

InterSections

An Australian journal for Christian encounter and encouragement



ChurchScope 2
Gosford Church of Christ



Letter from America 3
Allan McNicol



Feature 4 & 7
Training the Next Generation



Food for Thought 5
Penny Fry



News 7
Geoff & Joan Thomas



Interview 8
Don & Maxine Klingenberg

Subscriptions

InterSections is available in PDF or printed formats. Subscription for the PDF format is free. Subscription for the printed format is AUD\$22.00 per annum for 4 issues (inclusive of GST).

If you receive the printed format for the first two issues (Aug and Nov 2009), then you are receiving them on a complimentary basis. To continue receiving the printed format of *InterSections* in 2010, you must subscribe for it prior to 15 January 2010.

Editorial

The first edition of *InterSections* received favourable comments. Some of these comments can be found below in the section, *Readers Respond*. Thank you for those who sent us comments – we are encouraged by them.

We also received some unsolicited articles for publication. We are happy to consider publishing these for future issue. Thank you for those who have made contributions so far.

We hope you will find this second edition of *InterSections* equally uplifting. In this issue we showcase formal Christian training programs which have been implemented around the region. For our *ChurchScope* article, David Payne provides a snapshot of Gosford Church of Christ – one of our most active churches in Australia. This issue's *Letter from America* comes from Allan McNicol, an Australian teaching in America. Penny Fry offers us *Food for Thought* on the place of brotherly affection. Christine Payne interviews Don and Maxine Klingenberg – great servants who have overcome some big challenges in their lives.

InterSections is available in soft copy by email (free of charge) or in hard copy sent by ordinary mail (AUD\$22 for four issues). If you or your church received a hard copy but have not yet subscribed, this will be your last hard copy issue unless you subscribe. If you do want to continue to receive a hard copy, please subscribe by 15 January 2010 so that you don't miss any issues.

Our hope and prayer is that among the material we publish you will find some things that will stimulate your thinking and study and that you can adapt and implement in your church family. ■

Readers Respond

I enjoyed the first issue of *InterSections*. Could I please be placed on the free email PDF subscription list. *Mary Nelson, Tauranga, New Zealand*

Thank you and everyone involved in this project. What a wonderful idea. *Grant McFarland, Sydney, Australia*

Lesley and I both found *InterSections* very encouraging, a blessing to read. Well done! We're sure it will bear good fruit. Thanks be to God for the work he is doing through you. *Brett & Lesley Christensen, Melbourne, Australia*

Thank you very much for sending the new *InterSections* journal to me as a PDF file! It looks wonderful. Please continue to send to me in this format, and I will forward it to the Center for Restoration Studies for our files there. God's blessings on this new effort. *Douglas A. Foster, Center for Restoration Studies, Abilene Christian University, Texas, USA.* ■

Don't miss out!

If you received a printed copy of *InterSections* but have not subscribed, you need to subscribe NOW. ■

Gosford Church of Christ, NSW

The Central Coast is the coastal strip between the Sydney metropolitan area and the greater Newcastle area. This regional centre comprises Gosford City and Wyong Shire, with a combined population of around 300,000.

Gosford Church of Christ adopted the name of the dominant city of the Central Coast when it began over 35 years ago. The congregation has about 120 members. As the Central Coast is quite an elongated region, Christians live some distances from each other, one member even lives across the Hawkesbury River.

The congregation currently has four elders: John Stone, David Mowday, Ray Gritten and David Payne. Also within the congregation are three retired elders: Reg Evans, John Drennan and Trevor Payne. The four elders are joined by six deacons who each have a portfolio of service. The eldership at Gosford has been functioning since 1997 and the congregation is committed to perpetuating a biblical eldership.

The ministry team employed by the church comprises Stuart Penhall, David Payne and Evan Lawrie. The team is also aided by Jenny Gray, an intern from the USA. Each team member has diverse skills and experiences allowing a lot of different work to be covered. Stuart and David are graduates of the Macquarie School of Biblical Studies in Sydney. Evan is a graduate of the South Pacific Bible College in New Zealand.

