



InterSections

An Australian journal for Christian encounter and encouragement

Editorial

ChurchScope ①

Churches and Mission - Zimbabwe, Zambia, The Philippines

International Letter ④

Learning from Australia - Tim Westbrook

Book Review ⑤

Christian Mission in the Modern World by John Stott (InterVarsity Press, 2009)

Feature ⑥

Mission Question: What's Best for the Kingdom? - Graham Wall

News ③

Camp Revive
ACCET Update : Ann Kilpatrick
Women's Retreat
Harding University students

Interview ⑧

Travis & Kiala Powell, Wollongong, NSW



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Past Issues

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Welcome to the November 2017 issue of *InterSections*.

This issue focuses on missions. The Gospel is a prescription of hope for mankind and its proclamation has long been a priority for the church. The Great Commission echoed to the remotest region of the world or even to our neighbour across the street is part of the church's mission. Yet, are there times perhaps when the church has overlooked this mission? Become too busy with programs? How can we revitalise the church's proclamation of the Gospel?

In our *Feature* article, Graham Wall examines some thought provoking questions that can help Christians reflect on suitable mission frameworks and the best use of resources in whatever corner of the world we serve. Graham also shares some recent exciting mission initiatives occurring in Victoria. We also take a look at three inspiring mission programs that have been supported by Australian churches within the last three decades: assisting orphan children in Zimbabwe, the Banda family in Zambia and Christians in the Philippines.

Nathan Holyoak reviews a classic book on mission principles: *Christian Mission in the Modern World* by John Stott. This book provides an exploration of God's mission for the church, fleshing out some biblically grounded aspects of mission-work that can involve a diversity of Christian talents. In our *International Letter*, we hear from Tim Westbrook (Director of Distance Education in Bible and Ministry, Harding University), who shares his first-time experiences and observations about the Australian church from his recent trip down under.

We also interview a young American couple, Travis and Kiala Powell who share snapshots of their journey together, formative influences in their lives and how these have influenced their current work and church life in Wollongong, NSW. Finally, we wrap up with our *News* section around Australia: Camp Revive, Harding University students in Victoria, a Women's Retreat in Marysville, and the recent passing and legacy of Ann Kilpatrick in NSW.

We hope you find this issue encouraging and stimulates further thought on sharing the Gospel in your own mission field.

The *InterSections* editorial team.

ChurchScope - churches and Mission

Many individuals and congregations throughout Australia are being missional in their local communities and elsewhere. Praise God for each one! We can't feature them all; yet it's encouraging to shine a spotlight on some to see how Christians understand their responsibility for sharing the good news about Christ. So, below we feature three congregations which are supporting specific works and individuals in various overseas locations. May you be encouraged by each story.

Supporting Children in Zimbabwe

(Malaga Church of Christ, Perth, Western Australia)

'Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world'. (James 1:27)

In 2009 members from the Malaga Church of Christ, Perth, embarked on a program of making regular donations to support the needs of orphans in Zimbabwe, in the Zvishavane District, 400km south of the capital city, Harare. Christians from the eastern states and others in USA have also generously contributed from time to time in support of this work.



Timothy & Julia handing over stationery and uniforms.



Some of the children with food packs.

The number of children who were supported at the inception of this program was 43. As of 2017, this figure has increased to 72 children. Of the 72, 38 are girls and 34 are boys. They range from primary to high school ages. The majority of these children are under the care of elderly grandparents or other guardians, who themselves are struggling to make ends meet.

Donations offered are primarily used to pay for school fees for each of the children at the beginning of each term. Where funds permit, the support is extended to the provision of stationery, school uniforms, food packs and paying for medical expenses when a need arises.

Donations are managed via a trust account, Christians In Need Trust, overseen by David Atchley, Dennis Vander Kraats and myself, all of whom are elders at Malaga Church of Christ. We liaise with a trust committee composed of Christians in Zvishavane. This committee manages the daily affairs of meeting the children's needs while they are under the care of their guardians.

In Matthew 5:16 Jesus said, 'In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.' Through this assistance, the communities and school authorities where these children are located speak highly of this program. They give praise to God for this gesture of love. They acknowledge this program as a true example of faith in action.

