOR our healing. **'We all like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all'** (Isa. 53: 5-6).

This is the **'great exchange.'** He took what was ours so that we might receive what is His. Jesus took the cup of suffering and has drunk all of it on our behalf, so that if we are in Him our punishment has been paid in full; our rescue is assured; and we are eternally and infinitely safe and secure. **That's what Jesus has done for 'us all.'** Who is included in the word 'all'? All mankind? Every sinner? No! It's the Roman believers to whom Paul was writing. The 'all' are those defined in the context (verses 28-30).

The 'all' are all those who love God – all those called according to His purpose.

Just think: if that is what God the Father has done to His Son while punishing the sins of His people, what will He not do to those who reject Him and turn away from Him? Our sins must be punished. They are only punished once. Either Jesus personally bears our eternal punishment once and for all, or the sinner personally bears the punishment eternally in hell. The sufferings of hell will be aggravated by the knowledge that the miseries of hell could have been avoided. (See the story Jesus told about the Rich Man and Lazarus in Luke 16: 19-31). Don't make that mistake. Don't spurn the great and proven love of the awesome holy God. God gave up His Son for us all because He is for us.

4. God Guarantees our Future

'How will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?' This is the **'I shall not want'** of the New Testament. This is a beautiful benediction. This is the consequence of Calvary. This is the outflowing of His character and grace. This is God's guarantee for our future. **'This is not merely an argument from the greater to the lesser, but a statement of the impossibility of not completing what God began at so tremendous a cost to Himself'** (Lenski). It's impossible to think that after giving us His greatest gift, He will withhold His lesser gifts. It includes the material as well as the spiritual. Nothing is overlooked. **'My God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus'** (Phil. 4: 19). **'His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness'** (2 Peter 1: 3). **'The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want'** (Psalm 23: 1). Yes, Christian friend; God is for us. He always has been and He always will be. That's not a bad thought to begin 2013. I wish you all a happy New Year! But even more important, I wish every reader a happy eternity. It can be – and it will be with Christ.

The Past for Today

Can we be optimistic in 2013?

Can we be optimistic in 2013? Can we have a positive outlook for the future?

Maybe not, you say. Look at the paper or watch the television, or reflect back on what's happened in the last year. You might wonder whether 2013 can bring anything better. There are lots of reasons not to be positive and optimistic if you look at the media.

But from a Christian point of view can we be optimistic or not? If we see so many terrible things happening we might throw up our hands. If we turn to the Bible have a little bit of concern there too because even the major characters have major flaws. Can we be optimistic? Abraham passed off his wife as his sister to save his skin and risk hers. Jacob's name means deceiver, and a tricky fellow he was. Or look at David: for all that he was a man after God's own heart, he committed, adultery and murder. When you consider these things you might say, "Why should I be optimistic? Even the Bible characters are terribly flawed."

Grace for sinners

However, the very fact that the Bible characters are represented as real people with often serious flaws is the reason that we can be optimistic! God takes the flawed, the foolish, the sinful, the weak, and he transforms them so that they play a role in fulfilling his redemptive purposes in the world.

Abraham, well his name to begin with was Abram, which means "proud father," which was a bit of a mockery considering he had no children. But God blesses this man and changes his name to "Abraham," which means "Father of a Multitude," and he promises that through him all the nations of the earth will be blessed. Jacob the deceiver becomes Israel "Prince with God" because God works in this man's life and transforms him and changes him.

You see God delights to work with the hopeless, the helpless, the weak, even the dead in trespasses of sin. Then the glory comes to him, and then we see indeed the marvelous character of God.

God is gracious. God is not just wishing the world would be better. He is acting to change it and transform it. And grace by definition is what we don't deserve, and so the very fact that God is a God of grace is a reason for optimism. God takes those who don't deserve, who positively demerit his favour, and lavishes his grace and goodness upon them through Christ. Let's put it a little bit more precisely and say it's the very character of God in his covenant mercy that's the ground for optimism.



Some of those at the New Year Service

Do you remember right back in the beginning of the Scripture when sin has entered into the human family what does God say to the Serpent with a capital "S." He says, "I will put enmity between your seed and the seed of the woman." God, you see, is going to act so that he will place this irrevocable enmity between his purposes of grace in Christ and the Evil One. He will so act that ultimately the Evil One will be overthrown and cast into the bottomless pit. It is God who is at work building his church, gathering his people, and making them people who belong to a different kingdom, not the kingdom of the Evil One, but the kingdom of

Rowland S. Ward

God's dear Son.

The prophet says that when there was no eye to pity, no arm to save, God's eye pitied and his arm brought salvation. God is a God who works in a hopeless situation. In a world like ours so full of confusion and rebellion and sin this is the very theatre in which God reveals his glorious grace, the great character that belongs to him, rich in mercy and true in righteousness and justice.

And how does he do it? He does it in such a way that displays the riches of his grace. Who is it whom we see coming into this world, who is disfigured, disgraced, and damned in our place? It's Jesus, the very Son of God. It's God himself in the person of his Son who takes the knife to himself, to his own heart.

Remember Abraham didn't spare his son, his only son, whom he loved, Isaac. But he didn't have to give him up in the end, he was stopped. "Abraham! Abraham!" But the Father did not spare his only Son. Jesus gave himself for us willingly, and it wasn't in order to purchase the Father's love, because God so loved that he

gave. He already loved, but in righteousness he would act and he would redeem his people not on the ruins of his own character but in such a way as to display the marvels of his righteousness, his justice, his mercy.

