

# *fellow workers*

NEWS FROM AROUND THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VICTORIA

A PUBLICATION OF THE PCV STATE NEWS COMMITTEE

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## *index*

Edifying the saved	1
A vibrant and dynamic church	2
Editorial	2
Our world belongs to God	3
Darwin is different	4
PYV news	4
New ministers hit the ground running	5
Around the presbyteries and churches	6
Sudan appeal	8

## *contribute*

Your contributions to *fellow workers* are welcome! *fellow workers* is now published every quarter (March, June, September & December). All copy and enquiries should be sent to the editor (contact details above). The deadline for contributions to the next issue is **5th February**. Photographs should be digital and sent by email if possible.

## *edifying the saved are you astonished by christmas?*

It is appropriate to give an evangelistic emphasis to our Christmas activities. Reaching the unsaved is heralded in the message of the angels, 'To you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour'. Truly, this is good news of great joy for all people. Jesus' name, in itself, has a saving emphasis. But have we ever thought about what the incarnation means, particularly for believers? Have we ever tried to preach a Christmas sermon for the converted, emphasising the present personal benefits of God taking human flesh? 'Edifying the saved' we might call it. I fear that believers may no longer be astonished at hearing the Christmas message because it has all become too predictable!

Do believers sense the wonder of it all? I want to suggest three things to preach at Christmas time, and anytime for that matter, which will edify believers:

- 1) The incarnation means God walks my road with me.
- 2) The incarnation shows us what it means to be truly human.
- 3) The incarnation is about being more godly.

It is understandable in the Reformed tradition that we defended the deity of Christ, and rightly so! However, the humanity of Christ also needs to be vigorously proclaimed. It is important both doctrinally and pastorally. That Christ took upon himself true humanity is not only essential for salvation but unlocks a stunning reality – God entered as a human being into our creaturely plight and gen-

uinely understands it now from a human perspective. God walks my road with me.

Athanasius rightly insisted that 'what was not assumed could not be redeemed.' We all need to know this truth, regardless of our circumstances. God empathises with us; God understands because in Christ he has joined hands with each of us in the nitty-gritty details of our mundane existence. Our aches and pains, disappointments and frustrations, are not foreign to God. Amazingly, by also remaining wholly God, the God-man retains the unique ability to share in my life experience with me. Christ is more than a sympathetic friend who has walked this road before; he is the indwelling God who now walks my road with me.

We often assume that we see true humanity in our sinful state, but is this correct? In whom do we see true humanness? Jesus is the one person who is truly and fully human. If we wish to see what God is like, we need only look at Jesus. If we wish to understand what it means to be authentically human, it is to Jesus we must turn. Here at last the glory of humanity is on view. Our assumptions about what it is to be human will be radically different if we take Jesus as our model. What we were intended to be like, and what, one day, by the gracious working of God's Holy Spirit, we shall be like, is already seen in Jesus.

A final thought – many believers fear that by becoming more godly we will leave behind our humanity. The fact that Jesus was fully human and fully divine

*Continued page 8*

# *a vibrant and dynamic church*

## *the assembly address by the moderator of the presbyterian church of victoria*

**H**ow does God carry out his purpose of calling out a people for himself from every nation and tribe? He does it through the Church of Jesus Christ. The Church in Antioch of Syria, whose beginnings are recorded for us in Acts 11.19-30 and 13.1-3, displays the hallmarks of the ministry and mission of a vibrant and dynamic church. Such a church has five characteristics:

### **It shares the Gospel.**

Although we depend on the work of the Holy Spirit to open people's hearts to respond to the gospel, it is the testimony of Christians that is God's appointed means for reaching the lost. The Jewish Christians scattered by the persecution in Jerusalem in connection with Stephen travelled as far north as Antioch (the third most important city in the Roman Empire) and communicated 'the good news about the Lord Jesus' not only to Jews but also to Greeks.

A vibrant and dynamic church will not be introverted and parochial but will have a group of people who are passionately

committed to evangelism. Personal witness will be part of their lifestyle.

### **It is a welcoming and encouraging community of faith.**

For the first time at Antioch we have a congregation which is predominantly Gentile in origin – with a pagan background – and so different to the church in Jerusalem. Sent to investigate, Barnabas did not find fault and pour cold water on the whole thing, but rather 'encouraged them to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.'