Inspired by the assistance offered to the children, local church members in Zvishavane decided to complement our efforts by growing a maize crop in the 2016/2017 farming season to be shared amongst families that look after the children. Maize meal is used to prepare a staple food known locally as *sadza*. They were blessed with one and half tonnes of maize and the distribution will commence shortly.

The support that is currently being rendered to the children may be a drop in the ocean because of limited resources. Yet, the focus is to alleviate their plight and ensure that at least they attend school and possibly empower them in the future. But more could be done to lessen their burden of daily sustenance. Would you like to join hands and participate in looking after the needs of these children? If you require further information please email David Atchley (davjamat@gmail.com), Dennis Vander Kraats (dennis@vdk.com.au) or myself (wilbert.sibanda@gmail.com). □

Wilbert Sibanda, Malaga Church of Christ, Perth, WA. wilbert.sibanda@gmail.com

The Banda family in Zambia

(Lindisfarne Church of Christ, Hobart, Tasmania)

I want to introduce to you our brother, Christopher Banda, and his family, who live in the town of Chipata in the eastern province of Zambia. Christopher has been working as an evangelist for the church in various congregations in Zambia since graduating from Bible school in the early 1980s. He regularly travels to various parts of the province to preach, teach, encourage, and meet the spiritual and physical needs of the saints.

I have been involved with Christopher and the administration of his support from that time. In 1994 I spent four weeks with Christopher in Zambia, visiting and meeting with the brethren from the various congregations he works with. Since that time Australian brethren have visited Christopher on two other occasions.

At present Christopher is one of the elders at the Mpenzi Park Church of Christ and with his wife, Annie, shepherd the brethren at the Chipata congregation. Christopher and Annie have five children who are now grown and they have recently adopted three little ones (Andrew 7, Susan 5, and Dennis 4; two are the children of his niece who recently passed away). You can contact Christopher and Annie to encourage them in their work through their email (zondani3@yahoo.com.au).

At present, Christopher and Annie are solely supported by Australian brethren. This has been the fulfillment of a long-term goal since my visit with Christopher in Zambia. There have been many occasions when Christopher has considered doing additional work to support his family as various financial needs have arisen. Wood-cutting and gemstone prospecting were some of the options that were contemplated. Yet, as these challenges arose, Christopher's financial needs were met by the brethren here in Australia with additional support and special collections so that he could remain focused on his calling and passion—evangelism.

In supporting our brethren overseas, we often focus on meeting the immediate financial requirements of their evangelistic activities rather than the wider responsibilities that these families need to consider daily. So, if you're involved with supporting brethren in their service to our Lord, whether locally or overseas, consider if their needs are being met in order for them to be wholly devoted to their calling. □

Barrie Morgan, Lindisfarne Church of Christ, Hobart, Tasmania. barrie.morgan1@gmail.com



Christopher & Annie Banda



Dennis 4, Susan 5, Andrew 7



July 2017 visit (R-L): Mitch Tabe, David Tabe, Bettyboy and his wife, Bebing



Working on a satellite church building

Christians in Bago, The Philippines (Belmore Road Church of Christ, Melbourne, Victoria)

Bago is a small settlement in the mountains of Negros island in central Philippines. Negros is divided into two parts, Negros Oriental and Negros Occidental. Bago is in Negros Oriental (and not to be confused with Bago City in Negros Occidental). Bago is smaller than a town and is classified as a *barrio* (district). The Church of Christ in Bago was established by American missionaries in the 1960s as Bago was being settled by people from coastal towns looking for land to till and produce crops.

One young man who came to the place was Arsenio Saburiga who married a local girl from the ethnic Agtas tribe that first came to the area. Arsenio came into contact with the American missionaries and became a Christian. Over the years, Arsenio continued a Christian ministry in Bago with the help of his children. One of the children eventually took on the ministry when Arsenio retired. He is Bettyboy Saburiga.

From Bago, the Saburiga family was able to set up thirteen satellite churches around the area. This is to make it easier for Christians to get together within their district as the road network is in poor condition and almost non-existent in some areas. All this the Saburiga family achieved with no external support.

Then, in the 1980s, a new group of American missionaries from Texas came to plant churches in the coastal towns of Negros Oriental and in the main regional city of Cebu. They linked up with the Bago church and breathed new life into the local ministry which had been isolated for many years. But still the Bago church continued to work with their own meagre resources.