Grace for the world

Some people believe we are living in a world that is getting worse and worse. One such writes: "As we move closer to the last days and the end of the world as we know it, anxiety will rise, tumult will increase, nerves will fray, society itself will shaken to the core, troubles will mount, and it will seem as if the world itself is spinning out of con-

trol.”

Is that true? Wasn't Paul right when he wrote to Timothy and said in the last days perilous times will come (2 Tim 3:1). People will be lovers of themselves, disobedient to parents and so on. Yes, but we are in the last days, this era in which Christ now is the risen Lord. It was true in Timothy's age and is in ours that there is much wickedness. We live in times of tribulation. In this world you will have trouble, said Jesus. We don't need to look for a great tribulation in the future. We're living in tribulation now, and some more severely than others. Our brothers and sisters in South Sudan, or in South America in many places, or wherever – there are many who are suffering in a very physical way for their faith in Christ. But in this world, you will have tribulation. We are living in those times. Don't be surprised. But are we to think the world is getting worse and worse and the future of the Gospel is pretty hopeless?

There are a couple of strands in the New Testament and we've got to keep them in tension. On the one hand Jesus says to his small group of disciples, "Fear not little flock. It's your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." And so we comfort ourselves as we settle together as a small gathering of God's people. The fact that we are only a few doesn't matter, the Lord has his few. And although this is true, is it the whole truth? Because we also read in the NT of a great multitude which no man can number assembled around the throne of God and of the Lamb. That doesn't look like a little flock. It's a great multitude.

And so there are questions in our minds. Can we be optimistic about the gospel in the future? Certainly the sin of man is no obstacle to its progress in the sense that God is able to make of stones children of Abraham. He can take those who are dead and quicken them to life, and we who are believers in Jesus have been people who were dead but have been made alive through the power of the Spirit dwelling in Christ.

We read in Luke 13. "Lord are there few that be saved?" And sometimes people think the answer is, "Yes." But Jesus doesn't answer it that way. He doesn't say "Yes" and he doesn't say "No". He says, "You make sure you

enter in." If Jesus were to say, "Many will be saved", perhaps we would say, "Oh that's okay then I can relax", or if he said, "There will be few", we'd become depressed and think, "I can't be saved". But Jesus doesn't answer the question that way. It's an impertinent question. And it's not a helpful question to be answered, not helpful as far as our spiritual growth and development is concerned. Just make sure that you enter in.

But then again in Luke 18 we have another question. "When the Son of Man comes will he find faith upon the earth?" It is a question Jesus asks in connection with the story of the widow who pleads with the judge to give her justice. Eventually the judge, though he doesn't care for her, gives her justice to be rid of the annoyance to him. And it's one of those stories that by contrast shows us how much more then will God, who is just, not like the unjust judge, how much more will he care for his people. And he will act for them speedily. And then the question, "But when the Son of Man comes will he find faith on the earth?" That question's not answered either. The question is left there as a challenge to us. Will you be one who is a person of faith in Jesus?

We'd better not get the idea that God's election of people to salvation, God's having mercy on whom he will have mercy, means that there will only be a few. But there are as many as God pleases and they add up to a multitude that no one can number. What God is doing is first calling out a people for himself. God chose Israel a small people, a people of no account, he chose them, and through them he would bring the Saviour who would bless all the nations according to that promise to Abraham.

And so in the Old Testament you find God calling his people, establishing the nation. The religious New Year for Israel began with the Exodus. "This month shall be the first of the months of your year" (Exodus 12:1). And then follows the appointment of the Passover which marks a new beginning. And it's good for us too, to think like that. To begin with Christ our Passover. But when God called his people, not all of them really believed. Many of them still had idolatry in their hearts. When they came out of Egypt they made a Golden Calf. But there was a remnant according to

God's secret election, true believers in every age. When the time was right God brought about the fulfilment of his promise. And so the Lord Jesus came and gave his life a ransom for many, was raised, glorified and sent the Spirit.

Then the Gospel is proclaimed and what's happening? God is erecting again David's fallen tent (Acts 15:13ff). To the believing remnant of Israel God is adding believing Gentiles. The new and true King David, Jesus Christ, was now gathering believing Jew and Gentile together into his kingdom. So you have God's Israel consisting of those who are according to the election of grace, those who are true Israelites indeed, and to them are being added Gentiles so they form one true Israel of God. They form ultimately one Jerusalem that shall come down from heaven and to a new earth.

Optimistic for 2013?

You can be optimistic for all kinds of reasons: a job promotion, the mortgage paid off, the kids off your hands now, the big trip coming up... But these offer no lasting joy. The sin question needs to be addressed through repentance and faith in Christ.

Christ is the light of the world, the Saviour of the world. He has all authority in heaven and on earth. And he is gathering a multitude. You and I are called to be faithful in a hostile environment as we look for the coming of the King. That's all you need to know.

