

InterSections

An Australian journal for Christian encounter and encouragement

Editorial

Welcome to the August 2012 issue of *InterSections*.

Our society at present thinks a lot about money. An uncertain economy dominates most news headlines and many of us spend a considerable amount of time worrying about our finances. All the while, millions in the Third World look with wonder at our wealth. Against this background, in our *Food for Thought* section Michael Bargholz challenges us to consider where we find our true treasure. Continuing the same theme, Kent Hartman asks us to consider what it means to be good stewards of our wealth.

In our *Book Review* section, Peter Horne reviews *Real-Life Discipleship* by Jim Putman. This book offers a useful framework to help us envision how individuals become disciples of Jesus and bring others on the journey.

The Wynnum Church of Christ in Brisbane is the subject of our *ChurchScope* article. Alan Parr shares with us the ups and downs of this long-standing congregation and reminds us of the good work smaller churches can do in their community.

In this issue we also interview Peter and Di Coleman. Peter is an elder with the Malaga church in Perth. We hear about their service together over many years and the challenges and blessings brought about by the merger of two congregations to form Malaga. Finally, this issue also features a *Letter from PNG* by Velma Forman. Velma is a Canadian nurse who works in the One Mile Clinic in Lae which provides healthcare for the poor in that city. She shares with us about life in Lae and the work of the clinic in meeting people's physical and spiritual needs.

We hope that this issue will be both challenging and encouraging for you. We look forward to hearing your feedback.

The InterSections editorial team

ChurchScope: Wynnum Church of Christ, Qld.

At first glance the Wynnum Church of Christ seems small, with around 20 adult members (30 if we include children) meeting in a building that seats 150. However, there is a depth and maturity of faith amongst the membership that only comes with experience – over 550 years of living in Christ are represented by the current members.

The church first met in Wynnum in an old band hall at Tingal Rd near the Wynnum Central train station in 1958, with Colin Smith the original full time preacher for the congregation. In 1962 two properties were purchased on which the church building was constructed. A cottage was also built for the purpose of housing a visiting preacher or extra classrooms for the children's Bible study. Harry Wyre and Selwyn Brooks built the cottage.

Many campaigns were held over the years with visiting preachers attending and articles were written for the local paper. Some had provocative titles such as 'Genuine or Counterfeit'. This drew many comments from locals (not always favourable – but debating is a good conversation starter).

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...we sometimes feel we are limited in what we can do for God. Thankfully, God doesn't see it the same way. He has blessed us with many ways to serve him.

The Wynnum church grew quickly early on, with 200 baptisms during the first 15 years. The local community proved to be 'white for harvest'. In the 1960s the congregation was typically over 100 members strong.

As the church grew, a small bus was purchased to pick up the Sunday school children around the district. Dave Barker and Warren Smith were the drivers.

In 1998 a number of members from the Wynnum congregation left to plant a church in the Redlands district (The Point Church). The Point has since outgrown the Wynnum congregation to become one of the larger and stronger congregations in Queensland, having elders and deacons, and now provides assistance to the Wynnum church with preaching and teaching.

The Wynnum congregation has been the 'home' congregation for over 300 Christians over the past five decades (230 of them new converts). Many are faithful members and leaders in other congregations around Brisbane and elsewhere.

A majority of members in Wynnum are over 60 years old. Being an older and smaller congregation, we sometimes feel we are limited in what we can do for God. Thankfully, God doesn't see it the same way.

He has blessed us with many ways to serve him. The congregation is involved in a number of different Christian ministries and services:

- We provide financial support to the Jeremiah's Hope orphan outreach in the Ukraine. One of our members, Ray Walker, also visits to provide hands-on support as well.
- We also provide financial support to an annual mission trip for the indigenous children of Moree. Rachel Parr has been a participant of the week-long mission for the past three years.
- Our newest babe in Christ, Maree, has taken in two homeless school children, with other members of the congregation providing support as required.
- Members have assisted with the Brisbane 'Camp Connect' for teens.

The Wynnum men have begun a 'Boys to Men' activity, meeting every month or two, to help our boys in their journey to manhood. Boys have attended from a number of other Brisbane and Gold Coast congregations as well as some unchurched boys.