On 7 February 2012 it all began to change for the Saburiga family and their ministry. A magnitude 6.9 earthquake hit the area causing massive damage to infrastructure and killing 52 people. The Bago church building was destroyed. Through mutual contacts, the Belmore Road congregation in Melbourne responded with a generous donation to rebuild their church building.

At first this was thought to be a one-off donation. But God had other plans. A few months later, the ladies of Belmore Road funded the construction of a baptistry for the Bago building. The first visit by members of the Belmore Road church happened in July 2014. Thereafter, a regular financial support for Bettyboy was started to make it easier for him and his co-workers to do their work in ministering to the smaller satellite churches. Among other things, Bibles in local dialects were sourced and donated.

A second visit was made recently in July 2017. During that visit three Belmore Road members came to help with the construction of two small concrete church buildings in the district. This was possible through funds from Belmore Road members and labour provided by local Christians. The construction work also became fellowship opportunities for the local churches – patterned after the *fiesta* tradition of the people. The second visit also generated new contacts with the Luther family – a longtime missionary family in Bacolod City on the other side of the island, Negros Occidental, who have been running a Christian school for many years.

Upon reflection, this relationship between churches in Melbourne, Australia, and Bago in The Philippines may seem to be a very unlikely match. One is in a bustling metropolis of Australia and the other is in a remote mountainous region in Negros. The Belmore Road church realises its material resources should be shared to help keep and proclaim the faith, to give hope and to express love for God and one another. The Bago churches benefits from the material resources that the Belmore church offers and all the encouragement that comes with it.

This unlikely ministry is still in its infancy. Yet it's exciting to dream of what God may be planning for future generations of Christians from these two churches. □

Giovanni Rodriguez, Belmore Road Church of Christ, Melbourne, Victoria gbr98@yahoo.com

News Camp Revive - VIC

Southeast among others represented, as well as those from Sydney and New Zealand. The large contingent from Perth, a regular occurrence in recent years, were unfortunately unable to attend, and were missed by all.

The main lessons were organised around the theme of prayer. They were taught by Kyle Keesee, a HIM (Helpers in Missions) worker from Oklahoma, USA. They focused on 'Praying with Persistence', 'Praying with Reliance', and 'Praying with Devotion'. The devotionals were led by Christian and Nicholas Bargholz, who provoked thought around how we should pray, and why we possibly don't pray. Overall, the camp challenged attendees to reconsider their attitude to prayer, and encouraged us to pursue a deeper relationship with God through praying. □

Christian Bargholz, Eastside Church of Christ, NSW christianbargholz@gmail.com

News continued page 7.

International Letter

Learning from Australia by Tim Westbrook

This past June my wife, Anessa, and I participated in the Klesis Bible Program, and we had a delightful experience. I taught a graduate-level hermeneutics subject through Harding University, and Anessa spoke at a Women's Retreat in Marysville, Victoria. We also taught lessons in Hobart. In total, we spent just over one week in Melbourne and about four days in Hobart. This was our first time in Australia and, even though our assignment was to fill the roles of teachers, I would argue that we may have learned more from our 'students' than what we imparted to them. I'm listing below a few of the things we gained from our visit.



First, the cohort of students in our KBP module had some of the brightest minds I've encountered in one setting. Several in the group already have terminal degrees, and most have some sort of graduate education. Credentials aside, however, what I discovered was a diverse community unified by a common interest in serving the Lord and his church. Throughout our class on hermeneutics (biblical interpretation) we continuously cycled through the 'so-what' question. Each participant was thinking through the process of biblical interpretation in such a way that his or her new knowledge would be value-added to their home congregation.

Second, we saw enthusiasm for and commitment to evangelism. Anessa and I were missionaries in Central Europe from 1995-2003. We understand how – in some areas of the world – evangelism takes time. Because of this, sometimes Christians may become discouraged and give up on sharing their faith with their neighbours. What we found in the Klesis module, at Belmore Road Church of Christ in Melbourne, and at the Lindisfarne Church of Christ in Hobart was that the fire has not died out. Most conversations involved some sort of discussion about how to share the Gospel and how to develop leaders for the next generation. We were encouraged to see how the churches in Australia strive to increase in numbers for the sake of saving the lost and bringing glory and honour to God.