Like Barnabas, those of us who are leaders need to foster an environment of warmth and acceptance by having a vision for the Lord's work and a generous heart for people rather than being rigid and bound by tradition and pre-conceived ideas.

### **It teaches the Word of God.**

People need to grow in their faith, to know what it is to be a disciple of Jesus, to develop and use their gifts, to be trained for leadership. Barnabas called in the help of Saul of Tarsus and for a whole year those who had been brought to the

Lord were given a solid foundation in the Word of God. What a team ministry these two men had!

The Christians at Antioch not only had a commitment to the apostolic teaching, they also had a desire to live holy lives. Their doctrine impacted their lives.

### **It provides diaconal aid.**

There was a terrible famine in the east of the Roman Empire during the reign of Claudius (about 46-48AD). This famine was the subject of a predictive prophecy by a man named Agabus while on a visit from Jerusalem to Antioch. The young congregation there was galvanized into action collecting special offerings to help the Christians in Judea. A Gentile church helping a Jewish church – what a testimony to the reconciling power of the gospel!

A vibrant and dynamic church does not become isolationist and self-absorbed, losing interest in what God is doing in other parts of the world.

### **It has a vision and heart for mission.**

The church in Antioch did not impetuously rush out upon a missionary enterprise. Rather they waited upon the Lord and sought his guidance – giving themselves to prayer and fasting. The missionary initiative came from God himself through the Holy Spirit: 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' The church was so mission-minded that it was willing to give up two of its key leaders for the spreading of the gospel in distant lands.

Let us pray that the Holy Spirit will impress upon us with new urgency our responsibility to take positive steps in reaching the world for Christ, giving us the passion for people that grips the living Christ, and the power which he alone can make available. We have a responsibility to have a missionary vision of our own, encouraging potential candidates to further it, but that will only happen as it happened in Antioch – not when we are busy planning, but when we are busy praying.

May these be the priorities of each of our congregations that the Presbyterian Church of Victoria might be a truly vibrant and dynamic church.

*Rt Rev. Grant Lawry  
Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of  
Victoria*

## *editorial*

**A**s the new editor of *fellow workers* I wish to express my deep gratitude and appreciation for the wonderful work Rev Andrew Venn did as the immediate past editor. Andrew not only 'resurrected' a near-dead state newsletter, he excelled in improving the quality of content, layout and outlook of *fellow workers*. It is largely because of Andrew that our Church continues to enjoy a state newsletter. Thank you Andrew, for your tireless and faithful work.

On another note, I want to stress to the whole Presbyterian Church of Victoria that *fellow workers* is your newsletter. Our commitment is to represent the whole Church, without fear or favour. Having said that, *fellow workers* can only truly represent our Church if you, the members and ministers of the

Church, send in your news articles, stories and pictures.

As the editor of *fellow workers* I ask each one of you to continue to intercede on our behalf before the God of all grace, that *fellow workers* may glorify his name and encourage all who work for him in the Church.

May the Lord grant you, your family and your church, the desire of your hearts during this Christmas season. May we enjoy the festive season as we meditate afresh upon the meaning of Christmas:

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Happy and holy Christmas to one and all.

*Tony Johnson  
Editor*

# our world belongs to God

There are clear and compelling reasons for encouragement in the Presbyterian Church of Victoria. We have turned the corner on church attendance across the denomination, though it remains true that many congregations continue to age. However, congregational ageing is being offset by the addition of students to a number of congregations and the continuing influx of recent arrivals to this country who are often the product of the past missionary endeavours of Presbyterians. Our return to confessional orthodoxy and the evident unity amongst our ministers is a great blessing.

The Church and Nation Committee fulfils a unique servant role in the life of our denomination. Our charter requires us to 'keep under critical surveillance contemporary trends, movements and controversial issues in public life' and to 'select for special study, in the light of the church's standards, such of these as may require the General Assembly to issue special guidance to the church as a whole, and/or to acquaint the government or other relevant authorities of the church's attitude and the revealed Will of God on such matters'.

In its recent past the committee fulfilled this role through its publications on ethical issues, and by making submissions to government when particular pieces of legislation merited protest or modification according to God's Word.