Perhaps then we can close with Paul in Philippians 3:13-14 where he says. "Forgetting those things that are behind I press on toward the mark of our high calling in Christ." What difficulties people have in their lives! They may appear happy when there's a deep sadness inside. You can be imprisoned by the past, by the things that have happened to you or been done by you, sometimes very evil things. But if you've been saved, brought out of darkness into light, you may not forget absolutely but we are to forget in the sense that we do not live in the past, in that failure, that disappointment, that sin, that grief. Don't be imprisoned

like that. Press on to the mark of our high calling in Christ ... If we have the hope of the glory of our Saviour being revealed in this world, we are looking for the time when he will wipe every tear from our faces, when we will be forever with the Lord. Don't be like

those who when they see things bad happening in the world get all down-cast and despondent ... lift up your heads! Your redemption draws near! So let's live in the light of what Christ has done and in the light of his coming. May this year be one of cheerful

service, confident is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Address at the service at All Nations, Mulgrave 1 January 2013

Missions in the Banner

Careful Building

At the recent Rivers Convention at Gilgandra we looked at the text of 1 Corinthians 3:10 where Paul encourages his hearers to build on a solid foundation and that "each one should be careful how he builds." I was asked to share some thoughts from Nehemiah following this theme.

Nehemiah wrote between 445-425 BC and, with the book of Ezra records how God fulfilled his promise to his people Israel to return them to their land after being exiled in Babylon for 70 years. Those that return find Jerusalem in ruins with no protection from their enemies. There is a need to rebuild the city walls and Nehemiah begins to address that need.

Careful building responds to the need

The people are in great trouble and disgrace (1:1-3). Things are in a mess, with the city walls broken down and gates burned. We too, as we look about our ministry and observe the situation in many of our nation's Aboriginal communities, would have to say that the people are in great trouble and distress. Those working with AIM are seeking to respond to that need.

Careful building involves talking with the Designer

Nehemiah's first response is to seek God in prayer, in reverence and repentance (1:4-7), in remembrance

(1:8-10), reminding God of his covenant, and by being relevant (1:11) asking for success as he approached the king for help.

Careful building uses the right materials

God provides for His work, sometimes in ways which we might not expect (2:1-9). We have to look about to see what God may be providing to help us in our building task. Respect and interaction with the leaders of our com-



AIM Missionaries in a workshop in February 21-March 4, 2011

munities might lead to positive help. I am reminded of the gift of the church bus to the Tennant Creek mob by the community, and the local trust body donating funds to upgrade the Boroloola church, both as a result of the local communities recognising the positive influence the Christians were having in the communities.

Careful building is prepared for the mockers

We should expect that there will be those who do not want to see the cause of the Gospel promoted

Trevor Leggott

amongst Indigenous people (2:10). Many would know of the grog sellers and drug pushers, and those who would rip off customers who are not so aware of the value of money. We should also expect that there will be those stand off and laugh at what might appear to be our puny efforts. (2:11-19)

Careful building makes a start

Nehemiah answered the doomsayers with: "The God of heaven will give us success. We his servants will start rebuilding (2:20). We press on with the confident trust in the Lord with the long held motto of AIM: "Our God is able!" ... We will start!

Careful building involves coordination and teamwork

The Lord's work needs people prepared to extend themselves, to step out of their comfort zone, to get their hands dirty. It's interesting to see just who got on with the building, they weren't all bricklayers! We have the high priest and his fellow priests, the pastors out of the study and out with the people! There were goldsmiths and perfume makers (3:8), people normally doing fine work and using precious materials, but here getting on with hard labour as part of the team. And this wasn't all men's work. There was plenty for the ladies to do: "Shallum repaired the section with the help of his

daughters!" There was a real sense of the people being prepared to set aside some of their privileges for the common good, to get in and help to get the job done.

And we shouldn't be surprised that there may be some in our fellowship without such commitment, who aren't team players: "The nobles of Tekoa would not put their shoulders to the work under their supervisors" (3:5)

Careful building deals with problems as they arise

As we prepare for the mockers and troublemakers (4:1-3) we need the full armour of God for the fight (Ephesians 6:10-18). This is a spiritual battle.

Careful building presses on

Press on with prayerful determination (4:4-6). We must work and watch. With a sword in one hand and a trowel in the other, and a confident trust in the Lord. Everyone was vulnerable to attack, but their main focus was not the enemy, but in getting the job done. In this case finishing the building would be the victory, the attack of the enemy would then come to nothing.

Major Ian Thomas says, "It is a love for God, leading to dependence upon God, resulting in obedience to God, that lets God be God in a man!"

Cromwell said, as he took his men into battle: "Put your trust in God; but mind to keep your powder dry."

"Don't be afraid, remember the Lord. ... God frustrated the enemies plot and the work continued." (4:14,15)

Careful Building Sees the Job Done(6:15,16)

May we be such careful builders, and use the tools and skills and resources which the Lord has provided, and work as a team, as we seek to build His Church amongst Indigenous Australia.

The Rev. Trevor Leggott is an ordained minister of the PCEA presently serving as the General Director of Australian Indigenous Ministries.

The World in the Banner

Early Days More Hangover Than Honeymoon

The honeymoon period is a myth, according to new research which has found that couples are unhappiest in their first year of marriage. And forget bickering like an old married couple. The study found that the happiest husbands and wives are those who have notched up more than 40 years of wedded bliss. The research, by Deakin University's Australian Centre on Quality of Life, measured the happiness of 2000 people on a scale of 0-100. The average score for the Australian population was 75 but couples in their first year of marriage scored a rating of 73.9 compared with people who have been married for four-plus decades at 79.8. The lead author, Dr Melissa Weinberg, was surprised by the findings. "It's a little unexpected because the perception is that newlywed couples should be the happiest but in reality that's not the case," she said.

