

fellow workers

news from around the presbyterian church of victoria



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the Church in
East Timor:
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Believers from around the world meet at the World Reformed Fellowship



Bob Thomas, Robert Benn and Allan Harman at the WRF in Edinburgh, Scotland in April

'I thank God for Idi Amin,' said Victor from Uganda. Now that's not the kind of comment you anticipate hearing at the likes of the World Reformed Fellowship. I waited for a moment, not wanting to make a suggestion that would spoil Victor's train of thought. I didn't wait long.' He broke my family,

kicked me out, and I found myself at Westminster Theological Seminary, yearning to return to my own country to preach Christ.'

'When did you return?' I asked.

'1980.'

'And the church now?'

'We have about 50,000 mem-

bers, and I have stepped aside from the ministry to just one congregation, to become the trainer of young men and women in evangelism across all the congregations. We have about 20 congregations now.' I loved his passion and his Christ-like humility.

We heard story after story. From Korea, South Africa, Mexico, Brazil, the UK, North America, Kenya... indeed stories that flowed from members of the 58 denominations

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The locked ward: mental health chaplaincy

In late 2009, I was given an unexpected opportunity to experience ministry among those with long term mental illness. As part of my chaplaincy studies I completed a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education at a large Victorian metropolitan hospital. CPE is an internship program that requires both extensive group work and supervised ministry participation of up to

120 hours over a 5 month period. I had expressed a desire to work in the program amongst those with mental illness – knowing there was a mother/baby unit attached to the hospital which might be willing to 'take me on'! Instead, I was given another assignment: to visit 6 hours a week at the long term secure mental health unit – the locked ward! I had heard

other chaplains talk about this place: lots of unstructured time, unpredictable and bizarre behaviour, sometimes violence. I still remember making the firm commitment in my mind: there's no way I'm going in there...

I look back and realise that part of my CPE course was about breaking out of comfort zones. I still don't know if the

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Deadline for
next
FW edition:
1st August
2010.

Christians from around the world meet at the WRF Assembly



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that belong to the World Reformed Fellowship. The more we listened, the more we appreciated the rallying call of the WRF, 'that the strengths of some might become the strengths of all in their service of Jesus Christ.'

'We were thrown out of our denomination because we were attracting the black farming community members,' came the voice from Durban, South Africa. 'We amazed our white brothers and sisters, but we amazed our black folk more, as we took the pick and shovel and worked alongside them in the fields. This was our entrance into their lives. And now, there are 30 new mixed churches... each serving the others, each chewing on the same chicken-bone!' Apartheid principles have been overturned by the gospel. Again, I was thrilled.

The World Reformed Fellowship came into being in 1994 as a result of the white-anting in other ecumenical bodies and councils of the clarion call of the Scriptures to recognise that God has spoken in his revealed Word, and in His living Word, our Lord Jesus. Our church became a member of the WRF at the General Assembly of Australia in 2004.

Dr Allan Harman is on both the Board of the WRF and also on the Theological Commission.

Five of us from Australia attended the WRF Assembly during the second week of April: Allan and Marie Harman, Bob and Alison Thomas, and I. The Assembly met in the Pollock Halls of Residence in the University of Edinburgh.

A strong note was sounded in the opening session by the Archbishop of Uganda, Henry Orombi with his topic, Keeping Christ's Church Faithful! This set the tone, and soon we were into workshop mode: Evangeli-

┌ 'Once the heartland of Christianity was sending missionaries to the margins. Now the margins have become the heartland!'

icals in Mainline Churches, The New Spirituality, Responses to Post-colonial Africa, Issues of Social Justice, the Church and Gender Issues, Mission to the Islamic World, the Family in Society... these are but a sample.

Clearly the issues which were chosen for the delegates to think through and debate were issues which are so real in today's world where the church is attempting to holistically present the clarion call of

the gospel.

It was heartening to hear a strong voice from Brazil: 'Liberal theology is a parasite in the church. It sucks the church dry and leaves it empty. I hope it is soon as extinct as the dinosaur!'

During the sessions a half a dozen men and women were given the opportunity to bring greetings and tell about their special, often para-church ministries. It is always excellent to hear the news of what is happening by the Spirit's movement in countries of which we know little. So we heard the stories from India, Brazil, China, Korea, Indonesia and Uganda. As we contemplated the situation in many of the countries that once sent many missionaries, we couldn't help but notice that the baton seems to have been passed on to others. 'Once the heartland of Christianity was sending missionaries to the margins. Now the margins have become the heartland!' one speaker said.

└ And we longed, not for the turning of the tide, but that the one-time heartland would become heartland again, by a special action of God's grace.