The threat to religious liberty posed by the operation of the Victorian Racial and

Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (and the 'Catch the Fire' case) led the committee to take a concerted approach of linking to the Australian Christian Lobby and lobbying the State Government and Opposition for changes to this act. Part of this lobbying process involved building a coalition amongst confessional, orthodox, evangelical Church leaders across the Catholic-Protestant-Orthodox divides. In the event the Government conceded a small improvement and the opposition changed their position from support for the legislation to an undertaking to repeal it and start again if returned to government.

This led the Committee to consider teaching our people about the beliefs, practices and mission of Islam. We engaged a noted authority on Islam in the person of Dr Patrick Sookhdeo of the Barnabas Fund, for a two day seminar, attended by 200 persons. Half were Presbyterians, with about 30% being ministers. Hopefully there will be a major trickle-down effect through our congregations, while the committee will consider follow up in coming years. Modern secular humanism has no intellectual or spiritual answer to Islam. Only a rediscovery of the West's Christian heritage will suffice, and we can be a part of that.

What of our future work? We aim to build and strengthen partnerships with like-minded Christians across the denominational divides in company with the Australian Christian Lobby, to present a consistent and faithful prophetic voice on



Dr Patrick Sookhdeo

social and ethical issues. On many issues this will find us working with conservative Catholics, who share a common heritage shaped by the great ecumenical creeds. This does not mean that we will have given up one shred of our Reformation and Calvinist heritage. As children of the Reformation, we stand for piety and revival, for correct doctrinal formulation, and for an understanding that Christ will renew all of creation, not simply save individual souls. Benjamin Warfield described Calvinism as 'that sight of the majesty of God that pervades all of life and all of experience'. Abraham Kuiper said: 'In the total expanse of human life there is not a single square centimetre of which Christ, who alone is sovereign, does not declare, That is mine'. Expect to hear more from the committee on these matters.

Rev David Palmer

Convener, Church and Nation Committee



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## PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE DATES FOR EARLY 2007

### SUMMER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Monday 5 February 10am-1pm

### COLLEGE COMMENCEMENT

Monday 12 February  
Canterbury Presbyterian Church 8pm

### MASTER OF ARTS (THEOLOGY)

Semester 1 – *The Message of James* (Dr Tony Bird)  
2 hours weekly, commences 15 February

### MINISTERS CONFERENCE

Dr Bruce Milne the main speaker, 13-15 March

**SHORT COURSE:** *Preparing Bible Talks*  
commencing Wednesday 18 April 7.15-9.15pm

PHONE: 9898 9384 EMAIL: [info@presbyteriancollege.org](mailto:info@presbyteriancollege.org)

# darwin is different

**A**ccording to a recent article in the *Northern Territory News* (30 October 2006) which explored the social differences between Darwin and the rest of Australia:

*We breed more, love nothing better than an iced coffee for breakfast and a beer for lunch, and are younger than the residents of any other capital city. Welcome to Darwin, once the last frontier for weary adventurers and now a thriving city hooked on alfresco dining and the laid-back lifestyle.*

There is another difference between Darwin and the other capital cities throughout Australia (and probably the Western world). There is no Presbyterian Church there. Next year however, it will be the same as every other major city in Australia.

On 21 January 2007, the PIM plans to hold the first regular Presbyterian Sunday worship service in Darwin for over ten years. This recommencement has been a long-term goal for some Darwinites. This was given added impetus when Rev Martin de Pyle and his family moved there in 2005. Since then there has been a

ground-swell of support and anticipation throughout the Presbyterian Church of Australia. In fact, when the PIM was unable to make a permanent appointment, the heartfelt pleas from Darwin and the enthusiasm from the rest of the church was so strong that the project simply could not be delayed. It was at this point that the Melton Presbyterian Church stepped in and offered to supply both the finance and a short-term mission worker to start worship services and gather a core group in Darwin in preparation for the eventual permanent appointment by the PIM Committee. The Melton Session proposed that one of its elders, Rev Rob Duncanson, go to Darwin for the first six months of 2007. Rob & Jeanette Duncanson, together with their two younger sons, Ben and Stuart, will move to Darwin in January 2007 to take up this work.

The PIM is grateful to Melton for its support and to the recent General Assembly of Victoria, which gave a one off encouragement grant of \$8,000 towards the project. The isolation of Darwin (the nearest Presbyterian Church is 1628 km away), means that there is a great need

for prayerful support from the whole Australian church. There are three ways you may be able to encourage this exciting new venture:

**1.** Pray that God's people will be built up through this new congregation and that new people will be brought into his kingdom.