The congregation is not very ethnically diverse. This is in keeping with the demographic of the Central Coast region. Diversity is present in the generational spread of the brethren and through the different backgrounds of the Christians that make up the congregation. The congregation has an even spread of seniors, empty nesters, younger families, young adults, teens and children. Teaching, fellowship, outreach and service ministries are designed to both serve each of these groups and help them serve others.

One of the challenges for Gosford has been the blending of Christians coming into the congregation. The congregation has people that have been part of the congregation since its formation in the early 1970's; people that have moved up from Sydney and have come from other congregations; people from the ex-Peninsula Church of Christ that blended into Gosford a few years back; people that have been converted from the Gosford community; people that have come from the ICOC (International Churches of Christ) movement and the Conference Churches of Christ. These differing origins are seen as strengths rather than problems. This has played a key role in the growth which has seen the congregation more than double in size since 2000.

At times the Gosford congregation has looked to the Antioch church described by Luke in Acts 11, 13 & 15 as a


role model. Like Antioch, Gosford sees a calling not just to help the lost on the Central Coast but also to help brethren elsewhere. This is manifested by the sending out or sharing of Stuart Penhall, David Payne and Evan Lawrie. Each of these workers preaches, teaches and helps serve at other congregations on a regular basis in Australia, New Zealand, USA and Papua New Guinea – often fully paid for by the Gosford congregation.

Gosford is the sponsoring congregation for the Australian support that is sent to Andrew and Jenny Kelly in Ukraine. The congregation is further involved in Andrew's work through the sponsorship, support and the sending of one of our deacons, John Gibbins, to help serve in Ukraine.

Like other congregations in Australia, the work in PNG is also considered important. Support is given to Wesley Wosse to enable him to preach in and around Lae. David Payne has been involved in a campaign trip to PNG with Tom Bunt, Steve Collins and others from Queensland.

Closer home, the Australian Church of Christ Evangelistic Trust (ACOCET), was established by the brethren at Gosford. ACO CET was set up as a gift to the church in Australia to help fund and financially support workers and students. ACO CET is managed by a board of Trustees external to the congregation, but it still includes several Gosford members.

The Short Term Australian Mission Program (STAMP) was also set up at Gosford to help build faith in young people 18 to 25. This program is targeted at school leavers who want to use a gap year to gain some valuable Bible knowledge and ministry experience. Dean Edginton runs this program and, like ACO CET, it now operates independently from the congregation.

The congregation feeds about 100 homeless people every Friday night in Gosford City. This ministry has now been going for over four years. Our teens also volunteer with Evan Lawrie at a local community youth centre and help with youth at risk. 

Gosford has a small group framework for a variety of different ages, demographics and needs. These groups help provide care and support within the congregation. The congregation also sees Bible education as a vital part of our development and several teaching sessions are offered during the course of each week.

The congregation remains steadfast to its head – Jesus. It endeavours to reach out to the local community and edify the saints within the congregation and in other places. Thank you to all those that pray for, encourage and care for the saints meeting at Gosford. It is our prayer that you are encouraged in some way by reading a little about us. We too look forward to reading about your story. Keep the faith and keep pressing on. Heaven awaits!

The congregation currently has about 120 members, 4 elders and 6 deacons.

Letter from America

'we only have integrity if we continue to speak God's word in truth'

In these parts the title *Letter from America* has a particular provenance. For decades the British expatriate Alistair Cooke would send regular radio communiqués to the BBC from New York. He called it *Letter from America*. He patiently explained to the British and Americans the various eccentricities and dispositions of both cultures. It is often said that the British and the Americans are divided by a common language. In his own way, with his insightful observations, Cooke was extremely successful in breaking down many barriers.

Those of us who send you a 'letter' through this journal cannot claim Cooke's notoriety, or his audience, but I pray that we will contribute to a deeper understanding of the American brethren among believers in Australia. Like Cooke most of my adult life was spent in America. But, unlike him, I am still a Queenslander and an Australian citizen. I continue to be thankful that the grace of God allowed me to be born and raised in the land of the Southern Cross. I return there at every opportunity.

Australian brethren should be aware of an exciting new book that Eerdmans, a major Evangelical publisher, has released. Titled *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries*, it is the *magnum opus* of Everett Ferguson, an esteemed scholar in American Churches of Christ.