We have hosted a couple of mini campaigns with students from US Christian colleges visiting us for up to a week.

Activities included door knocking, letter boxing, Vacation Bible School, evangelism forums and community service.

We're also active in local evangelism. Gordon, one of our oldest members, spends many hours each week knocking doors, handing out pamphlets and speaking with those he meets on the street about Christ and the Bible.

As with most other churches, Sunday morning is the time we get to see everybody together. The last Sunday each month sees us share a fellowship meal (something to remember if you plan a visit – no one leaves hungry). A smaller number of us are able to make it to one of the two mid-week classes on Tuesday afternoons and Wednesday evenings. Also, several of the ladies from Wynnum are able to meet with ladies from other congregations during the week who meet closer to where they live.

The Wynnum church has been blessed with Christians from other congregations providing sermons and lessons over the past few years. Having this teaching has been beneficial to us. It also brings the added bonus of maintaining and deepening relationships with other Christians and sister churches who can otherwise be easily forgotten in our fast paced society. Churches that have

provided sound teachers for us (and continue to do so) are The Point, Gold Coast, Holland Park, Birkdale and Cleveland. We are very grateful to them.

Recently the congregation had a three month break from sermons to have a longer Bible study time. This was set aside so we could revisit important fundamental questions such as: 'what are the most important things a Christian should be focused on?'; 'how should we "do" church?'; and 'why do we do worship like we do?' These Bible studies stimulated a lot of discussion, earnest questions and Bible searching – all good for spiritual growth.

One of the analogies we learnt was the geologist who was filling a jar with rocks, pebbles and sand. We learnt that we can't complete the task unless we put in the big rocks first. We have now returned to the traditional sermon format on Sunday, but the Wednesday night class is continuing on with our 'Big Rocks' study.

Looking forward, the Wynnum church would love to grow in number, but we know it is God who grants the increase. Other specific areas we hope to continue to grow in are:

- Being more aware of those around us who have needs and helping them;
- Making sure that we use what we have for God's glory;
- Ensuring we all have a good understanding of basic Bible teachings. ■



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Food for thought *Sharing True Treasures*

Our English word 'treasure' comes from the Greek word *thesauros*, ie. a storehouse. Treasure is a storehouse of wealth accumulated, concentrated and preserved.

In biblical times the word 'rich' was used as the antithesis of hunger. It means to be full or to have more than enough (eg. Luke 1:53). By this base line measure the average Christian in Australia in 2012 has financial treasure and is rich.

Consider three additional points:

- The latest (2011) IMF (International Monetary Fund) data ranks Australia's per capita income sixth in the list of nearly two hundred nations in 2011.
- In the parable of the rich fool Jesus describes a rich man as having 'many goods laid up for many years' (Luke 12:19). The average value of our homes and/or superannuation qualifies most Australian Christians as rich by this definition.
- Fishermen and tent makers of the first century were likely to have enjoyed incomes less than 1 percent of ours (see Angus Maddison, *The World Economy a Millennial Perspective*, OECD 2001).

Our relative wealth is staggering. The average Australian Christian's income today is in the top 5 percent of all people who have ever lived (not just those living today). We, of all Christians, should be thankful and attend to the Holy Spirit's plea that we 'not be haughty... [but] be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share' (1 Timothy 6: 17-18).

The Bible discusses material wealth and challenges us to choose between serving God and serving mammon (Luke 16:13). However, Scripture contains no masterplan to 'make poverty history'. Instead, Scripture has much more to say about real and enduring treasures.

The Psalmist rejoices at the Word of God 'as one who finds great treasure' (Psalm 119:162). Proverbs teaches us the value and riches of wisdom and encourages us to treasure knowledge and discernment like silver (Proverbs 2:1-4). In short, wisdom and knowledge are the true treasure since they lead us closer to God and lead on to eternal life.