**2.** Tell your friends, relations and contacts in Darwin that there is a new Presbyterian Church starting there, and ask them if they would mind you passing on their names to the new pastor, Rob Duncanson.

**3.** Be informed. Have a look at the DPC web site at [www.darwin.org.au](http://www.darwin.org.au), and send an email asking to be put on the list for regular updates. If you don't have email, contact us through the following contact details:

**Address:** Rob & Jeanette Duncanson, PO Box 1599, Howard Springs, NT, 0835.

**Telephone:** (08) 8988 9911 or 0413 021 716

**Email:** [rob@darwinpresbyterian.org.au](mailto:rob@darwinpresbyterian.org.au)

**Website:**

[www.darwinpresbyterian.org.au](http://www.darwinpresbyterian.org.au)

*Rev Rob Duncanson  
Convener, PIM*

## pyv news – past, present and future

**S**ince the last edition of *fellow workers*, there have been three PYV events. In September about 150 people attended the social organised by the youth from Grace Presbyterian Church in Ballarat West. Matt Tegart spoke about the awesome privileges of being 'in Christ'. There were 'fashions on the field,' and a great time was had by all. Later that month, PYV Junior Camp was held at Shiloh Ranch. Alisha Bilyj, one of the campers wrote this:

*This was my first ever Junior Camp and it was soooooo much fun in so many ways! The camp theme was 'Walk like an Egyptian' and Shady Mehanni was our genuine Egyptian on-camp Pharaoh. All the games were very amusing and based on the ten plagues brought upon Egypt. On the Saturday, we were blessed with some hot weather and went on a long walk down to the beach where we played tug-o-war and searched for buried Egyptian treasure.*

*The speaker was Douglas Robertson, whose talks were on the Exodus. The talks were both interesting and inspiring for many, including myself! I made a lot of new friends whom I can't wait to see again next year.*

This was PYV's last camp at Shiloh Ranch. It will be sad to leave behind a place with so many good memories. Next year we plan to have our camps at a new site in Bacchus Marsh, which has plenty of room to expand. This has become a necessity as the numbers on Junior Camp have doubled in the past two years!

More recently, the PYV volleyball tournament was held. The day began with a testimony from David Beard, former Olympic volleyball captain. About 32 teams participated in the competition, the winners being Burwood Chinese (men), St Georges Geelong (mixed), and Croydon Hills (cheerleading).

Coming up soon is the PYV Carols Service run by Heathmont Presbyterian. This is an evangelistic event for all ages.



*PYV Junior Camp at Shiloh Ranch*

Please bring friends and family.

The biggest event of the year begins on 27 December when the PYV Summer Camp will be held, open to age 12 and up. Rev John Buchanan will give a series of talks entitled 'To Seek and to Save: How Jesus did this in Luke's Gospel.' The activities theme for the camp is 'Super Heroes and Villains.' Also running at Summer Camp will be the Intensive Stream, where Dr Allan Harman will take a senior group through a survey of the Old Testament. For more information about registrations for Summer Camp, please visit [www.pyv.org.au](http://www.pyv.org.au) or speak to your church minister.

*Mr Andrew Vines  
PYV Youth Worker*

# new ministers hit the ground running...



*Assender family*

## *david assender scots presbyterian church, geelong west*

Since my ordination this time last year, consolidation and careful planning has taken a front seat in the direction of Scots, Geelong West. Three new elders were ordained at the end of 2005 and half a dozen new members have joined us. Some of our older members have taken seriously ill and our little flock has rallied to support them. Recently, our organist of nearly 22 years resigned, requiring our new music team to make a larger commitment to our Sunday morning service.

Our church strategy is in its final stages of completion. It proposes important ministry developments for the next 5 to 10 years that will deepen our love for the gospel of Jesus Christ and our responsibility to share it with the world.

Three key areas we are committed to working on in the next six months are: prayer, leadership training and small group development. It has been a wonderful first-year of full-time ministry for Tanya and me, with many blessings accompanying the comparatively small trials. We're amazed at the grace of God in our lives and are seeking to depend upon him for all things.

*Rev David Assender*

## *ian hutton ararat presbyterian church*

During the final year of college the anticipation of an exit appointment is both exciting and distracting. Trusting that God is placing you where he wants you to be is essential. God wanted us in Ararat!