As the title indicates it is not an easy read - 953 pages. It covers the waterfront with respect to what we know about baptism in the first three centuries of the ancient church and is 'representatively comprehensive' with respect to the fourth and fifth. What impresses me is that world class scholars of the ancient church in North America and Europe are giving this book rave reviews as 'the definitive statement on baptism in the ancient church.' A major conclusion is that the ancient creedal confession of 'baptism for the forgiveness of sins' can be affirmed

because it matches unanimously with the teaching of the leaders of the early church. Ferguson also notes that infant baptism occurs only in rare instances in the ancient church. It appears first in the latter part of the second century of our era. Concern about the death of the child because of serious illness precipitated its earliest usage.



Our emphasis on the importance of believer's baptism is one of the crown jewels of the witness of Churches of Christ. It is good to know that this superb work is now available. It will serve for many years as a resource to aid and enlighten the many conversations that are bound to occur on this important topic.

Ferguson's book comes at a timely moment, not only for the wider religious community but also for Churches of Christ. Through the widespread impact of their literature in chain bookstores, radio and television, and non-denominational Bible classes, the Evangelical movement continues to have widespread impact in America. In recent years many in American Churches of Christ, admiring this success in outreach to outsiders to Christianity, have sought to duplicate the approaches of the Evangelicals. A common denominator in this strategy is to give short shrift to the strong connection in the Bible between baptism and conversion. Such a resource as this book reminds us that such an accommodation is not only questionable biblically, but it is also a betrayal of our heritage. Brethren in both America and Australia constantly need to remind themselves that we only have integrity if we continue to speak God's word in truth – and always in love. ■

Allan McNicol is the A.B. Cox Professor of New Testament & Biblical Theology at Austin Graduate School of Theology in Texas and a member of the InterSections Advisory Board.

InterSections

InterSections is a quarterly journal designed to inform, inspire and unite Christians in Australia seeking to restore New Testament faith and practice. The editors are responsible for selecting material for publication, but each article reflects the views of its author(s). *InterSections* is published by Klesis Institute, the ministry division of CommAsia Australia Pty Ltd (ACN 097136171 ABN 53702023602).

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Art & Design: Gekko Graphics / H.M.Cox

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Training the Next Generation

God lamented through the prophet, 'My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge' (Hosea 4:6). When God gave the Law through Moses, his concern about training the next generation was evident when he said: 'These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.' (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

For Christians, training the next generation begins in the home. Christian parents and grandparents have primary responsibility here. It is perhaps telling, that the best New Testament example is of Timothy's mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15). Male spiritual leadership is so often lacking even in Christian homes – which probably explains why we have so few shepherds in our congregations. Too many parents seem to think that their role begins and ends with getting their children to Sunday School and youth camps.

Of course each church and its leaders have a role to play in training the next generation. This is part of their more general task 'to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the son of God and become mature' (Ephesians 4:12-13). Traditionally this has been done through vehicles such as Bible classes and sermons. The value of less formal means such as mentoring are now also increasingly recognised. Some larger churches have initiated their own internal training programmes. Two are mentioned here as examples.

The Point Church leaders in Brisbane developed a formal preaching training programme in 2006. They did this for over a dozen young men in their late teens through to early thirties. This was not only to help them better serve the church, but because their experience had been that lesson preparation contributed greatly to their own spiritual growth. During and after a six-month period of formal teaching on Saturday afternoons, two or three participants at a time presented 20-minute sermons on one Sunday night each month to older brethren who would complete feedback sheets to both encourage them and suggest areas for potential improvement. This was repeated until each participant felt confident enough to preach a lesson to the whole congregation.

They were then scheduled to participate in shorter monthly talks on assigned Scriptures on the first Sunday of each month until they felt ready to preach a full sermon. Only then were they included on the preaching roster. Some were also willing to serve surrounding smaller churches, initially Bundaberg but then Gold Coast, Morayfield and Warwick. These churches

cooperated by including them along with more experienced preachers from The Point on a monthly roster. It has turned out to be a win-win experience for all.