The delegates to the WRF Assembly come from many denominations that are strongly committed to the great classical Confessions of Faith. These confessions come from early Christian days or are the result of careful formulations of Biblical understanding flowing from the Protestant reformation. These confessions were written against a religious, historical and political background very different from that which we know and experience. The WRF Theology Commission

applied itself to producing a new Statement of Faith for study and comment, with a view to its adoption at a suitable time.

It is proving to be a very interesting study, for apart from the classical statements of Christian doctrine, it is very easy to detect the influence of the struggles

we have all faced as we have walked through the 20th and into the 21st century. There are chapters on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the Christian life, the Church, the place of Tradition, Mission and Evangelism, and Law and Ethics, including subjects like marriage, sexual ethics, family planning, prolongation and termination of life.

We all wonder what this new Statement of Faith might become, and how it might be used in the years ahead.

Christians sing! It was special that Keith and Kristyn Getty from Northern Ireland made themselves available to lead the music, run a workshop, and allow us to enjoy the praises of God with an evening of the Stuart Townend/Keith and Kristyn Getty music, which of course included *In Christ Alone*. We drank it in! Particularly as there was a very rich dose of Irish music integrated into practically everything we sang. It was good for the 'reformed' soul!

Our final gathering at the Assembly was a service of worship. Rev Martin Allen of the Church of Scotland addressed the question of 'What a church looks like' from Acts 1:8. It was so good to go back to the Source, to relive the early church, to recommit ourselves

to building the church of our Lord Jesus... his way!

That might have been the end of the report... but then, there was the Iceland volcano Eyjafjallajökull. I haven't tried to say it, have you? All flights were cancelled: 100,000 commercial flights across Europe. Phenomenal. Plenty of initia-

tive was used by delegates to return to their home countries, but no-one but the locals returned home quickly.

Thus ended the 3rd Assembly of the World Reformed Fellowship.

For further information on the ecumenical body to which our church belongs, I suggest you google World Reformed Fellowship. There is an up to date report from the 2010 3rd Assembly there.

*Robert Benn
Moderator
General of the
PCA*

▣ 'That might have been the end... but then there was the Iceland volcano Eyjafjallajökull. I haven't tried to say it, have you? All flights were cancelled: 100,000 flights across Europe.'



New Minister for Warburton Presbyterian Church

Sunday 2 May 2010 was an important day in the continuing story of the Presbyterian church in Warburton. In the afternoon the church building was more than full as people gathered to witness the Induction of Reverend Brian Harvey to the ministry of this church. Brian has been an interim-minister at Warburton since February 2009. At last, and after a lengthy process, this is now official. The Warburton church is excited and looks forward to many years of ministry with Brian & Anne Harvey.

*Rev Brian Harvey
Warburton Presbyterian Church*

Youth Gatherings at Hume PC

On the 18th of April 2010, Hume Presbyterian Church (of the Northern suburbs) hosted its first (of 4 quarterly) youth gatherings for the year.

It was a fun night out for those who attended, with games (like dodge ball and soccer), music (the very own Hume PC band) and an abundance of bread and barbecued sausages for supper. Pastor Scott Kroeger gave a rather frightening talk on 'Things that will keep you out of heaven'. All in all it was a great night to gather with other youth and share the same—yummy—food and faith.

Next Hume Presbyterian youth Gathering is on June 6th (last Sunday of school holidays) at the Hume Presbyterian Church (Corner of Section and Somerton Roads Greenvale) from 5-7pm.

Special guests and organisers will be the students from the Presbyterian Theological College.

If you have not yet come to one of our Gatherings, this coming one would be a great start.

It is going to be MASSIVE. And we are not just talking about the food quantity!!

*Reuben Chew
Hume Presbyterian Church*

The locked ward: Mental health chaplaincy

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leaders placed me there on purpose – knowing I did not want or plan to go. Mothers and babies are just fine... but definitely not that! You can imagine my fear and nervousness on day one, even though I went in with an experienced chaplain. I certainly took every kind of preconception and prejudice in with me and had to talk myself steadily through the next two hours.

The unit itself is an expensive, well appointed environment with rotating staff shifts and several daily programs. It has three 'Get Smart' doors with magnetic swipes for entry and exit. It is punctuated by many regular meal and coffee breaks where this eclectic community comes together – for better and sometimes worse.

Chaplains run a weekly prayer meeting and Bible study for a small group of committed Christians in the ward. I at-

tended that first day, shielded into the room by a silent, burly patient while another patient ranged around the hallway outside with powerful energy, swearing and shouting. I will

‘One lady would tell me one week how much she loved me, and the next week, hurl shocking abuse.’

never forget that first gentle kindness and his natural protective act – a chink in my defences – good things found in here!