We were looking forward to the shift back to the country. But country life can bring unexpected challenges at short notice. We had only been in Ararat for five

days when the extremes of Australia's climate revealed itself by driving a huge fire through the Grampians and out into the open country between the Grampians and Ararat.

Skills from a past life were put into practice following the fire. One member of the congregation was severely affected and needed urgent fencing. Working your way into a rural community is a slow process. Some say you are only local once you have died there! The church community have been welcoming and encouraging.

Christian Religious Education (CRE) was about to die in the three primary schools in Ararat because of a lack of teachers, but praise God there are five new teachers involved this year, including ourselves, covering 50% of the classes.

As a family we have settled in well and are thankful for the prayer support of others. I continue to be amazed at God's leading in various issues, including the preaching program and praise him for the strength he gives despite our weaknesses.

*Ian was ordained and inducted as the minister of Ararat Presbyterian Church on 30 June.*

*Rev Ian Hutton*

## *bill medley frankston presbyterian church*

The first week was great. After my sermon I was feeling good because I was thinking that by the time I have done that sermon a few more times it should be polished, but then I realised that you are actually supposed to have a new one each week!

Things started well, but they have got better. The best part has been the people. We are small in number and the majority are older, but they are committed Christian people who show their faith in their lives.

Diana has already turned the house into a home. Our sons Luke (8 years old) and Joshua (5 years old) love it because the manse is adjacent to the Church car park and they now have the biggest backyard in the world. Luke also enjoys playing piano in our evening service.

The community has become a blessing to us. It already feels like home. Knocking on doors as an outreach has been a better experience than other suburbs where I have been. Even those people who are not

interested are still friendly – sometimes. We have done several outreaches so far through leaflet distribution. One of the best times was a door knocking outreach one weekend. Praise God for Dan Brown who helped us fill our hall on a freezing cold June night with interested *DaVinci Code*-hangers. Praise be to God for we have seen a couple of souls come to the Lord!

*Bill was ordained and inducted as the minister of Frankston Presbyterian Church on 24 November.*

*Rev Bill Medley*

## *gary stephens bairnsdale presbyterian church*

On Thursday 12 January, as I drove past the sign that welcomed me to Bairnsdale, I could hardly believe what I was doing. The hectic blur of final year assessment and trials for licence were history, as was the place we had called home for my final three years of study. We had said goodbye to the church family and friends that had supported us as we started raising our family and made the decision to move into full time ministry.

As I consider this first year of ministry I affirm that living within the instructions of Scripture brings great blessing. In the Bairnsdale congregation my family and I have discovered faithful men and women, a congregation who is united, a leadership that is godly, people who pray, believers who love the Word of God, and disciples of Christ who willingly serve others.

One of my discoveries has been the humbling honour of being entrusted with continuing the ministry of the gospel to this congregation of God's people. Above all is the discovery of God Himself. The spiritual responsibilities of a pastor/teacher and the everyday faithfulness of congregation members have shown me just how empty I am, while in the very next breath I'm witness to the immeasurable grace of God through Jesus Christ that works beyond all that I am. For this I give thanks that I have been able to share some of this with the congregation.

*Gary was ordained and inducted as the minister of Bairnsdale Presbyterian Church on 21 May.*

*Rev Gary Stephens*

# around the presbyteries and churches

## from death to life, the story of the ararat presbyterian church

**N**ot only do we rejoice and give thanks for the provision of a permanent building for the Ararat Presbyterian Church but we also give thanks for the twenty years of ministry of the Church in Ararat since it was reconstituted in 1986.

The original Presbyterian Church was opened on 10 February 1859 with twelve people attending. On 13 June 1958, almost 100 years to the day after the decision was made to build the first church, a new building was commenced which was dedicated and officially opened on 17 November 1959. In 1977 the Ararat Presbyterian Church went into the Uniting Church and so the property ceased to belong to the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

During 1985-86 several meetings of those interested in reconstituting the Presbyterian Church led to the re-formation of the Presbyterian Church in Ararat. In 2005 a move was made by the Home Missions Committee to purchase a building. This building was formerly a restaurant known as 'Country Chicken'. Following minor renovations, these buildings were first used for the ordination and induction of Rev Ian Hutton into the Parish.