Third, we met brothers and sisters in Christ who were hungry and thirsty for spiritual development. The Women's Retreat in Marysville was a huge success with women representing several congregations. Anessa was blessed by her conversations, and I'm sure her lessons blessed the attendees. In my conversations, both in class and informally, we often discussed strategies for preparing the next generation of church leadership in Australia. The fact that this is of concern means that the current leadership is advancing into the future with their eyes open.

It's my personal prayer that our Klesis/Harding partnership will continue in such a way that will assist leadership development for years to come. Not only do we hope that this partnership will benefit non-denominational Churches of Christ in Australia, but we also anticipate this partnership to become a model that could be replicated around the world where culturally appropriate.

Fourth, we experienced a wonderful example of unity within diversity. My PhD focus was in intercultural education, and I often try to put myself in situations where I can experience new cultures and learn from different ways of thinking and knowing. I also like to encourage diversity in our churches because I believe that our different ways of seeing the world can be a resource for helping each other understand God better. In addition, multiplicity in the church is biblical.

Revelation 7:9-10 provides a window into heaven where we see a mosaic of believers. What we found at Belmore Road was a taste of this celestial image. Where else can we find a community of believers who represent 14 nationalities and yet share in the love of Christ in an infectious sort of way? Something tells me that even though our experience was specific to Belmore Road, that spirit of unity within diversity is a trait that may be found throughout the fellowship in Australia.

Anessa and I are grateful for the opportunity to witness first-hand the community of wisdom, commitment for evangelism, desire to grow, and the unity within diversity that are organically dispersed throughout the Australian Churches of Christ. May God continue to bless your work, open new doors, and prepare your ministries for generations to come! □

Tim Westbrook is director of the Center for Distance Education in Bible and Ministry, Harding University, Arkansas, USA. Tim and his wife, Anessa, also a faculty member at Harding, visited Australia in June 2017. twestbrook@harding.edu

InterSections is a quarterly journal designed to inform, inspire and unite Christians in Australia seeking to restore New Testament faith and practice. The editors are responsible for selecting material for publication, but each article reflects the views of its author(s). Advertisements in *InterSections* are broadly consistent with the ethos and goals of the journal; however, they do not necessarily constitute endorsement by the journal. *InterSections* is published by Klesis Institute (© Klesis Institute, 2017). Copyright permission is given to anyone wishing to reproduce an individual article for non-commercial purposes, as long as due attribution is given to the author and *InterSections*. Klesis Institute is a division of CommAsia Australia Pty Ltd (ACN 097136171 ABN 53702023602).

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Book Review *Christian Mission in the Modern World*

by John Stott (InterVarsity Press, 2009)



We live in a time when society views religion as something that should be followed privately without touching those who aren't interested. Yet, as Christians, the imperative to go out into the world has never been stronger. In light of this, how should we view our mission in the world? What should the church be doing and why?

In this environment, John Stott's classic work on the topic, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, still has much to offer us. The book is based on a series of lectures Stott gave in 1975—a time when, as now, social attitudes were changing rapidly. Opinion was polarised about the church's primary mission and purpose. One traditional view said the church's mission was evangelism—proclaiming the Gospel. Any other activity the church undertook was merely a platform for this goal. An opposing view was the mission of establishing God's kingdom in the world by renewing, blessing and transforming society through social justice, serving the needy, and other activities.

Stott argues that there is truth in both positions. He states that we lose something important when we limit ourselves only to one narrow view. His book offers a commentary on these debates then and today. The debates may sometimes seem academic but, as Stott shows, how we think about these things will shape the goals of our mission and, ultimately, how we go about our daily work serving in God's kingdom. This affects all Christians.

Stott's book is structured around five closely connected words: mission, evangelism, dialogue, salvation, and conversion. In defining these words from a biblical perspective, Stott centres the discussion on *God's* mission for the church rather than our own agendas. This constant call of going back to the Bible sets this book apart.

Stott roots our understanding of *mission* in God's own nature. God is the One who reaches out and sends out as a manifestation of his love. Mission then is reaching out in love—in all its manifestations. Mission is about the relationship between the church and the world. How we view this relationship will be defined by how we see the world: what we think the world needs and what we think we have to offer it. The Bible helps us to answer these questions—in the Great Commission, obviously, but also in the life and ministry of Jesus. This broad definition of mission allows all the church's diverse gifts to be utilised.