The New Testament takes the thought further. Paul speaks to our topic in the epistle to the Colossians. In the passageway between the Student Centre and the Bible building of Harding University in Arkansas (a college which I enjoy visiting when I can) is a wonderful sign in bold letters. It reads:

Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Colossians 2:2-3)

In the same chapter Paul speaks of his desire for the Colossians to attain 'all the riches of the full assurance of understanding'. Our knowledge of Jesus is our real wealth. He is the image of the invisible God and through him all things were created, and for him (Colossians 1:16). If knowledge is power then it is doubly so in spiritual matters!

Unlike financial riches, these spiritual treasures are within reach of every Christian. They are not hidden. Rather, they are in plain view. In another contrast, these riches and treasures are not diminished the more we give them away.

Christians are in the business of sharing the treasure and riches of wisdom and understanding: that alone we are lost, but in Christ we are forgiven and reconciled. Evangelism is our primary mission.

While the Bible encourages us to share our wealth, it doesn't contain a plan to make poverty history. Rather, the Bible contains the plan to make sin history. While we are obliged to share our financial wealth, we are even more compelled to share the Good News with anybody who will listen.

Paul writes elsewhere: 'It is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels' (2 Corinthians 4:6-7).

We are vessels for Christ. We have invaluable true riches to share in the form of the Gospel. Let's share it. ■

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InterSections

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Letter from PNG

A View from Lae, Papua New Guinea



Dawn comes suddenly in the tropics with an abundance of light, sound, and colour! Fruit bats shrieking as they return to our backyard, dogs yipping, roosters crowing, the local *koki* (cockatoo) reciting the names of everyone in the house, then the rattle of the lock as I open the clinic gate and the ailing enter with a quiet “*Gut morning, sista*”. Another day starts.

One Mile Clinic, located in Lae, Papua New Guinea, has served the local community and remote villages since 1980. Prior to its opening the missionaries and local Christians provided care at their back doors, doing what they could or transporting people to hospital. Going from settlement to settlement, they provided basic medicines and dressed sores while sharing God’s love and his Word, praying with the needy and bringing them to faith in Christ.

Now the clinic provides primary health care to mildly and moderately ill people of all ages on an outpatient basis using PNG’s standard treatment manuals or referring them to hospital. We are also treatment partners with the National Government’s TB DOTS program, caring for those with all forms of tuberculosis from diagnosis (if sputum positive) through to cure or completion of their treatment (daily from six to nine months).

All this is a tremendous opportunity to know our neighbours well and share with them the love of Christ. We do this during our early morning devotionals (led by the Melanesian Bible College students, my co-worker Nelson, and our neighbour Norman) and throughout the day - and sometimes during the night as well. We have plenty of opportunities to demonstrate the love of Christ in a practical way while serving the sick. Below is a story of one of the individuals we served and whose life we touched to God’s glory.

Jacob’s Story

Born to a young teenage mother in the poorest of circumstances, Jacob soon succumbed to malnutrition and tuberculosis. He came to us looking like a little old man, skeletal and very weak. Would he live? Painfully and slowly he regained his strength. Initially unable to walk, by the end of the third month of his treatment he was shuffling along and starting to smile a little. At the end of nine



months of treatment Jacob was well again, free to play and grow with his extended family.

Life continued to be tragic for Jacob when his mother died in 2010. He was absorbed into his aunt’s family and started school in 2011. Still struggling with health problems and grieving for his mother, Jacob was having difficulty attending to his lessons and was sent home mid-year as the teachers were unable to meet his learning needs.

When I returned from leave in late 2011, I searched for Jacob among the crowd of Sunday school kids. I was told Jacob was sick at home. Every week I was given the same answer and eyes were averted to my probing questions. By mid-January this year I became insistent that Jacob be brought in for treatment. When he arrived he was pale and puffy, unable to walk and in very poor condition. I sadly sent him off to the hospital once again, not expecting him to come home.

With many prayers said, a month later Jacob was well enough to be returned to our DOTS program. Now we are thrilled to see him running down to the clinic every morning to take his medication. For four months he’s had breakfast at the clinic and now he has gained nine kilograms! Recently I heard him reciting his ABCs to himself so we’re hopeful that he will be able to return to school next year.