On 24 September 2006, the former restaurant was dedicated a Church to the honour, glory, worship and service of the LORD. The moderator of Presbytery led the worship service, the Rt Rev Bob Thomas preached the occasional sermon, and the new minister of the parish read the Scriptures. We praise God that a restaurant is now a Church! Too often, the opposite has happened! It was a great delight and joy to be a part of and to witness this awesome event in the life of the Ararat Presbyterian Church.

*Rev Dr John Woodward*

## evangelism through english classes

**H**ave you ever thought about teaching English conversation? It is a wonderful way to connect with newcomers to our city and State from overseas. Steve Young commenced such a ministry to Japanese students in 1991. Today this ministry continues 5 days a week in rooms on the 1st

floor of the Assembly Hall – to Japanese, Koreans and some others as well. Morning classes run from 10.00am–12.30pm and afternoon classes (except Wednesdays) from 1.30–3.30pm. Each lesson includes a 30 minute Bible Study. All the teachers are volunteers and God has worked in remarkable ways in the lives of many of these students. Kerry Waters from Eltham Presbyterian Church, who has taught weekly in these classes for nearly 9 years, tells of one of them:

Jenny was a very quiet, gentle girl – I think from a Buddhist background. This day in 2003, the class was big (about 30 students) and the Bible Study was on the Ten Commandments. I simply went through and explained them. As soon as the class had finished, Jenny came up to me and started crying. Immediately I knew whatever was coming next was of God – but I was thinking, how could God touch someone through this study? But he did! She was weeping as she had suddenly realised how much God loved her whilst she had been praying to idols. With her consent, I carefully explained the Gospel and, with a flood of tears, she accepted Jesus as her Lord and Saviour then and there. As soon as we finished praying, she was different – God had transformed her. She left me with the confidence and assurance of a decided Christian. Within a couple of weeks she began to travel and our Almighty, Providential God went before her – to Adelaide, to Tasmania – and every host family she stayed with were Christians who taught, loved and helped her to grow.

When Anne, Geoffrey and I visited South Korea in May this year, Jin Hee (Jenny) was at Incheon airport in Seoul to meet us with a group of other students who had been to Melbourne. We subsequently spent a wonderful day sightseeing with her, the highlight of which was several hours in a teahouse in Insadong talking and praying with her. She is active in her church, teaching Sunday School and involved in prayer ministry. She has grown into a mature Christian young woman, a great support for her best friend, who had been praying for her salvation since they were in primary school together.

If you would be interested in the possibility of teaching English conversation, we will be having a training day early next year. Please contact me on 9836 4601 if you are interested.

*Rt Rev Grant Lawry*

## vacancy at drouin

**T**he Presbytery of Gippsland has declared a vacancy in the parish of Drouin for a successor to the current minister. The interim-moderator is the Rev Bob Boan.

*Presbytery of Gippsland*

## kangaroo ground 150th anniversary

**T**he Kangaroo Ground Presbyterian Church will be celebrating its 150th anniversary on Sunday 18 March 2007 at 10:30 am. Kangaroo Ground was settled by Scottish emigrants in 1841. Like other settlers, as soon as they had made a home for themselves and their families, they desired church services as in their homeland. The Rev James Forbes, the first minister of Scots Church, Melbourne, had written in 1840 to the Colonial Committee of the Church of Scotland asking for suitable ministers to be sent out. In response to that appeal, the Rev Peter Gunn arrived in January 1842. Although Mr Gunn conducted church services from 1843, Kangaroo Ground was not formally constituted a preaching station or charge until 17 March 1857.

A thanksgiving service is planned at which former Minister, Dr Reg Mathews will be the guest preacher. A luncheon and an afternoon program featuring songs of praise led by 'Serendipity' will follow this. Further information can be obtained from the Session Clerk, Dr Robert Baldock, on 03 9437 1265. Any photographs and anecdotes of the church's earlier days would be greatly appreciated and gladly received by Dr Baldock.

*Mr Barry Anderson*

## good news for noorat

**T**he Fagans are coming to be with us at Noorat. We are so glad! We have read Miles Fagan's article in *fellow workers* under the heading 'Excitement in the Air', and we at Noorat wish to express our excitement, anticipation and joy as we await the arrival of Miles, Robin, Rebecca and Joel. Indeed, we have much for which we are thankful to God.

When last we wrote to *fellow workers* we were six months into a vacancy. At that time, we expressed our thoughts and

fears amid the sure knowledge that God would lead and provide if we trusted in Him. We can now report with full confidence that our prayers have certainly been answered. Here we are nearly twelve months into a vacancy and we are overjoyed at the prospect of Miles, Robin and the children coming to Noorat in 2007.