...The research, carried out for the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index, found that couples bounce back from post-nuptial depression, with their happiness score increasing to 78.4 in the second year of marriage. Those

who can stay the distance are the happiest of all, with Mr Aiken noting that couples learn how to manage conflict. The research, to be released on Monday, found that married people were generally happier than singles, de factos, divorcees or people who were widowed or separated. Those who had been through a separation were the unhappiest with a score of 69.2. Married women were happier than men, with wedded bliss peaking at between three and five years for women and again at the 40-year mark.

+ *Sydney Morning Herald 3 Dec 2012*

Uganda's President Publicly Repents for Nation's Sins

President Museveni celebrated Uganda's 50th anniversary of independence from Britain at a National Jubilee Prayers event last month. During the celebration, he did something very unusual for a national leader: he publicly repented of his personal sins and the sins of the nation.

Museveni began his prayer with thanks, then declared his intention to make a firm break with the past: "Father God in heaven, today we

stand here as Ugandans, to thank you for Uganda. We are proud that we are Ugandans and Africans. We thank you for all your goodness to us.

"I stand here today to close the evil past and especially in the last 50 years of our national leadership history and at the threshold of a new dispensation in the life of this nation. I stand here on my own behalf and on behalf of my predecessors to repent. We ask for your forgiveness," Museveni said.

"We confess these sins, which have greatly hampered our national cohesion and delayed our political, social and economic transformation."

Next, President Museveni got specific in his acknowledgement of sinful activity.

"We confess sins of idolatry and witchcraft which are rampant in our land. We confess sins of shedding innocent blood, sins of political hypocrisy, dishonesty, intrigue and betrayal."

"Forgive us of sins of pride, tribalism and sectarianism; sins of laziness, indifference and irresponsibility; sins of corruption and bribery that have eroded our national re-

sources; sins of sexual immorality, drunkenness and debauchery; sins of unforgiveness, bitterness, hatred and revenge; sins of injustice, oppression and exploitation; sins of rebellion, insubordination, strife and conflict.”

The president then asked God for a new beginning:

“These sins and many others have characterized our past leadership, especially the last 50 years of our history. Lord forgive us and give us a new beginning. Give us a heart to love you, to fear you and to seek you. Take away from us all the above sins. “We pray for national unity. Unite us as Ugandans and eliminate all forms of conflict, sectarianism and tribalism. Help us to see that we are all your children, children of the same Father. Help us to love and respect one another and to appreciate unity in diversity.

“We pray for prosperity and transformation. Deliver us from ignorance, poverty and disease. As leaders, give us wisdom to help lead our people into political, social and economic transformation.”

To close his remarkable prayer, Museveni dedicated Uganda to God: “We want to dedicate this nation to you so that you will be our God and guide. We want Uganda to be known as a nation that fears God and as a nation whose foundations are firmly rooted in righteousness and justice to fulfill what the Bible says in Psalm 33:12: Blessed is the nation, whose God is the Lord. A people you have chosen as your own.

“I renounce all the evil foundations and covenants that were laid in idolatry and witchcraft. I renounce all the satanic influence on this nation. And I hereby covenant Uganda to you, to walk in your ways and experience all your blessings forever.

“I pray for all these in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

While President Museveni repented for “sexual immorality” among other sins, he did not single out homosexuality for any special attention.

+ Mark Ellis, Senior Correspondent, ASSIST News Service (adapted)

Law Officers Invade Prayer Meeting

A 7 December 2012 The *Herald* article by Brian Donnelly titled “Kirk under Fire as Court Officers Disrupt Prayers” reports that law officers acting on behalf of the Church of Scotland (CoS) entered a prayer meeting at St George’s Tron, Glasgow, Scotland to serve papers demanding the return of Bibles, hymn books, and an organ. The CoS had previously threatened the congregation with eviction from the premises after it split from the CoS in opposition to the ordination of homosexual ministers. St George’s Tron pastor the Rev Dr William Philip commented: “To disrupt a prayer meeting in that way and demand the organ and other key items that were gifted to the congregation, just weeks before Christmas, truly beggars belief.

“Not content to evict us, it seems they are determined to publicly humiliate our leaders and frighten our members, some of whom are vulnerable people.

“It is shameful. Having law officers disrupt a church meeting and intimidate a church is something we associate with China or former Soviet dictatorships but is the last thing we expected from the so-called national Church.”

“We have sought to avoid going to the courts at every opportunity,, which is why we took the decision to vacate the building rather than fight for it, trusting God as we enter this new phase of ministry to which he has called us. But to do this we need resources like our hymn books, organ and bibles, so we have been left with no other option but to contest this petty and ridiculous action.”

+ *The Herald*, www.theherald.co.uk
+ *Church of Scotland*, 121 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4YN, Scotland, 0131-225-5722

The Giglio Imbroglia — The Public Inauguration of a New Moral McCarthyism

A new chapter in America’s moral revolution came today as Atlanta pastor Louie Giglio withdrew from giving the benediction at President Obama’s second inaugural ceremony. In a statement released to the White House and the Presidential Inaugural Committee, Giglio said that he withdrew because of the furor that emerged yesterday after a liberal watchdog group revealed that almost twenty years ago he had preached a sermon in which he had stated that homosexuality is a sin and that the “only way out of a homosexual lifestyle ... is through the healing power of Jesus.”