The hour of Bible study was both familiar and different. We read, prayed and sang. Several patients came in and out. One sat silent, rocking back and forth. One talked frantically, passing the chaplain a note about a kidnapping he had witnessed that morning. She received it with concern

for him but was also unfazed. She told me later that this was a common experience, and that I must learn to participate, as she did, in the 'reality of his unreality'.

In the next few months I would get to know many of these patients. I would visit for free time in the common room: talking, sitting and playing cards or doing jigsaws. Several patients would often groan, shout and swear at me. One lady would tell me one week how much she loved me and the next week hurl shocking abuse. Over many weeks patients and some staff would share their stories with me. Sometimes we would pray together – simple, heartfelt, often desperate prayers.

I found that if I simply sat, after a while several people would come in and sit around me, to watch TV together. They didn't always want to talk or

even make eye contact but it somehow felt like a 'regular family scene'. I learned over those months that connection in the secure ward is fleeting but precious. Many with long term mental illness are deeply disconnected and long to experience, even for a moment, gentleness, love, belonging and laughter... just like everyone else.

I was afraid to go into the locked ward and afraid almost every week I visited. It would have been foolish and unrealistic to turn off that fear as behaviour would often change quickly, and I did witness several violent events and exchanges. But

Public Lectures @ PTC (there is no charge for these events)

Tuesday July 20, 10 am - 4.30 pm: *Christian Ethics* with Dr Scott Rae

Wednesday evening July 28, 7.30 pm: *Heart Idolatries* with Dr Sam Larsen



Dr Scott B Rae (PhD, BAS) is Professor of Biblical Studies-Christian Ethics at Talbot School of Theology in California. He is ethics consultant at six hospitals and has authored several books. Dr Rae is in Melbourne for several speaking engagements and will

give lectures throughout the day at PTC. The program will include two morning lectures on Biblical Ethics, and two afternoon lectures on Sexual Ethics covering reproductive technologies.



Dr Samuel Larsen (DMin, PhD) is Professor of Missions and Evangelism. He has special interests in globalisation, contextualisation and intercultural education. Dr Larsen has served as a naval Commander and Chaplain, a missionary in Kenya and Australia, and has church planting experience on three continents. Dr

Larsen will be in Melbourne for a week of MA(Th) lectures at PTC on *Church Planting*. Both MA(Th) students and other interested people can attend this course. Please contact PTC for more information.

These lectures are open to all members of the public

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FELLOW WORKERS

The Bible & Femininity: PYV Girls day out



Some of the girls who stayed to enjoy dinner on the beach together afterwards

Once upon a time in February, on a cold summer's day, in a little seaside Church, a group of girls met together for the PYV Girls' Day Out. They came from far and wide, all bustling with the excitement of being able to spend a day together. They met two lovely young ladies, Josephine Millstead and Hannah Moody, who had spent a lot of time making sure the

day was enjoyable for all.

The day really began when Erica Sorrenson spoke to the girls about femininity, and what a suitable topic it was! The girls were challenged to consider the pressures society places on them to conform to a certain image. With this distorted image of femininity in mind, the girls turned their attention to Proverbs 31 to consider what the

Bible says about femininity. She put the girls into small groups and had them brainstorm ways they could encourage younger girls in femininity. And it didn't stop there; Annette Koker spent time outlining the Bible's view on femininity from Genesis, and how women are designed to sustain the men. She challenged the girls to embrace the Bible's perspective on femininity and mold their lifestyles on God's Word.

After discussing the ins and outs of femininity, the girls spent the evening by the sea, sharing dinner together and chatting. Many hours later, it was time to go home, and the girls said their last goodbyes. The Girls' Day Out is always a fabulous day for any girls, young and old, to be a part of.

Joy Venning
PYV Secretary

as I went in fearfully to minister, I found that I was the one being changed. These experiences awakened in me a great tenderness, respect and admiration for the many talented people there who suffer long term mental illness and struggle with it every day, precious to God in that 'hidden place'. It also awakened my concern for those in the community who struggle and don't have access to the protections of the 'locked ward' for themselves or their loved ones. There are many complex issues attached to mental illness and many are affected in our state by the illnesses themselves or as part of their caregiver role.