We met and enjoyed a weekend with the family recently, which was great for us all. We feel so blessed and humbled. God is surely true to his promises to hear and answer prayer in his time. As Miles said, 'He truly has a plan for everyone'. Our church is looking forward to welcoming the family to their new home and working with them to glorify God and build up his church in Noorat and district.

*Mr David and Mrs Dorothy Selman*

### *a mission minded church, reservoir presbyterian church*

**O**n 24 September 2006, we were delighted to receive a visit from Alex and Nadia Kozned, who are involved in Christian radio ministry in Russia. Alex and Nadia broadcast from San Francisco, USA and are also building a radio station in Alaska. The Reservoir Presbyterian Church has been committed to financially and prayerfully supporting the Kozned's for over 35 years, that is, since they left Australia to commence their missionary service overseas.

As Alex and Nadia were only in Melbourne for one Sunday, our Church hosted a fellowship meal on the evening of 24 September, which was followed by a worship service led by Alex. This was a wonderful occasion; the great dinner with a time for everyone to chat and then hear Alex preach and report God's blessings on their ministry.

This was an encouraging start to our annual Missionary Convention, which was held in mid October. The convention fea-



*Reservoir*

ured a prayer breakfast, mid week and after church meetings, a convention dinner and the Faith Promise Sunday. Our minister, Rev Ross Tucker, introduced Rev Michael Raiter, principal of BCV, at our Faith Promise Sunday and Mr Raiter spoke powerfully on the theme 'Why Proclaim Christ?'

*Mrs Kath McDonald*

### *from excommunication to ordination – radical restoration*

**M**r Phil Neil was ordained as an elder at Warburton Presbyterian Church on 17 September. We give thanks to God for this as a special evidence of God's grace at work in the life of the Presbyterian Church and in Mr Neil's life. At around the time when the Victorian Assembly would once again be grappling with issues related to the Fellowship, we were able to witness the transforming power of God in the life of one whose background was in the Fellowship.

Phil Neil was one of the members of the Fellowship instructed to leave Mt Evelyn church by the Presbytery of Maroondah. Most significantly, his former minister at Mt Evelyn, Mark Crabb (also an assessor elder to the Warburton Session), now 'enthusiastically and unreservedly' endorses Mr Neil's induction and ordination as an elder.

How has this transformation come about? With Tony Archer, his current minister, and then later with Mark Crabb, his former minister, Mr Neil worked through the theological matters raised in Chapter 4 of the booklet *Fractured Fellowship*. Mr Neil acknowledged that many of the things addressed in this chapter were evident in his experience as part of the Fellowship, some of which he previously believed, but no longer held to. He commented on his personal growth in the faith since coming to Warburton and his delight at seeing the surprising work of God in beginning a real work of restoration.

His minister, Tony Archer, believes the reasons for this turn of events can be attributed to a number of factors:

- 'a humble submission to God and God-given authorities, a willingness in all parties to come together with complete openness and goodwill,
- a deliberate choice to connect with the church at Warburton,
- an honest acknowledgement of past sins and errors,

• and without losing sight of that which was good and true, a desire to stand apart from those beliefs and practices identified in the book *Fractured Fellowship*.

*Rev Tony Archer*

### *faithful generosity honoured*

**I** cannot believe how blest we are to have such a great vehicle,' said Cameron Mackenzie after returning from patrol recently. Cameron and Carmel Mackenzie have recently taken up the work of the Flynn Patrol in South Australia. It is due to a generous gift from the Wangaratta congregation that PIM has been able to buy a new Land Cruiser ute with a slide on camper for them to use in their work.

On their latest patrol, Cameron and Carmel started with two or three days of relentless winds and a dust storm. They were very appreciative of their new vehicle, which gave them great protection from the elements. 'Without this vehicle we would have started off with a couple of sleepless nights, which would have made the rest of the patrol much more difficult. Praise God for His provision!' they said.

On Sunday 8 October, Cameron and Carmel, Stuart Bonnington (PIM Superintendent) and Rob Duncanson (PIM Convener) went to Wangaratta to express to the congregation our deep thankfulness to God for their gift of \$75,000 for the new vehicle. Stuart Bonnington commented that the last couple of years have seen tremendous growth in the ministry of the PIM to the remote areas within our country. He expressed his deep appreciation for the generous support of congregations, individuals and organizations throughout the Presbyterian Church of Australia, which has enabled this increased work.