In other words, a Christian pastor has been effectively disinvented from delivering an inaugural prayer because he believes and teaches Christian truth.

The fact that Giglio was actually disinvented was made clear in a statement from Addie Whisenant of the Presidential Inaugural Committee:

“We were not aware of Pastor Giglio’s past comments at the time of his selection, and they don’t reflect our desire to celebrate the strength and diversity of our country at this inaugural. Pastor Giglio was asked to deliver the benediction in large part because of his leadership in combating human trafficking around the world. As we now work to select someone to deliver the benediction, we will ensure their beliefs reflect this administration’s vision of inclusion and acceptance for all Americans.”

That statement is, in effect, an embarrassed apology for having invited Louie Giglio in the first place. Whisenant’s statement apologizes for the Presidential Inaugural Committee’s failure to make certain that their selection had never, at any time, for any reason, believed that

homosexuality is less than a perfectly acceptable lifestyle. The committee then promised to repent and learn from their failure, committing to select a replacement who would “reflect this administration’s vision of inclusion and acceptance.”

The imbroglio over Louie Giglio is the clearest evidence of the new Moral McCarthyism of our sexually “tolerant” age. During the infamous McCarthy hearings, witnesses would be asked, “Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?”

In the version now to be employed by the Presidential Inaugural Committee, the question will be: “Are you now or have you ever been one who believes that homosexuality (or bisexuality, or transsexualism, etc.) is anything less than morally acceptable and worthy of celebration?”

Louie Giglio, pastor of Atlanta’s Passion City Church, is also founder of the Passion movement that brings tens of thousands of Christian young people together to hear Giglio, along with speakers such as John Piper. They urge a rising generation of young Christians to make a passionate commitment to Christ. In recent years, the movement has also sought to raise awareness and activism among young Christians on the issue of sex trafficking. It was that activism that caught the attention of both President Obama and the Presidential Inaugural Committee.

Note carefully that both the White House and the committee were ready to celebrate Giglio’s activism on sex trafficking, but all that was swept away by the Moral McCarthyism on the question of homosexuality.

Two other dimensions of this story also demand attention. First, we should note that Louie Giglio has not been known lately for taking any stand on the issue of homosexuality. To the contrary, Giglio’s own statement withdrawing from the invitation made this clear:

“Due to a message of mine that has surfaced from 15-20 years ago, it is likely that my participation, and the prayer I would offer, will be dwarfed by those seeking to make their agenda the focal point of the inauguration. Clearly, speaking on this issue has not been in the range of my priorities in the past fifteen years. Instead, my aim has been to call people to ultimate significance as we make much of Jesus Christ.”

A fair-minded reading of that statement indicates that Pastor Giglio has strategically avoided any confrontation with the issue of homosexuality for at least fifteen years. The issue “has not been in the range of my priorities,” he said. Given the Bible’s insistence that sexual morality is inseparable from our “ultimate significance as we make much of Jesus Christ,” this must have been a difficult strategy. It is also a strategy that is very attractive to those who want to avoid being castigated as intolerant or homophobic. As this controversy makes abundantly clear, it is a failed strategy. Louie Giglio was cast out of the circle of the acceptable simply because a liberal watchdog group found one sermon he preached almost twenty years ago. If a preacher has ever taken a stand on biblical conviction, he risks being exposed decades after the fact. Anyone who teaches at any time, to any degree, that homosexual behavior is a sin is now to be cast out.

Second, we should note that Pastor Giglio’s sermon was, as we would expect and hope, filled with grace and the promise of the Gospel. Giglio did not just state that homosexuals are sinners — he made clear that every single human being is a sinner, in need of the redemption that is found only in Jesus Christ. “We’ve got to say to the homosexuals, the same thing that I say to you and that you would say to me ... It’s not easy to change, but it’s possible to change,” he preached. He pointed his congregation, gay and straight, to “the heal-

ing power of Jesus.” He called his entire congregation to repent and come to Christ by faith.

That is the quintessential Christian Gospel. That is undiluted biblical truth. Those words are the consensus of the Church for over 2,000 years, and the firm belief held by the vast majority of Christians around the world today.

The Presidential Inaugural Committee and the White House have now declared historic, biblical Christianity to be out of bounds, casting it off the inaugural program as an embarrassment. By its newly articulated standard, any preacher who holds to the faith of the church for the last 2,000 years is *persona non grata*. By this standard, no Roman Catholic prelate or priest can participate in the ceremony. No Evangelical who holds to biblical orthodoxy is welcome. The vast majority of Christians around the world have been disinvented. Mormons, and the rabbis of Orthodox Judaism are out. Any Muslim imam who could walk freely in Cairo would be denied a place on the inaugural program. Billy Graham, who participated in at least ten presidential inaugurations, is welcome no more. Rick Warren, who incited a similar controversy when he prayed at President Obama’s first inauguration, is way out of bounds. In the span of just four years, the rules are fully changed.

The gauntlet was thrown down yesterday, and the axe fell today. Wayne Besen, founder of the activist group Truth Wins Out, told *The New York Times* yesterday: “It is imperative that Giglio clarify his remarks and explain whether he has evolved on gay rights, like so many other faith and political leaders. It would be a shame to select a preacher with backward views on LGBT people at a moment when the nation is rapidly moving forward on our issues.”