Evangelism is proclaiming the Good News. But what does this look like? What should be our goals in this? Stott shows that our call to evangelism shouldn't be limited by our audience or methods. Nor is it defined by our success or failure. Instead, the call to evangelise is a call to faithful proclamation of the Gospel message in season and out of season. This faithfulness goes beyond simply teaching the message correctly. It involves a complete embrace of the *Good News*. "Nothing hinders evangelism today more than the widespread loss of confidence in the truth, relevance and power of the Gospel." (p. 63)

Dialogue considers our attitude towards and interactions with those we're trying to reach. Do we teach and proclaim with authority? Or do we enter into a conversation—listening and learning with genuine give and take? To what extent does dialogue or cooperation with other religious traditions risk compromising the Gospel's integrity? We're to preach faithfully regardless of the response, but that doesn't mean we're arrogant or unresponsive to our audience. In Scripture, God has shown his readiness to dialogue with his creation and deal with our questions. Likewise, we should engage with people at a personal level, whatever their situation, while upholding the clarity and power of the Gospel.

Salvation is crucial to the Gospel message. God is the One who saves. But whom does he save, and from what? Stott examines popular ideas such as salvation means receiving physical and

mental healing or social and political liberation. As mentioned before, our love will cause us to serve the world in these areas, but Stott shows that it's wrong to equate those goals with the saving work of Christ. In Christ we are saved from sin and the penalty of death, then set free to serve as God's adopted children. This is the Good News that forms the heart of our mission.

Finally, Stott considers *conversion*. What does it really mean to convert someone to Christ? How do we do it effectively? As Stott points out, there are many things that may look like conversion but fall short of the mark: conversion by manipulation or coercion, conversion without counting the cost, or conversion to a false Gospel. What we're seeking is true discipleship: persuaded hearts and minds that bear fruit in life. Ultimately, though, conversion is a work of the Holy Spirit and no effort or technique on our part is enough on its own.

This book has helped me to see that there is more about the church's mission than I had imagined. One important point Stott brings out is that 'there can be no evangelism without the church' (p. 85). By this he doesn't just mean that we must work together. If evangelism is proclaiming the Good News of God's kingdom, and if the church is the manifestation of that kingdom in the world today, then the church isn't merely a tool for evangelism but the embodiment of it. Churches should be beacons of good news for our communities. That involves every member of the body playing their part in the mission God has given us: reaching out in love to a lost world. The church's mission isn't just for a few 'missionaries'.

The book is a powerful reminder to every Christian of who we are as God's people and what we are about. What distinguished the New Testament church was their faithfulness to the task (regardless of consequences) and their faith in God to see his will and his servants through. Stott's book challenges us to do the same. □

Nathan Holyoak is a member of The Point Church in Brisbane and an associate editor of InterSections. nathan@helmsdeep.org

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Feature

Mission question: what's best for the kingdom?

The questions we ask ourselves can impact the way we function and the direction we take as individuals, groups, organisations, and congregations. Questions direct attention, engage the imagination, determine answers to problems, and allow us to acquire and make sense of new information.

It's by asking a different question that we often find new solutions to old problems. If you've ever found yourself hitting your head (metaphorically speaking) against a brick wall when it comes to trying to solve a problem, then perhaps it's because you keep asking the same question. It may be more helpful in these situations to step back and ask a different question which opens you up to a broader range of solutions.

From the perspective of many among non-denominational Churches of Christ, the questions that have often propelled us as a restoration movement have included: 'How do we attain unity?', 'How do we restore the early church?', 'How do we reach out to the lost?', 'How do we keep a particular program going?', 'How do we keep a congregation from becoming extinct?', 'How do we keep young people from leaving the church?', and 'How can we get missionaries to come to Australia?'

Each of these questions may, to some degree, be appropriate. At the same time, all of them can also be limiting. That is, they can lead us to simply maintaining the status quo, failing to adjust to what is needed in a specific era, keeping a program or congregation going when it's no longer productive to do so, or failing to see new ways to take the Gospel into all the world (Mark 16:15).