Could you be interested in mental health chaplaincy? This is a demanding type of work

that requires real emphasis on respect, acceptance, love, presence and prayer. Perhaps you have experienced mental illness yourself or cared for a someone with mental illness. Mental Health chaplaincy in Victorian hospitals is now considered as a profession that requires chaplains to become

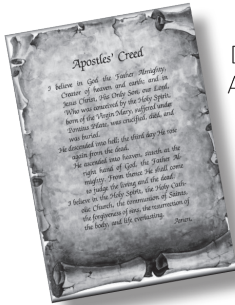
qualified and trained. If you are interested in exploring this type of ministry the Health and Community Chaplaincy Committee would love to hear from you. Please email me at convenorh-ccc@optusnet.com.au.

Kathy James
Convenor, Health and Community
Chaplaincy Committee

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Evening Short Course at PTC

Introduction to Christian Doctrine - Apostles' Creed




Dr Douglas J W Milne
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- Week 2. Faith in Jesus Christ, God's Son as Saviour
- Week 3. Christ's Birth, Sufferings, Death and Burial
- Week 4. Christ's Resurrection, Ascension, Session and Return
- Week 5. Faith in God the Holy Spirit as Life-Giver
- Week 6. Forgiveness, Resurrection and Eternal Life.

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PARTNERS!



Rev. Philip Burns

It's a word we're hearing a lot about these days. Gone are the days when you could be introduced as someone's *de facto*. When was the last time you heard that? No, *de facto* is definitely out and partner is definitely in! In the context of the New Testament, partner was a word that Paul was familiar with too, referring to Titus as his 'partner and fellow worker' (2 Cor 8:23). Paul also regarded others as 'fellow workers' (could be a good name for a church magazine!) and these included Urbanus (Rom 16:9), Timothy (Rom 16:21), Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25), and Philemon (Phm 1).

In terms of mission, partners are absolutely vital. Its worth noting that the great commission was not given to one individual disciple such as Peter or James, but to all of the disciples (Matthew 28:18) and it was understood that he expected them to be partners in the work together. When our APWM National Director, Rev Bill Lutton, came up with the working name of 'Mission Partners', he hit the nail on the head, because that name reflects our task. We are to be about 'mission' as 'partners' with other 'fellow workers' that the Lord of the harvest has 'sent forth into his harvest field' (Luke 10:2).

One of the ways that mission partners APWM has taken up Jesus' command seriously is to develop formal links with partner churches. Here in Victoria we are familiar with hearing about developments in our partnership with our Presbyterian brethren in Malawi (Blantyre Synod of the Church of Central Africa) and to a lesser extent in Zambia (Zambia Synod of the CCAP) and also in Sudan (Presbyterian Church of Sudan). Our partnership with these believers is steadily growing through the regular visits of Rev. John Wilson, Rev. Bob Thomas, the STAMP teams and the sending of missionary Motor Isaac Yat in December 2008 to Sudan.

See why we are partners and need partners? The work that needs to be done is too big for any of us!

But within the Presbyterian Church of Australia, the picture is not limited to Africa alone. We are also partners in the work of the gospel in Vanuatu through theological education, discipleship and mentoring conducted by Rev. Andrew Williamson and Glenn Connor at the Talua Ministry Training Centre on Santo Island, and the various Youthpartners and Tradespartners trips to Talua and to Tanna Island.

We are also partners in the work of the gospel in Myanmar through regular mission trips made by members of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland and missionary-in-training Martin Eagle from NSW. We are also partners in gospel work through English teaching in Japan through Nerida Shimizu (nee Bell) from NSW, and in

Bangladesh through a strong interest in theological training and education by members of the NSW church.

Let's not forget our own backyard where Rev. Rick Mantton works in Western Sydney in Aboriginal ministry, and the training of Aboriginal pastors through the development of training courses together with the Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship. Added to this are possibilities that may lead to more partnership in gospel ministry in East Timor and in India, and perhaps many other places in the days ahead!

See why we are partners and need partners? The work that needs to be done is too big for any of us! That's why we are partners together, and why our State (Victorian) Committee, along with the other State Committees in conjunction with the Federal (GAA) Committee, have given attention in recent years to making sure that we work together better than we have in the past – because when we work together we can do more. As you pray for missions and missionaries, please also pray that God will help us all to value and to promote partnerships for the sake of the extending of His Kingdom.

P.S. The recent AGM of Mission Partners APWM in Sydney was informed that Rev. Bill Lutton will conclude his term as National Director from 30 September this year. Please give thanks to God for the way He has used Bill throughout the Presbyterian Church of Australia in these last 9 years and pray that his replacement would be forthcoming in due time!

*Rev. Philip Burns
Convenor, APWM Vic*



Kirkbrae Presbyterian Homes celebrate 50 years of service

Kirkbrae Presbyterian Homes, Mount Dandenong Road, Kilsyth will celebrate 50 years of Aged Care service on behalf of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria on the 2nd July 2010.