And there you have it — anyone who has ever believed that homosexuality is morally problematic in any way must now offer public repentance and evidence of having “evolved” on the question. This is the language that President Obama used of his own “evolving” position on same-sex marriage. This is what is now openly demanded of Christians today. If you want to avoid being thrown off the program, you had better learn to evolve fast, and repent in public.

This is precisely what biblical Christians cannot do. While seeking to be gentle in spirit and ruthlessly Gospel-centered in speaking of any sin, we cannot cease to speak of sin as sin. To do so is not only to deny the authority of Scripture, not only to reject the moral consensus of the saints, but it undermines the Gospel itself. The Gospel makes no sense, and is robbed of its saving power, if sin is denied as sin.

An imbroglia is a painful and embarrassing conflict. The imbroglia surrounding Louie Giglio is not only painful, it is revealing. We now see the new Moral McCarthyism in its undisguised and unvarnished reality. If you are a Christian, get ready for the question you will now undoubtedly face: “Do you now or have you ever

believed that homosexuality is a sin?” There is nowhere to hide.

+ by *Albert Mohler*, www.AlbertMohler.com

Burma (Myanmar): Junta Escates War Against Kachin

The Kachin Army is defending the lands and rights of the Christian ethnic Kachin in Kachin State against Burma’s Burman-Buddhist supremacist junta.

This year brings with it the prospect of a humanitarian catastrophe because as many as 100,000 Kachin are now displaced and the regime continues to deny humanitarian aid to areas under Kachin control. The Burmese military has Laiza (the Kachin headquarters) virtually besieged, running a base only 20km away. Since Christmas Day Kachin positions close to Laiza have suffered aerial bombardment, strafing from helicopter gunships and mortar shelling. A ground invasion or state of siege may be imminent. MP Aung San Suu Kyi says she will not intervene without regime approval. It is God, however, who has power to save. In God we trust!

(Psalm 56.)

+ *Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin | RLPB 192 | Wed 09 Jan 2013*

I Am a Christian

When I say that I am a Christian, I’m not shouting that I am upright and moral. I’m rejoicing that though I was lost, now I am found and forgiven.

When I say that I am a Christian, I don’t say this with pride. I’m confessing that I stumble and need Christ’s grace.

When I say that I am a Christian, I’m not claiming to be strong. I’m professing that I’m weak and need His strength to carry on.

When I say that I am a Christian, I’m not bragging of success. I’m admitting that I have failed and need God to clean up the mess I’ve made.

When I say that I am a Christian, I’m not claiming to be perfect. My flaws are far too visible, but God nevertheless calls me His child.

When I say that I am a Christian, I still feel the sting of pain. I have my share of heartaches, so I call upon His name.

When I say that I am a Christian, I’m not “holier than thou”. I’m just a sinner who received God’s grace somehow!

+ *Anonymous*

Synod Funds for 2012

For the year ended 31/12/12 support of Rev Trevor Leggott, General Director of the Australian Indigenous Ministries has been maintained as approved by Synod (Minimum stipend and superannuation contributions). While donations were received during the last quarter from most congregations it was still necessary to cover a shortfall of \$7,140 at year’s end (2011 was \$12,524) from the DA Anderson bequest. A most generous donation of \$5,000 was received from two individuals which was greatly appreciated.

However, it is estimated that, provided the same level of donations are received from congregations during the next four months (to 30/4/13) as was in 2012, then it will be possible to continue payments to Rev Leggott at the current level until then. However, it appears it will not be possible to continue payments at this rate beyond next Synod (May 2013) as the bequest of the late DA Anderson will have been exhausted by then.

Otherwise the Synod has been able to meet all its commitments as planned during 2012 for which we are thankful.

“It is true that the soul of the liberal, properly taken, shall be a gainer by his liberality; no more thriving Christians, than the merciful Christians; what they expend in temporals is abundantly returned in spirituals.” - Thomas Gouge.”

Alex Steel, Treasurer

Children under the Banner

From: 'Search and Solve: Bible Activity Sheet',
by Betty De Vries, [Illustrated by Donna Greenlee]
Baker Books, 1998

Easter Words

Many words in the Easter story have an E in them. Use the key below to fill in the blanks.

1 15 14 2 11

10 6 4 15 2

10 4 11 8 3 2 7 10

17 2 10 5 10

2 1 10 6 2 7

14 1 7 8 2 15

2 18 9 6 12 6 4 18 13

Key:

A 1 B 13 D 8 E 2 G 14 I 3 J 17 L 11 M 18 N 15 O 4 P 9 R 7 S 10 T 6 U 5 Y 12

Prescribed Search / Youth Work

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

JANUARY 2013

SENIOR and INTERMEDIATE (Intermediate omit questions 4 and 6)

1 CORINTHIANS chapter 1

1. For what did Paul thank God on behalf of [concerning] the Corinthians? (2 verses)
2. Rather than to baptise, what did Christ send Paul to do?
3. Write out the verse in Isaiah 29 concerning the wisdom of the wise to which Paul alludes in 1 Cor. 1:19.
4. In contrast to the preference of the Jews and Greeks, what did the apostles preach?
5. Where is it written in Jeremiah 9 that he that glories must glory in the Lord?

chapter 2

6. What would the princes of this world not have done, if they had known the wisdom of God?
7. Write out the verse in Isaiah 64 to which Paul refers in 1 Cor. 2:9.
8. Why does the natural man not receive the things of the Spirit of God?