While Jacob has been struggling for survival his aunt has become a Christian, attended literacy classes at the Melanesian Bible College, and started work at the local fish cannery plant. Life in the settlements is far from easy but with the love and support of brothers and sisters both locally and worldwide, we are able to extend hands and hearts to help bear the burdens. We are all very grateful for your prayers, love, and assistance as we serve the needy in our neighbourhood! ■

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What blessings are you personally missing out on if you are not being generous with the money God has blessed you?



Feature

Honouring God with our wealth

'Honour the Lord with your wealth, with the first-fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing and your vats will brim over with new wine.' (Proverbs 3:9-10)

I like 'big picture' ideas. Sometimes I get bogged down and frustrated with details. Proverbs 3:9-10, at least to me, is a big picture idea of what God wants us to do with our money. The big picture is he wants us to honour him with the money he blesses us with.

Over 20 years ago I began a study of Christian stewardship and began teaching some of the things I had learnt about Christian stewardship at Macquarie School of Biblical Studies in Sydney. I now continue teaching a similar course on this topic to students at Oklahoma Christian University in the US. The Scripture I repeat almost each class period to the students who take my course is 'Honour the Lord with your wealth....' To me, this Scripture helps guide me to use the money God blesses me with.

I usually begin my class at OC telling students that I want them to be guided by Proverbs 3:9-10 as they think about what to do with their money. I then ask the following question (usually several times before I get a response): 'How do we honour God with our wealth?' Think for a few seconds how you would answer that question.

The first response I usually get is: 'Give money to God'. Not a bad answer. Then I ask, 'How else do we honour God with our wealth?' Usually there's an extended period of silence. Sometimes a student will say, 'Help other people.' This is also a good answer (see Matthew 25:31-46 where our judgment before God is going to be based, at least in part, on how we treated people we saw in need).

Occasionally a student will say, 'We honour God with our wealth by taking care of our family.' Again, a good biblical answer according to 1 Timothy 5:8. There are other answers that can be given for how we honour God with our wealth, but to me the ones given above are a good starting place.

What would happen in Australia?

After having worked with churches in Australia for a number of years, one of the challenges most congregations seem to face is having sufficient funds to do the work they desire for God's glory. It seems to me that those of us in leadership in churches need continually to challenge our members to give generously to the Lord through the congregations we are part of.

Several studies that have been conducted by religious organisations in the US have discovered that the average church member in the US is giving between 1.8% – 2.4% of their incomes through the local congregation. In contrast, several times in the Old Testament God commanded his people to bring a tithe (10%) of what he had blessed them with that year to the Levites (eg. Numbers 18:21-28; Leviticus 27:30-34). Malachi 3:8-10 goes so far as to say a man was robbing God if he didn't bring the whole tithe to God.

I'm not saying we are under the Old Testament and that we should tithe, but have you ever wondered what would happen in your congregation if each family began giving 10% or more to God through the local church? What ministries could your congregation do that you are not doing because of a lack of funds? What blessings are you personally missing out on if you are not being generous with the money God has blessed you? When will we become responsible for supporting the ministers/ministries that we and our families benefit from?

Change the words

Most congregations would have a prayer before taking up the contribution on Sunday morning. Many times I have heard brethren here in the US and around the world say words like, 'Lord, bless us as we return a small portion of what you have given us back to you.' Would it make any difference in our giving if we used words like Paul used in 2 Corinthians 8? In verse 2 Paul mentioned 'rich generosity' in relation to their giving. In verse 3 the Macedonian churches gave 'as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability.' Paul stated that their giving was an 'act of grace on their part' and they should 'excel in this grace of giving' (verses 6-7).

In 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 Paul also used the words 'sowing generously' and 'giving with a cheerful heart' in relation to how a person approached their giving. Would it be helpful to remind people that God wants us to be generous in our giving and to give beyond our ability to give? Should we remind Christians that giving is a grace that we should

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Book Review

Real-Life Discipleship: Jim Putman (NavPress, 2010)



'If you set out to make disciples, you will inevitably build the church. If you set out to build the church, there is no guarantee you will make disciples. It is far more likely that you will create consumers who depend on the spiritual services that professionals . . . provide for them.'