*Rev Rob Duncanson  
Convener, PIM*



*PIM new Landcruiser*

# sudan appeal

**T**he 2006 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria approved the following motions concerning our brothers and sisters in the Presbyterian Church of Sudan (PCS):

- Authorise APWM Vic. to re-launch a relief appeal to the wider church to assist the Presbyterian Church of Sudan in the provision of diaconal aid and to establish strong church communities in Southern Sudan.
- Encourage all congregations to remember in prayer our Sudanese brothers and sisters in Christ.

We are encouraged that the Moderator, Rt Rev. Grant Lawry, will visit the Presbyterian Church of Sudan in January 2007. Grant will take with him the fruit of this appeal and present it in person to our friends from the PCS. This will be a visible and tangible expression of our love for and our solidarity with our Sudanese brethren. But why Sudan?

## *the troubles have been all theirs*

The circumstances behind the departure of many refugees from Sudan have often been full of trouble. Those who arrived on our shores have faced many hardships. Finding a spiritual home and a place of security and love within the Presbyterian Church has helped many refugees be re-established – but their heart's desire is still for their brethren left behind. Civil war in Southern Sudan has had a devastating effect upon its peoples. The predominantly Islamic North has long recognised that the Southern Sudan region is strategic for the spread of Islam through

Africa. Sudan has faced the reality of this tension with many hundreds of thousands of people dying as a result of this conflict. The only hope for the people of Southern Sudan is the gospel of Jesus Christ and in particular the message of reconciliation.

## *the blessings have all been ours*

In terms of the growth of the Presbyterian Church within the state of Victoria, one of the most significant developments in the last decade has been the arrival of many Southern Sudanese with a Christian and Presbyterian background who have joined our Churches in the city and the country.

## *lasting peace is now almost theirs*

For 21 years the SPLA [Sudan Peoples Liberation Army], under the leadership of Dr John Garang, fought to ensure that a predominantly Christian south would gain equality with the Muslim-majority north. Earlier in 2005 Garang signed a peace deal with the Khartoum government, bringing hope to the war-ravaged region. The agreement ensured wealth and power would be shared, and allowed Garang to take up a position as vice-president of Sudan, and president of southern Sudan on 9 July 2005. However, just three weeks after this historic event, Garang tragically was killed in a helicopter crash travelling back to Sudan from meetings in Uganda. At his funeral in the Anglican Cathedral in Juba, his wife and family pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ as the foundation for hope. In September 2005 the first sitting of the Legislative Assembly took place in Juba. The new leadership faces many challenges.

## *the opportunities are now all ours*

For all of the above reasons the APWM Victorian Committee believe that this is a crucial time for the Presbyterian Church in South Sudan to know the support and assistance of their Victorian brethren. We have the financial resources and the practical skills and spiritual gifts to be of use to the believers who remain in South Sudan.

The committee believes that the best way that we can help our brethren in Sudan is via a monetary gift for diaconal aid, combined with the sending of personnel from within our own church family. We hope to make meaningful connections with the Presbyterian Church in Sudan by demonstrating our support for these brethren. With this in mind APWM Vic., with the blessing of the General Assembly, is pleased to present this opportunity to the wider church for funds to be provided that will enable these goals to be reached.

## *how can you help?*

Very simply! Your gift towards diaconal aid in the south of Sudan will be directed to the right people who will implement whatever is most helpful for the many brethren who remain. The process is simple:

1. Cheques can be made to Presbyterian Church of Victoria
2. Attach a note, which says: SUDAN – RELIEF APPEAL
3. Send to PCV, 156 Collins Street, Melbourne Vic 3000, by 30 December.

We thank you in anticipation of standing with your brothers and sisters in Christ in southern Sudan.

*Rev Philip Burns  
Convener, APWM Vic.*

## *continued from p. 1...*

removes any fear of this. In fact, the more godly we are, the more human we shall become. Because our model is fully human, there is nothing human that needs to be left behind. Sin alone needs to be eradicated, because our model is sinless and sin makes us less human. 'In his birth is our birth, our wasted ways are restored, our endless capacity to undo our own lives is itself undone.'

*Rev Chris ten Broeke*

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