JUNIOR

LUKE chapter 14

1. Who shall be abased, and who shall be exalted?
2. In the parable, for what purpose was the servant sent into the highways and hedges?
3. **What kind of person cannot be Jesus' disciple?**
4. What happens to salt that has lost its savour [flavour]?

FEBRUARY 2013

SENIOR and INTERMEDIATE (Intermediate omit questions 7 and 8)

1 CORINTHIANS chapter 3

1. Paul planted, Apollos watered, but what did God do?
2. Which is the only foundation that can be laid?
3. Who dwells in those people who are the temple of God?
4. **What is included in the "all things" that Paul says are ours? (2 verses)**

chapter 4

5. Why should we judge nothing before the time?
6. What did the apostles do when they were reviled, persecuted, defamed? (2 verses)

chapter 5

7. Why should we purge out the old leaven?
8. Quote a verse from Exodus 12 where the children of Israel were told to remove leaven from their houses before the passover.

JUNIOR

LUKE chapter 15

1. In the parable, what would the man with a hundred sheep do, if he lost one of them?
2. When is there joy in the presence of the angels of God?
3. In the parable, what did the younger son say when he came to himself?
4. Why did the father say it was meet [right] that they should make merry and be glad?

Please send the answers to:
 Mrs I Steel
 PO Box 942
 Epping NSW 1710
 Or email to: iesteel@gmail.com

Life under the Banner

The Eighth Commandment — The Problem With Stealing

Jim Klazinga

Theft Is Forbidden

In Exodus 22:1 we read: "If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and kills it or sells it, he shall repay five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep." Thieves must make restitution. A helpful principle, don't you think? Our government would do well to consider what they could do to increase the implementation of this approach in our contemporary judicial system. Consider also verses 7 and 8 from this same chapter – "If a man gives to his neighbor money or goods to keep safe, and it is stolen from the man's house, then, if the thief is found, he shall pay double. If the thief is not found, the owner of the house shall come near to God to show whether or not he has put his hand to his neighbor's property." More helpful wisdom, relevant for banking systems in any age.

Are Not Earthly Possessions Irrelevant?

You might wonder, though, why God would be concerned about such an earthly, worldly matter as stolen property. After all, of what concern are our material possessions? As we read in Matthew 6:19-21 – "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Physical treasures on earth are fleeting. Spiritual treasures in heaven are the more important riches to be sought after. So, why should we be all that disturbed if our material possessions are stolen? And hey, if we happen to steal something from someone else, well, we would be helping them to be freed from material distractions, so that they could focus on more heavenly matters, right? There is almost something appealing about this line of reasoning. But of course, such thinking is unbiblical, because the Bible is obviously concerned about how we treat our neighbour's property.

Greed Is Not Good

Mind you, the Bible is not trying to encourage us to be greedy. The Bible makes it clear that we should respect private property, but our thinking on this should not be guided by an unhealthy possessiveness with regard to what we personally happen to own. So, if saying that others should not steal our property, if this is not supposed to be motivated by a selfish desire to hold on to what belongs to us, why is it then that we don't want others to steal from us? Why is theft wrong? Is there something sacred about a person owning something? Perhaps it helpful to look at it this way: when we steal, we are insulting God.

You shall not steal.

Exodus 20:15

Everything Belongs to God

To understand how theft is an insult to God, we have to first remember that God is the creator of everything that exists. Because of this, all of creation ultimately belongs to him. Everything we own is first of all owned by God, which means that anything that we might have here in this life is basically a gift given to us by Him. Think about it: the land on which your house is built, along with the house and everything in it, it all belongs to God. The fabric from which your clothes are made, it belongs to God. The food you have in your fridge, it belongs to God. As we read in Psalm 24:1,2 – "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers." As for us, when it comes to physical possessions, we are merely stewards. A steward is one who watches over something that belongs to someone else. God has entrusted us with the awesome responsibility of watching over His creation. Everything we

have, you could say then, is a gift from Him, but is to be used in His service, not our own. And so, we are accountable to Him for how we use it. The car for which you've worked long and hard, you are accountable to the God who owns it for how you use it. The animals God has entrusted to your care, you are accountable for how they are treated to the God who ultimately owns them.

How Theft Insults God

All right then, everything belongs to God. We are accountable to him for how His gifts are used. How does all this make theft an insult to God?

Well, what are we saying when we steal? Are we not then saying that we are not satisfied with what God has allowed us to acquire via legitimate means? Really, when we steal, we are saying, "Lord, I don't think you've given me enough." "Lord, you have not given me enough money to get that tool I need so badly, so I'll just take it home with me from work. So what if my employer paid for it?"

"I don't want to spend the money you've allowed me to earn on that apple, so I'll just take it from the grocery store. So what if you've determined that the grocer should make a living by selling food?"

"Lord, I'm going to take matters into my own hands and take what I think I deserve by whatever means possible, lawful or unlawful." My friends, this is an insult to God, to think that we know better than He does regarding what we should or should not have and what other people should or should not have. After all, He places each of us in our various situations in life. He provides us with gifts and opportunities. He provides our neighbour with his gifts and opportunities. When we think we deserve more, and that someone else deserves less, and then go on to steal from that person, we are in effect making ourselves into God, making judgments that belong to Him. That is not the way God would have us to think and act.