Kirkbrae is nestled at the foot of the Dandenongs on 13

beautiful hectares of gardens.

From a small number of buildings 50 years ago, Kirkbrae has grown to 90 independent living units, a nursing home of 110 high care/low care beds and employs 150 full time and part time staff.

A range of activities are provided for the residents with weekly Church Services and Bible studies conducted by the Chaplain Rev. Wally Gear.

On Friday 2nd July at 11am an Anniversary Service will be held in the Kirkbrae Community Hall to be conducted by the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, Rt Rev. Andrew Bray. A light lunch will be provided following the service.

Those wishing to attend please contact the Village Office on 9724 5200.

Robert Lowe

Convener, Social Services Committee

Supporting the Church in East Timor

In February last year, contacts were initiated which led to my accompanying Robert Benn and Rob Duncanson in a visit to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Timor Leste (East Timor).

One year later we met in Sydney to consider future directions for our growing partnership. We were joined by Bill McCrae, moderator of the Presbyterian Church in WA and Wilson Fernandez, pastor of a Brazilian Presbyterian church in Sydney.

Robert Benn outlined the history of both the independent nation of East Timor and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of East Timor. Robert's outline included the trips which we made last April and a leadership training trip which Rob Duncanson, David Burke (pastor from Singapore) and Roger Bannister (elder from Mount Gambier) made last December.

Rob Duncanson related more detail of the tremendous trauma that the country has endured over recent generations. Repeated cycles of loss of life, property and destruction of infrastructure have given rise to a sense of discouragement in East Timor. Some people have very low expectations: an important aspect of our partnership is encouraging

them to dream and then helping their dreams come to fruition.

The presence of Brazilian Presbyterians, whose theological positions are the same as those of the PCA, was noted. The EPC-TL adopted a constitution and confessional standard subsequent to the teaching seminar last December. A delegation from the Brazilian Presbyterian Church will be visiting East Timor during 2010. The leadership of the EPC-TL warmly affirmed the possibility of more leadership training at an early opportunity.

In addition, a broad range of other needs exists. Bibles are in short supply. Church buildings and facilities range from basic to barely adequate. There is reason to believe food can be scarce in some places, and money is needed to create opportunities for education of children. Pastors are not paid and opportunities to help local congregations provide a self generated income exist. This will probably be our preferred model of supporting pastors and local churches.

Ten tertiary students are



Rev Arlindo Marcal, Moderator IEPTL.

presently being sponsored, and another trip from Australia may take place soon. Arlindo Marcal, leader of the EPC-TL will be here in September.

Our challenge in continuing this partnership is to provide support that encourages the leadership of the EPC-TL to work out their own desires and plan for growth. We need to balance our desire for specific goals against the need for support sent to the EPC-TL to be distributed in an equitable manner that will enhance their fraternal relationships and develop a sense of equality among their congregations.

I firmly believe the growing future of cross-cultural involvement will be based on local congregations supporting other local congregations working in cross-cultural situations. Our partnership in East Timor is a demonstration of that.

PYV Volleyballers swarm Dandenong



The winning cheer squad certainly earned their trophy!

Approximately 250 people from 19 Presbyterian churches across Victoria gathered on Saturday, March 27 for some volleyball action. PYV Volleyball has been a feature of the annual youth calendar for over a decade and this year was no exception with a large enthusiastic crowd!

Men's and Mixed teams entered into a hard fought round robin followed by a fierce set of finals. In the end, Burwood Community Presbyterian Church took out both the Men's and Mixed trophies against strong opposition from Fawkner. The Cheer Squad Trophy was awarded to the Arabic & South Yarra Presbyterian Church for a series of very loud and enthusiastic songs!

The day commenced with a devotion from Rev

Major Martin de Pyle, where he encouraged us all to practice being Godly. 'For physical training is of some value, but Godliness has value for all things, holding promise both for the present life and the life to come', 1Timothy 4:7.

The draw was

simplified this year to allow 6 games per team and coloured wrist bands once again helped to keep players on the right court.

For the first time ever, players were able to try out the beach volleyball courts in between their round robin games.

Thank you to the organising committee for a huge effort and a successful day – Marton Murrany, Matt Whelan, Tim White and Brad Haughey. If you'd like to contribute to the organising of next year's event then we'd love to hear from you. Please contact Brad Haughey at the PYV office.

In the mean time, practice, practice, practice... being Godly!

David Bruce

Religion in the Public Square

A COLLOQUIUM ORGANISED BY THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Thursday-Saturday, July 22-24, 2010
Assembly Hall, 156 Collins St, Melbourne

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