Breen and Cockram, *Building a Discipling Culture* (2009), p 6-7

I believe that Churches of Christ have exerted a lot of effort to give baptism its rightful emphasis. However, baptism serves as one of the steps to making disciples, not as an end in itself. What comes next requires equal attention. I recently heard a speaker ask, 'What path does a new convert take in your church to become an elder/deacon/ministry leader?' He then answered his question, saying 'the only pathway most churches have is longevity.'

The longer a new Christian attends worship services the more likely they'll be asked to serve. But the million dollar question is, 'Does attending worship services make someone a disciple?'

Jim Putman is a Christian Church minister who believes the answer to the previous question is 'No'. In his book, *Real-Life Discipleship*, Putman encourages churches to 'take the accidental out of discipleship'. 2 Timothy 2:2 demonstrates a model of discipleship. Paul teaches Timothy who teaches reliable men who teach others. God wants each of us to be disciples who make disciples who make disciples.

Among Churches of Christ, certain congregations once known as the 'discipling movement' have tended to make discipleship a dirty word. In fact, perhaps because of this movement a whole family of words including 'accountability' and 'mentoring' often evoke negative feedback. However, if we swing to the other end of the pendulum, we would face a real risk that in avoiding the demonstrated problems of this movement, we lose sight of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18b-20a.

So what is a disciple? Putman observes that many churches 'don't agree on what a disciple is and they don't use the same language.' He continues, 'We want [the definition] to be in simple language so the whole church is able to remember it. We point our people to the definition of a disciple found in... Matthew 4:19. We believe that this invitation describes the definition of a disciple and that to follow Jesus will mean a life change at the head, heart, and hands level of our beings.' (p 26)

The discipleship process begins with church leaders. Leaders have a responsibility to evaluate their church members. To guide someone to spiritual maturity, we must first know where they stand in their walk with Christ. In the core of his book Putman describes attitudes and behaviours that help identify each of five stages

of a disciple's growth. He devotes a chapter to each stage: spiritually dead, spiritual infant, spiritual child, spiritual young adult and spiritual parent.

The benefit of characterising people in this way is that it provides insight into the next step they need to take. I know this kind of labeling sounds a bit clinical, but when I recently shared this material with a group of young men I meet with regularly, they were more than happy to label themselves. They appreciated the insight into the path ahead of them. They weren't all at the same stage, and the labels helped them to share a common framework and to encourage each other's spiritual growth.

After identifying stages of spiritual growth, Putman promotes a four step 'reproducible process' for maturing disciples appropriate to the needs of each stage. We *share* (Gospel, life, truth, new habits) with spiritually dead and infants. We *connect* spiritual children to God, a spiritual family (small group) and a new purpose. Spiritual young adults seek to serve, so we *equip* them and provide opportunities. The last step in the process is to release spiritual parents or disciple-makers by *explaining* the discipleship process, *apprenticing* them, and *supporting* them to disciple alone.

For example, if I'm investing in the growth of a spiritual child, I want to ensure they understand the value of spiritual disciplines in connecting with God. I also want to ensure that other Christians are making an effort to embrace this spiritual child. Finally, I want to lead this person to understand their role in God's kingdom. I don't want to just increase their knowledge, but ultimately influence their behaviour. This process may take several years in a new Christian, but it gives the individual and the church a common understanding of the spiritual goals and process.

Finally, it's worth highlighting that Putman's fifth stage is not *adult*, but *parent*. 'As Christians we are called to make disciples – to do our part to reproduce our faith in another. Adults are *able* to reproduce, but that does not mean they are reproducing.' (p 42) In contrast, spiritual parents make reproducing their faith a priority.

Putnam's book is an easy read. The much bigger challenge is implementing discipling relationships. To this end, I also highly recommend a related workbook for sharing these ideas with a small group: *Real-Life Discipleship Training Manual*. ■

*Peter Horne is originally from Tasmania and now ministers with the Lawton Church of Christ in upstate New York, USA.
He also blogs (www.GodMeetsBall.blogspot.com). aussiepete@rochesterchurch.net*



excel in? Maybe if we thought about the words we were using in relation to giving and considered using biblical phrases that are used in regard to giving (and not phrases that would make us comfortable) it might impact our giving.