Be Content

You know what lies at the heart of stealing? Discontent. Discontent with what we have been given by God. Discontent in seeing others have more than we have. Discontent in seeing that others have stuff that we want. Discontent in seeing that God has given property and possessions to them, which He has not given to us.

Consider what the apostle Paul writes in Philippians 4:11-12 – "I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need." See how Paul says here that he can be content in whatever situation he is in, whether he has a lot or whether he has a little.

By the way, there is an important point here that might be easy to miss: not only do we have to be content when we have a little, but we have to be content when we have a lot. It's easy to think that those who are poor are going to experience more discontent. But the wealthy could have just as much difficulty being content.

They may have much, but that doesn't prevent them from wanting more. Consider the ridiculous salaries some professional athletes make. Such salaries can easily become problems when one player gets a pay rise, which in turn makes other players think they deserve more. Instead of being satisfied with their already high earnings, they become discontent. We all need to learn what it means to be content, no matter who we are, no matter what our situation in life. We all need to learn what it means to trust in the Lord God who will provide all that we need.

Listen to what Jesus says in Luke 12:22-26 – "Do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?" And in verses 29-31 – "And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you."

Jesus is not saying here that we shouldn't put together a shopping list for groceries, since we don't have to worry about what we are going to eat. And he's not saying, "Don't bother getting a job, since you don't have to worry about money. After all, you don't need to worry about providing food and clothes for your family." We must be responsible in as far as it depends on us.

But the thing is, we cannot allow such concerns to run our lives to the point where we are obsessed. Such obsession could easily lead to stealing. Instead, we are called to be content with what we have been given.

Easy For Me to Say!

Still, I must admit, I can't help but think: "Hey, what right have I got to say this! I've got an income. I've got a place for my family and me to live." This is true. But I'm not the one who wrote: be content. I'm not the one who wrote: do not worry about your

life. These words come from the Word of God. And remember this: God knew the circumstances that each and every one of us would ever face, and yet He still says to us: "Be content. Learn what it means to be content in all situations."

Mind you, there is something we need to remember here, especially those of us who have plenty. We should not go to our poor neighbour and say to him: "Be content with what God has given you," and then do nothing about their situation. We have a responsibility to share with those in need. The Bible makes this very clear. If we look at how the Bible tells us not to steal and think, "Hey, everyone else better respect my property, and they better not expect to get any of it from me!", then we just don't get it.

My friends, there should be no need to steal. When our selfishness reaches the point where we say, "I want that thing and I'm going to get it even if I have to steal it," then we are committing the grave sin of not placing complete trust in God.

When our selfishness reaches the point where we say, "I'm not going to give anything to anybody, but I'm going to keep it all for myself," then we have forgotten the generosity of the one who has given us what we have.

I would ask you: are you content? Or are you inclined to envy and selfishness? May each of us repent of our greed, however it manifests itself. May we look to God alone as the one who ultimately provides our daily bread. And may we treat the property He entrusts to us in such a way that demonstrates thankfulness to Him.

Search Work Book Voucher Recipients

Following are the names of the children who were awarded book vouchers for answering the Search Work questions for 2012:

Senior Section: Jessie Carswell, Aimee Carswell, Andrew Hamilton

Intermediate Section: Rebecca Hamilton

Junior Section: Steven Hamilton

Churches in the Banner

Induction in Ulverstone, CWI—Melbourne, 70th Wedding Anniversary



*Clockwise from top left:
The question being asked of the Rev. Andre Scheepers by the Clerk of Presbytery, Rev. Rowland Ward; part of the congregation at the induction; PCEA office bearers present—Elder Ian Hamilton, Rev. Sjirk Bajema, Rev. Kenneth Macleod, Rev. Andre Scheepers, Rev. Rowland Ward, Deacon Robert Hingston; CWI Workers in Melbourne—Rev. Stephen & Mrs Lana Holmes; 70th Wedding Anniversary of Jean & Ab Hearps (Ulverstone); Rev & Mrs Andre & Sue Scheepers.*



Ulverstone Induction

It was a most joyful occasion when we could gather together on Friday night, the 7th of December, for the induction of the Rev. Andre Scheepers into the office of the minister of the Word and Sacraments in our congregation.

Representing Southern Presbytery was the Clerk, the Rev. Rowland Ward, and the Rev. Sjirk Bajema, who has been our Interim Moderator for the past 18 months.

We were encouraged by quite a number from the Southern Presbyterian Church, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, and the Free Reformed Church—even a minister from the Grace Presbyterian Church of New Zealand—who were with us for this occasion.

There was a blessed time of fellowship afterwards. Andre becomes the seventh inducted minis-



ter of our congregation and fills the vacancy we have had since July 2005.

serve for Christian Witness to Israel amongst the Jewish folk in Melbourne. We were encouraged by the presentation the Rev. Stephen and Mrs Lana Holmes gave us, speaking of their backgrounds, their previous interaction with Jewish folk, and their desire for the CWI work in Melbourne.

CWI—Melbourne

At the Knox PCEA church on the 8th December we were able to meet the new couple delegated to

Melbourne has the largest Jewish population of any city in Australia and so we are thankful the Lord has opened up this opportunity.