That's not to say questions like those above are wrong. Neither am I saying that we should never ask them. However, are there better and more helpful questions for us, as the Lord's body, to be asking in our generation?

Recently, one question proving to be useful to me and several others is this one: 'What's best for the overall kingdom at this time?' I find this question valuable as it moves my thinking beyond myself and my congregation to a broader, global, and eternal perspective. It's a question that directs me more towards the heart of God and motivates me with the same passion and purpose that I see in Christ, the apostles, and the early church.

In the New Testament, the term 'kingdom' is mentioned often throughout the Gospels. In Matthew it's mentioned more than fifty times. It's the underlying theme in the Sermon on the Mount and the main message Christ preached from town to town and region to region. In the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13), praying about the kingdom is given more priority than praying about one's needs. In Matthew 6:33 Jesus tells us that our main goal in life should be seeking the kingdom and the righteousness that flows from it. In Matthew 13:44-46 Jesus describes the kingdom as something that's so valuable that it's worth giving up all you have to obtain it.

So, what is this kingdom? It includes the universal body of the saved but it's also more than that. The kingdom is best described as the reign of God. At present, God's reign is expressed through the kingship of Jesus Christ. That refers to Christ, his overall reign, his power, and his righteousness.

This has to be our number one priority in our individual Christian lives, as congregations, and as a global movement.

A focus on Christ and his overall reign was what drove the apostle Paul to suffer while preaching throughout the Roman world. In Philippians 1:21 Paul says, 'to live is Christ and to die is gain'. In Philippians 3:7-8 he wrote: 'But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things, I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ...' All this sounds very similar to what we read in Matthew 13:44-46.

Thus the question, 'What's best for the overall kingdom?', is really about asking: 'How can we best serve Christ and his purposes at this time with the resources we currently have?' Contemplating this question has been helping congregations in Victoria – where I'm based – to think beyond the boundaries of our own congregations. It's motivated some to focus on serving and feeding the marginalised of society. It's motivated others to start working inter-relationally with sister congregations while respecting each congregation's autonomy – specifically, by restoring the itinerant minister model where an evangelist is supported to travel throughout various congregations in Victoria to teach, encourage and keep them connected to the broader body.

It's the restoration of an itinerant minister model that I find most exciting. Amongst Melbourne churches many members don't live close to where their congregation meets weekly. Although there may be benefits to travelling far to attend existing congregations, is this best for the overall kingdom? The answer is: perhaps not. Perhaps it might be better to plant congregations in areas where Christians are living. This is strategic because it makes use of the connections those Christians have to their community, encourages them to step into daily ministry, and makes evangelism easier. It can also provide launching pads to reach out to new areas and communities.

The church planting approach some of us have used in Melbourne revolves around Sunday afternoon or evening gatherings. Typically, Christians who live in a particular area begin to meet once a month on a Sunday evening. As things progress over many months, they move towards gathering fortnightly, and then weekly. This allows those involved in the new work not to be overwhelmed. It also protects their original congregation from a sudden loss of members to a new church plant. One new congregation has started in this way in Melbourne. Another prospective church plant is using a similar process.

If each congregation considers the question, 'What can we do to best serve the kingdom?', how may this direct us and future generations to serve God? Perhaps we may find that we will once again be a movement that makes a significant impact throughout Australia and also around the world. □

Graham Wall works as an evangelist with the Heidelberg West Church of Christ in Melbourne, Victoria. He and his wife, Kristina, have two young children. gjwall@hotmail.com

Women's Retreat – VIC

Over Friday night and Saturday, 23-24 June 2017, around 45 ladies from nine congregations participated in a Women's Retreat in Marysville, Victoria, organised by Klesis. Anessa Westbrook from Harding University was the guest speaker and taught lessons on 'Spiritual Growth – Living Intentionally'.

One young participant was high school student Lois Ekong from West Heidelberg Church of Christ who said, 'Being one of the younger sisters at the retreat, having many other sisters in Christ that I could look up and relate to really gave me a sense of support and boost in faith. I know that I have other sisters who are on the same path as me aiming to be with Christ in heaven one day – this is important especially when living in a society where being a Christian is seen as irrelevant. Anessa with her lessons brought me closer to other women through the various discussion groups. That strengthened already made friendships but also created them too. I would definitely come back to a retreat like this again.'