What can stop us from giving as we ought to? My answer: too much personal debt, not putting God as #1 in our budget, trying to keep up with the Joneses, greed and

selfishness, and not maturing to the point where we take responsibility for what we receive.

I pray this article will cause us to look deeply into our hearts and examine our hearts to see if we are really 'honouring the Lord with your wealth'. If you haven't been doing this, what steps will you take to put things in place so that you can honour the Lord with your wealth? ■

Kent Hartman was a missionary in Sydney in the 1980s-1990s. He's now a missionary-in-residence at Oklahoma Christian University, USA. kent.hartman@oc.edu

Interview cont.

What are you reading at the moment that has been spiritually encouraging?

Peter: I rarely read one book at a time. I usually have several books I am looking at. What I read usually reflects questions people have raised or studies that I am having with other people. At present I am reading books concerning the eldership, the life and times of Jesus leading up to his death, the sovereignty of God, the nature of evil, the origin of sin and nature of man, raising children, evangelical tools being used in Africa, justification and atonement and the importance of salvation by faith in Christ. Sadly, I find many religious books discouraging and so I endeavour to avoid them and spend most of my time reading the Bible. Over the past few weeks I have been considering passages related to the concepts in Romans 3-6 and 1 Corinthians 15. The extent of God's grace and the relationship and hope we have in Christ is amazing.

Di: I love to read novels. I am currently reading Joseph Conrad's, *Heart of Darkness*. How spiritually encouraging? Not sure, but it definitely challenges the values of Western civilisation and helps me understand the devastating consequences of imperialism being experienced by African nations. I love books that help me grow in my compassion for people and sense of social justice. Obviously the Bible is my real source of encouragement: Philippians 4 keeps me sane; the end of Ephesians 3 gives me strength; 2 Peter 1 gives me direction and the Gospels confront me in my apathy and hypocrisy. When preparing Bible studies I use a variety of Bible concordances and reference books.

What have been the blessings and challenges for the Malaga church in the process of amalgamation with sister congregations in Perth?

Peter: It is seven years since the Darling Range and City Beach churches amalgamated to form a new congregation that now meets in Malaga. Since then God has blessed us with 45 baptisms and more than 50 Christians joining us from all over Australia and the world. Our challenge is to provide for the nurturing of each of our brothers and sisters as they grow and develop the abilities which God

has given each of them, so that we may all work together in love and build up the church to the glory of God. More than two thirds of the congregation were not with us when we amalgamated. The aim of the amalgamation was to form a new congregation; we are really a very new and very young church. We are challenged with coming to know each other so that we can meet each other's needs and use everyone's abilities.

We have also been blessed by the number of children who regularly come with their families. Our Sunday school has grown from the mid-20s to over 60 children. Our challenge is to train teachers and prepare curriculum material for these children. Preparing men and women to teach and prepare study material for both our children's and adult classes is a major challenge. We currently have eight regular study groups in addition to our Sunday morning, Sunday night and Wednesday night classes. It is also a challenge to make the best use of the time when we meet together to edify and build each other up and to glorify God.

It is a challenge not to become complacent but to continue effectively spreading the Gospel in the community. We usually have more than a dozen visitors each Sunday and hope to have more when we start FriendSpeak and open a stall at the Malaga weekend markets in September. We are currently preparing members for this outreach and undertaking the reconstruction of a warehouse we have recently bought, as we have out grown our existing building.

Do you have any advice for couples entering the eldership ministry?

Peter: Hold fast the faithful word; do not get drawn away by worldly wisdom. Serve the brethren; do not neglect doing good and sharing what you have. Imitate Jesus as you care for and nurture the family of God.