Shortly The Point leaders plan to put these same young men, along with some older men, through a formal leadership-training programme. Leadership of both physical and spiritual families will be covered, as they are related. It will include asking them to workshop how they might have dealt with actual situations the existing leaders have had to deal with (the details will of course be changed to preserve confidentiality). The intention is that these young men will both better lead their physical families and, with on-going mentoring from existing church leaders, one day be prepared to become leaders of churches.



South Pacific Bible College
SPBC

The elders of the church that meets at Malaga have initiated a more individualised approach that is open to all members of the congregation. This approach first identifies gifts to be encouraged and specific areas of guidance appropriate to each participant. A tailored programme is then developed with a particular emphasis on mentoring by the elders, deacons, older women and/or church supported workers. At this point of time four brethren are participating in this initiative.

Other churches have overseen the establishment of a more institutionalised approach to training available to students throughout Australasia and beyond. Three full-time programs are now available in Australasia. Those operated by the

Macquarie Church of Christ in North Ryde, NSW (Macquarie School of Biblical Studies or MSOBS) and Mersey Bluff Church of Christ in Tasmania (Tasmania Bible School or TBS) have not sought accreditation, but the South Pacific Bible College (SPBC), begun by the Otumoetai Church of Christ in New Zealand, is accredited and quality assured by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. All offer comprehensive Bible studies as well as related practical instruction in Bible languages, hermeneutics, theology, history, world religions, apologetics, homiletics and evangelism. Both MSOBS and SPBC also actively engage students in ministry with other congregations as part of their programs.



The training program of **MSOBS** in Sydney began in 1970 as Macquarie School of Preaching under the direction of Coy Roper, and then Ted Paul. Since 2006 when MSOBS began a partnership with Sunset International Bible Institute from Texas, Ted Paull has served as Academic Dean alongside Craig Peters, the Administrative Dean.

Some 54 Christians have graduated from the initial two-year and now three-year full-time training program. An additional 34 men and women have completed at least one year of studies in the school and over 200 other students have completed at least one class, including Monday evening classes. More information is available from Craig Peters on (02) 9888 9664, or email, craigp888@gmail.com or at <http://msobs.macquariechurchofchrist.org.au>



TBS, located in Devonport, began in 1998 under the oversight of the Mersey Bluff Church of Christ. The two-year full-time

Continued page 7



Food For Thought

Too close for comfort? 

The place of brotherly affection.

If our expectations are different from God's, how do we deal with it?

What expectations did you have when you became a Christian, when God placed you in his family? Did you expect to be connected to a stack of other people? And what does this connection mean?

In this article I hope to provoke thinking on two issues:

- God's expectations regarding the level of closeness and affection between Christians.
- If our expectations are different from God's, how do we deal with it?

Our Place in the Family

We know we belong to a body in which each part's contribution is needed by the other parts.

'And the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you' or again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' (1 Corinthians 12:21)

We are meant to get along and matter to each other.

'So that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.' (1 Corinthians 12:25)

We are also impacted by what happens to other Christians.

And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it. (1 Corinthians 12:26)

So, are we meant to feel distressed when a brother or sister is going through something difficult and to feel ecstatic when something great happens to one of us? How close are we expected to be to our brethren? Is it OK to be closer to some than to others?

God's Expectations

Christians are recognisable to the outside world by their love for each other:

'By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another' (John 13:35).

For some of us this means treating brethren in ways consistent with God's teachings about love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, with patience, hope, humility, unselfishness etc. And yes, we should live these words with each other.

However, the nature of love between brethren seems to have another dimension. How comfortable are you with Romans 12:10:

'be devoted to one another in brotherly love' (NASV)

'be kindly affectionate to one another' (NKJV)

'Love from the centre of who you are; don't fake it' (v9) and *'Be good friends who love deeply ...'* (v10) (The Message)

Or what would you think if you were in Thessalonica back in Paul's day and heard:

'Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by

God to love one another; for indeed you do practise it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you brethren to excel still more.' (1 Thessalonians 4:9-10)

God makes love between brethren a high priority. So what does this love look like?

There has been much teaching and discussion on the different Greek words for love, especially *agape* and *phileo*. One suggestion is that these words are discrete in their meanings, with minimal or no overlaps. *Agape* has been described as a higher kind of love involving self sacrifice and the intense care for the well being of another. *Phileo* has been described as more a friendship, brotherly kind of love. Jesus uses both words in questioning Peter (John 21:14-16). In terms of how we love each other, is the distinction important?