Penny Fry, who travelled from Canberra to be part of the retreat, reflected and wrote: 'I've always believed we're to help (*parakaleo*) each other, male and female, grow closer to God and to allow others to grow us. Before the retreat, it hadn't really clicked with me how much Jesus invested in the spiritual development of women and celebrated spiritually healthy choices (Mary's decision to listen to Jesus). What a blessing this time together was! The teaching, the conversations (how life is better with God in it), the shared joys and struggles, and the prayers and times of contemplation and reflection. Anessa's clear and practical presentations together with the other rich sessions (such as Psalm 119) have shaped how I teach and encourage the women in Canberra – to focus on what's needed, not only what I'm passionate about. For my own faith, I am saying 'no' more often to the clutter of life and allowing time for God's Word to settle on my heart. Thank you for these insights into my own need for spiritual maturing and on how I can better serve the church family in Canberra.' □

Benny Tabalujan, Klesis Institute, VIC b.tabalujan@gmail.com



ACCET: the enduring legacy of Ann Kilpatrick – NSW

The tension that exists when a Christian dies – between mourning the loss of a loved one and rejoicing as they enter their reward – was experienced by the church family at Gosford, NSW, recently with the passing of Ann Kilpatrick. Ann left a couple of enduring legacies. One is the legacy of faith that lives within her family. The other is a legacy that many would not know about.

You see, over the last eleven and a half years, Ann had been giving to ACCET (Australian Churches of Christ Evangelistic Trust) fortnightly from her age pension. Ann realised that these donations would enable the Gospel to be preached across Australia. In fact, because of the investment strategy adopted by ACCET to preserve and invest all donations, Ann's gifts will continue to generate income to support the spread of the Gospel in Australia for many years to come. What an amazing legacy to leave!

We miss Ann, but we rejoice that the legacy of faith observed in the lives of her physical and spiritual families motivated her to give to ACCET so that more Australians might come to know Christ. Should you wish to leave a legacy that will endure and assist the preaching of the Gospel in Australia, go to www.accet.org.au and learn how you can do this. □

David Mowday, Gosford Church of Christ, NSW, and ACCET dmowday@gmail.com

Harding University students – VIC

It's hard to write about a group of young Christians who arrived as strangers and by the time they left were loved as family. From 2-13 June 2017, a group of six Harding University students visited Melbourne and were hosted by the Belmore Road congregation and coordinated by me. The team comprised Annsley Wilson, Alison Slagter, Rheanna Frampton, Liza Johnson, Sarah Roddy and Jordan Turney. The students came with their team leaders, Bryan and Darla Phillips, who teach at Harding.

What I observed and benefitted from the most was this group's willingness to serve and get to know people of all ages, hear people's stories of how they became Christians, and their joy of being part of God's family. They demonstrated a great attitude – even when it meant having a 5:30am start to drive from Melbourne to Bairnsdale for morning worship and then visit with Christians in rural Mirboo North (South Gippsland) on the way back to Melbourne.

The friendships which the Harding students struck up very quickly with the youth and young adults among several Churches of Christ in Melbourne seemed genuine and mutually edifying. For Liza, 'One of my favourite memories from being in Australia was working with the SALT Foundation. The first night we got in town we had the opportunity to feed members of the community. I will never forget some of the conversations I had with the individuals I met.'

Sarah said: 'The time we spent in Victoria had, I feel, a bigger impact on my life than I could have had on the lives of all the people we met there.' Rheanna recalled a day of voluntary gardening work in the community: 'We ended up working for some elderly people simply because someone saw an ad in a cafe. To me, that just shows the wonders of how God works.' For Allison, it was the way 'church' looked a little different: 'What really stood out to me was the families who had church services in their houses. I think that takes incredible dedication and love for God.'

Annsley recalled visiting an elderly Christian couple: 'One thing that really stuck with me was when we went to visit with Trevor and Christine. They were so filled with the spirit and had so many life experiences to share.' As for Jordan, 'The first thing I noticed was the warm hospitality I received from the community of believers. You are all so loving and dedicated to Christ.'

I believe this visit was a great success and hopefully we will have the opportunity to host another student team in future, if the Lord wills. □

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Interview *Travis and Kiala Powell, Wollongong, NSW*

Let's begin with you telling us about your respective backgrounds and how you found each other.