Di: Pray. I am tempted to turn to pray as a last resort. I am still learning to pray first, be patient and rely on God. This is his work and we are privileged to work with him. ■

Peter and Di Coleman are members of the Malaga Church of Christ, WA. They were interviewed by Jenny Ancell. colemanpd@bigpond.com

Interview

with Peter and Di Coleman

Peter and Di Coleman are part of the Malaga Church of Christ in Perth, WA. Peter grew up in Perth and was baptised into Christ in 1969 at the City Beach church. He is now one of six elders who serve the Malaga church. Di (nee Stone) grew up in Armidale, NSW, and was baptised in 1962. They have three children: Catherine who is a biomedical scientist, Robert who is studying music in Tasmania and Jennifer who is in her final year of an Arts degree. Jennifer was baptised in 2003 and worships with Malaga.



How did your journey begin together as a couple?

Peter and Di: We met at a Bible study the night Di arrived in Perth and saw each other regularly at meetings, Bible studies and social events. Di then joined me in a Bible study at the Karnet Prison and helped in having prisoners out on day release. In 1975 we both went back to university and married in September. A few months later we began sharing our home with ex-prisoners to help in their rehabilitation. And so our life together began.

Tell us about your former professional working lives. Did your careers assist in your current roles as elder and elder's wife?

Peter: I studied science and education and then went teaching in rural WA. While teaching in the country I had a lot of time to study my Bible. But it was not good to be away from a congregation where I could worship and work. After two years, I decided I needed to be part of a local church again. So I returned to Perth to study psychology. As a psychologist, I chose to work with the Education Department, working four days a week and having all school holidays, giving me time to work with the church. Even with these limited hours I found it hard to do the work needed in the church. So in 1995 I became a self-funded retiree working fulltime in the church. Being an elder takes time and I have been blessed to be able to do this work without the burden of a secular job.

Di: I studied humanities, social work, education and library studies. My work included factory work, cooking, clerical, social work, library work and helping raise our three children. I believe that God has been able to use all of these experiences in his church: studying God's Word, teaching, caring for others and hospitality. Having kids has helped me understand just how much God loves us, enjoys us and how much he does to care for us.

Who has been an inspiring influence on your life and why?

Di: Oh! There are so many:

My mum and Dad, who raised me to love God and his Word.

Christians who helped the church in Armidale and helped me remain faithful as a teenager.

Peter, for inspiring me to study God's Word, to live it and to serve Christ by serving people, whoever they are and whatever their needs.

Jenny, my daughter and sister in Christ, who is wise and strong beyond her years.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, who faithfully encourage and care for each other and use their abilities to work hard in the church.

I am inspired by Christians who are faithful despite adversities like physical or mental health problems, addictions, family opposition, marital problems, war and displacement and loss of loved ones. I am always thankful for those who love me enough to look for the good in me and forgive me when I let them down.

Peter: Every faithful Christian I have known over the years inspires me and teaches me things about how I can better imitate Christ and serve my brethren. I am especially encouraged by those Christians who share God's Word together with me in individual and small group studies. It brings me great joy to see Christians, whom I have known since they were babes in Christ, grow to maturity and use their varied talents and abilities to minister to their brethren and share the Gospel. Isn't it encouraging to think that, 'we all, with unveiled faces beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit' (2 Corinthians 3:18)

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HARDING SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

2013 Hogan-Cate Asian Missions Sabbatical

Harding School of Theology invites applications for the 2013 Hogan-Cate Asian Missions Sabbatical. The sabbatical is made possible by the Hogan-Cate Endowed Asian Missions Fund established at Harding University in honour of missionaries to Asia, Gordon & Jane Hogan and Steve & Jean Cate.

The sabbatical recipient will be an outstanding missionary, church worker or ministry leader based in an *acappella* Church of Christ in Asia (this covers East and North Asia, South East Asia, South Asia, Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific). The sabbatical period is 3-5 months commencing from August 2013.

Whilst based largely at HST in Memphis, Tennessee, the sabbatical recipient will also spend time at the main campus of Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas. Funds may be used to cover airfare, food and accommodation, HST tuition fees (audit or credit), visiting churches and ministries and participation in the Harding University Bible Lectureship for spiritual renewal and to promote missions in Asia.

An information sheet and application form are available from www.hst.edu and applications should be emailed to dean@hst.edu on or before Monday, 3 December 2012.

**Harding School of Theology • 1000 Cherry Road,
Memphis, Tennessee 38117, USA • www.hst.edu**



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