In the 1 Thessalonians 4 passage referred to earlier, Paul says that regarding 'love of the brethren' (contains *phileo*) the Thessalonians don't need anyone to write to them because they have been taught by God to love (*agape*) each other. If we have been taught to *agape* then we are equipped to *phileo*. 1 Corinthians 13:4-9 teaches us about love, as does Jesus' sacrifice. We have from God what we need to love our brethren.

- God expects affection between brethren (Romans 12:10)
- He expects shared emotions – distress and joy (Romans 12:15)
- He says if we don't love our brother whom we have seen, we can't love God whom we haven't seen. (1 John 4:20)

It seems that God wants us to love each other fully, with care, with affection, with patience and sincerity.

This is not to say that we can't have close friends or that we should reveal our personal struggles to everyone. Jesus chose twelve people to be His close companions. He enjoyed a close friendship with Mary, Martha and Lazarus (John 11:1-5). He chose Peter, James and John to be with Him for one of His toughest experiences (Mark 14:31-33). It is fine to have close friends. But God also wants us to develop a close affection for our other brethren too.

If there is a difficulty, how do we deal with it?

Many Christians are close to their brethren and have great affection for them. Even if we spend most of our lives apart,

the love we have for each other and the close connection are evident each time we get together; we are lifted just by being together.

What if we're in a situation like Euodia and Syntyche – two fellow workers of Paul who were not living in harmony (Philippians 4:2-3)? God's desire is clear – be reconciled. That may mean the involvement of others. Become involved, if that is appropriate, remembering Galatians 6:1

'... each one looking to yourself so that you too will not be tempted.'

A lack of closeness may be due to a deliberate distancing by one party. Paul pleads frankly with his brethren in 2 Corinthians to not withhold their affection.

'Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide. You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections. Now in like exchange – I speak as to children – open wide to us too.' (2 Corinthians 6:11-13)

We, like the Corinthians, are capable of shutting people out. God answers through Paul: open up, do not be restrained in your own affections. We might be restrained because we are taking into account a wrong suffered – if so remember 1 Corinthians 13:5, and forgive.

Loving our brethren can be difficult. Some people seem harder to love than others. God shows us that we can learn how to affectionately love each other. In Titus 2:4, we read that older women are to help the younger women 'love their husbands' and to 'love their children'. This means that even if we have trouble feeling affection for another person, we can learn.

What happens if we just don't *feel* part of the family? Simple answer – we are part of it! It's a good thing – a great thing that God has provided us with a spiritual family. Jesus says in Mark 10:29-30;

'...truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or

farms, for my sake and for the gospel's sake but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life.'

Jesus is reminding us of the blessings of being a Christian. Even if we have lost certain relationships as a result of our faith, God is giving us so much more. Do we value and rejoice in this promise?

Perhaps we are the 'brothers, sisters, mothers or children,' that God has placed in his household. Are we willing to provide that sort of close, family love to each other? What a blessing it has been to be treated as a mother, sister or daughter.

If we believe that we should be closer and more affectionate to each other but still struggle, remember what God has told us:

- our love for each other marks us out as His followers; (John:13:35)
- if we have acted against what God wants, ask him to create in us a clean heart; (Psalm 51:10)
- He can help us *abound* in love for each other and for all people; (1 Thessalonians 3:12)
- at times other people may need to help us (Titus 2:4, Philippians 4:2-3); and
- we can choose to open or close ourselves to other people. (2 Corinthians 6:11-13)

Let us not be restrained in our affections but rather be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Let us allow God and our brothers and sisters in Christ to strengthen this bond of love. Let us feel about each other the way Paul felt about the Philippians:

'For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus' (Philippians 1:8). ■

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For Christians, training the next generation begins in the home.



Classes at TBS

Cont. from page 4

teaching program is a combination of video presentations prepared by the World Video Bible School and live instruction. More

information is available from Brett Rutherford on (03) 6424 7573, at: www.merseybluffcofc.com.au or email: merseyforth@yahoo.com



STAMP is now overseen by an independent board made up of Christian leaders from all over Australia. It has the potential to be a breeding ground for future church leaders.