T: I grew up in Campbelltown, NSW, as a missionary kid. My parents were part of the team that started the Southwest congregation in the 1980s. We moved to Oklahoma when I was 11 and I stayed there until I graduated from Oklahoma Christian University. I then moved back to Campbelltown to work with Southwest as a HIM (Helpers in Missions) worker for two years. Next I moved to Japan as an English teacher. That is where I met Kiala!

K: I grew up in Oklahoma and had never moved house until I went to Oklahoma Christian University which was right down the road. I went to Memorial Road Church of Christ – which has about 2,000 members – all the way through university. I was doing a study abroad program called Pacific Rim that went through Japan at the time Travis was there. When Travis moved to Oklahoma the next year we started dating and fell in love and so we got married! After four years in Florida for Travis' training, we moved to Wollongong, NSW.

What brought you back to Australia? How did you find the process of integrating into the Wollongong community?

T: I've always wanted to move back to Australia, particularly to Wollongong. It was my favourite place as a kid. Also, my time as a HIM worker showed me that I didn't want to be a fulltime church minister, but I definitely wanted to be an integral part of a small church. Anyway, there was a good business opportunity (taking over the chiropractic clinic where my family used to attend) and a ministry opportunity (working with the Whaley family's house church and the Windang congregation) that just happened to be in my favourite place in the world!

K: My husband brought me to Australia. When I came on the study abroad program I did enjoy Australia and its natural beauty and people. So I was interested in coming back with him. The process of integrating was harder than we expected. Meeting people our age and becoming friends took quite a while. Having no family here was very difficult for me. It was also difficult to find a job in my field in Wollongong as there was not much around, and my resume all had work experience from the US. I also took a while to adjust to small differences like having no central heating or air-conditioning in our house and hanging clothes out on the line! And the huntsman spiders!

Travis, as a Christian chiropractor, what difference does your faith make to your professional work?

As a chiropractor, I get to help people feel better. People that have suffered with pain and dysfunction for many years suddenly feel better and have hope again. But as a Christian, my job is not that different from any other Christian's. I just try and do what I do to the best of my ability, and I try to be ethical and fair in all I do.

Can you describe the people, ideas and influences that have helped you mature in the faith?

T: Being raised as a missionary kid gave me a special perspective and a desire to help small churches. That's why I am here. And I would say my Dad has had the biggest influence on my faith. From him I learned to try and really see what God wants to communicate through the Scriptures and not let preconceived notions get in the way.

K: My parents, my siblings, my grandparents and my husband have all been major influences that have helped me mature in my faith. My parents always had me involved in church and church activities growing up, which helped teach me in many ways about the Bible and what it meant to be a Christian. They are also always there on Skype or Facetime when I have questions or need to talk, even when I'm all the way across the world! My siblings have been supportive and encouraged me, in times of trouble or in decision-making, to put Christ as the centrepiece. My grandpa was a preacher and my grandparents showed me



love and helped fund my study abroad program at Oklahoma Christian University.

The Pacific Rim study abroad program gave me such a new perspective on the world outside of my hometown and let me see God working through different ways and people in the world. It also helped show me God's amazing beauty with some of nature he created! And Travis, wow, he has helped me so much through questions and struggles with faith. He is great at talking through things even if we don't agree. He is very supportive and has shown me Christ's love in some of my hardest moments in life.

How would you describe the local congregation which you're part of? What are the key advantages and challenges of being with a congregation in a regional city like Wollongong?

K: Well, it's small in size which is very different from where I grew up. We just had a few families move away to other cities and countries so that was a big hit to a congregation of about 20. The advantage is that you become closer to the people with whom you spend time. You know people better – a bit like family. The challenge is that sometimes it feels a bigger support group would be helpful – spiritually as well as to help with and be involved in the community.

T: Our homes are pretty spread out so that has made it difficult to engage with each other and with the community, but we're getting a lot better!

What advice would you give to anyone seeking to help plant a church in an Australian regional city?

K: It would be good to do it with a few other supportive and Christian-led families. Have patience. It may take time as people are not as open to the idea of following and living a Christian life.

T: Do it. Regional Australia is the best! □

*Travis & Kiala were interviewed by Benny Tabalujan
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