STAMP has been developed to run over a 12 month period starting and ending in alignment with the NSW school year. The curriculum has three components: the 'In Class Program' of two school terms at the start of the year covering biblical fundamentals, ministry training and ministry life held at the Gosford Ministry Centre; the 'In Field Program' during which each student then works with a selected congregation in Australasia for 5 months; and the 'Open Learning Program' that runs over the entire 12 months in partnership with OTEN (a division of TAFE NSW that specialises in distance education). The OTEN component provides students with the opportunity and dedicated time to further their education with nationally recognised qualifications.

During the course of the year, students will not only gain a greater understanding of God's Word but also forge strong relationships with others who have a passion for God's work in his church.

After the 2008 inaugural class, STAMP was unable to gain traction due to lack of personnel, so this year has been used to restructure and refine the programme. Now six students are already planning to join the programme in 2010 with day-to-day operations to be run by Dean and Amanda Edginton. More information is available from Dean Edginton on 0413 422 588 at www.mystamp.org.au or email: enquiries@mystamp.org.au ■

Prepared by the editor with input from Dean Edginton, Peter Coleman, Mary Nelson, and Craig Peters.

SPBC in Tauranga, New Zealand, began in 1982 and is now the largest training organization in our region. It has its own dedicated campus. The two diplomas offered by SPBC are the Diploma of Advanced Biblical Studies (2 years) and the Diploma in Christian Ministry (1 year). Partnerships and 'visiting lecturer' arrangements mean that many courses are taught by professors from Christian universities in the United States such as Abilene Christian University, Oklahoma Christian University, and Lipscomb University. This is in addition to a team of on-site staff and visiting preachers and teachers from around the world.

An ability to work with people from other cultures is extremely important today and the environment at SPBC is a truly multicultural one. Students have come from Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Korea, Taiwan, China, Pakistan, South Africa and the United States as well as New Zealand and Australia. More information is available at www.spbc.org.nz or by emailing spbc@spbc.org.nz.

The newest initiative has come from the leaders at Gosford Church of Christ on the central coast of NSW. They decided it was imperative to develop a program that focuses on preparing young Christians for life as a Christian rather than full time ministry workers. The aim is to provide a basic spiritual education and practical mission experience while each student is also studying

to further their career. From this objective, the Short Term Australian Mission Program (STAMP) was born.

News

Saving Light Series

The annual Saving Light Series at Heidelberg West Church of Christ was first held in 1993, with the aim of encouraging more fellowship amongst sister congregations in Melbourne. To this end, speakers have come from the various sister churches in Melbourne and other places and only occasionally from the Heidelberg West congregation. This has been very successful, as we have had tremendous support from other congregations in Melbourne.

The name 'Saving Light Series' grew out of the fact that daylight saving started around the time we were holding the series. And, of course, Jesus is our saving light, so it seemed a good combination.

In 2009 the 17th Saving Light Series took place from 5 – 8 November. This year's theme was 'Hope for a Troubled World'. David Payne, from Gosford Church of Christ, presented Jesus as the hope in a world of despair. There were five lessons in the series, one on the Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, and two on the Sunday morning. The series was advertised to the local community via newspaper and radio, as well as

letterboxing. We have even had sessions simulcast over the local community radio station.

Sometimes we have had several speakers, whilst other times we have just had the one speaker present all the lessons. There is sometimes a singing session in conjunction with the series. This year it took place immediately before the Saturday night session. Another Saving Light tradition is the BBQ lunch on Sunday at the home of June and Don Chapman. This is always very well attended and a chance for brethren from various congregations to get together and enjoy great food and fellowship. Each year a booklet is produced outlining the lessons. Recordings are also available on CD. ■

Geoff and Joan Thomas, Heidelberg West Church of Christ, Victoria. Joanthomas1@gmail.com

Interview

with Don & Maxine Klingenberg

*'Once a task is begun, never leave it 'til it's done.
Be the labour great or small, do it well or not at all.'
(cf. Colossians 3:23)*

How did you come to serve as missionaries in Australia?

Maxine: From the time we were married, our life goal was to serve God together in whatever way we could. We were interested in sharing the gospel and have always used our home as a tool for God. Thirteen years after we married, Don gave up his career; we sold our house and, with our family, moved across America for Don to train as a preacher. Growing up, we were both interested in Australia. When we became friends with Ron and Edna Wallace in Bible School, it was an easy choice to come to Australia and work with them. The rest, as they say, is history.

Don: When I became a Christian, two passages of scripture became a burning passion for me - Matthew 28: 19-20 and Mark 16:15. I now see being here as a Spirit-led thing that we were to preach the Gospel in Australia (Galatians 1:15-16).

How have you seen the church change since your work started at the Warringah congregation in Sydney in the early 1970's?

Don: Well, it seems like everything has changed. The church is much more spiritually mature in its understanding of the Scriptures now. One illustration of this is the concept of being saved by grace and working because we are saved, not working to be saved. Another is the concept that Christians are holy because of Jesus' blood. The acceptance of the Holy Spirit being active in our lives today is another. Elders have a better understanding of their roles as not just administrative, but shepherds, looking after the spiritual lives of the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers. These and other changes have had a big impact on the church.

Maxine: Today we have more congregations with shepherds to help carry the load of congregational work. We worked mostly with new Christians in the early years, and this brought many challenges.

Evangelism has changed considerably through the years. Missions of several days were common and well supported by other congregations. Macquarie School of Biblical Studies getting started brought much enthusiasm and evangelising into the church. Door knocking and letterboxing usually involved the whole congregation and we held many classes on evangelism. We constantly had people into our home for meals followed by Bible studies and worked on a very personal basis to convert people. People are not really interested in the church until they see the church in action. Being hospitable and sharing your life with them is a good way to show that you care.

What have been some of the highlights of your ministry journey?

Maxine: The biggest highlight has been the feeling that we are doing God's will to the best of our abilities. Mostly it was a case of learn as you go and get on with the job. If we do

our best, God will do the rest. Many wonderful servants have supported our work through the years. God always provided through his saints and we have been richly blessed in amazing ways.

Also, for many years we had the opportunity to work with MSOBS, allowing us to share in the growth and lives of wonderful brothers and sisters. Through missions, camps, youth rallies, etc. we were able to travel to other congregations and to get to know, visit and stay with lovely Christians throughout Australia.

One of the most rewarding and intense works was the Marriage Awareness weekends we conducted with Doug and Eileen Taylor in Sydney and Brisbane during the 1980's. We worked closely with many dear Christians and some couples became Christians after being introduced to Christianity during these weekends.

Don: We feel thankfulness for having been here, experiencing what has happened in our lives and that God has been able to use us. Sitting back now, watching and listening to the graduates from MSOBS, to see their development and them taking on leadership roles in the church has been a real blessing. And of course, the salvation of souls is the greatest highlight.

What has challenged you the most?

Don: The biggest challenges have been time and energy. There were so many things we were involved in and could have been involved in and it was often difficult to determine when to say no. It has also been a constant challenge to balance family and church work.

Maxine: It is always a challenge for families to live away from loved ones. There has been the personal challenge of study, growth, balancing family and work, and doing things I had no idea I could do or would ever be called upon to do, but God gives you what you need when you need it. I panic; God provides.

How has working as a team assisted the work you have done?

Don: I don't believe we ever set out to work as a team. We were already a team in our marriage and that team aspect of marriage flowed through to every aspect of our lives.

Maxine: We each had an understanding of everything that was going on and its importance to our work and life. I have been able to free Don up to do what he did best: teach, preach and write. Don in turn supported me to accomplish what I needed to do. Each of us was willing to cover whatever needed to be done in order to do the overall work whether it was home or work related.

What advice would you give to Christians contemplating full time ministry?

Maxine: Pray. Purpose. Prepare. Perform. Praise God! (2Timothy1:7)

Don: Believe in God's promises, appreciate the working of God in your life and love people as God loves people, both Christian and non-Christian (Mark 12:30-31) Be all things to all people, that by all means you might save some (1 Corinthians 9:22). Have the mind and attitude which was in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5). ■



Don and Maxine Klingenberg are currently members of the Gosford Church of Christ. They were interviewed by Christine Payne.