

Church Matters

Keeping a link with the Sydney congregation



Living and Sharing the Gospel

May 2017

On May 27th, **Mark** and **Rod** will be flying to PNG. They will return on June 9th. A major focus will be the growing number of young people and children. At present, we believe we have 50 young people and 100 children.

PNG

For the full itinerary and goals for the visit, please contact **Robyn Pemberton**. Please pray that God's will be done and that mutually we rejoice together with our PNG family with what God is doing in Mt Wilhelm.

Liberia

Two projects have recently been received from our Liberian church through **Kalengule Kaoma** and **Jackson Flah**.

Over 3 weeks, a number of questions have been sent and answered over these projects. From all the communication, a proposal has been put together to be sent to our Head Office for approval.

The first project involves 6 acres of land in a prime area that has been donated to the church under tribal law. With the modernisation of Liberia it needs to be surveyed and registered. This will cost about AUD \$10,000. This land is in an ideal location and investors, churches and organisations are demanding land highly along the road it is on. So to make sure it is not lost this needs to be done soon.

The next project is the building of a school with a seven-classroom block, with three toilet rooms.

Grace Communion Institute is an institute established for the purpose of providing quality and affordable education for the church and the society through Christian doctrine.

The reason for proposing this school facility is that they have been operating in the church building since the establishment of the school, but recently the Ministry of Education summoned them and said this year is the last academic year for operating in the church building. They plan to double the present student population over the next 12 months.

The estimated costs is about AUD \$10,000. This is low because of volunteer labour in the building process.

Clear boundaries and relationships have been drawn up so that, at present, this is our commitment if approved. If, in the future, we are in a position to help with plans for a health clinic and youth camp, we will review the situation and see how it fits into our budget and other priorities.

We believe that through the generosity of people, already we can afford these two proposals. It is a privilege to share the hopes and dreams of our brothers and sisters in Liberia, still recovering from a devastating civil war.



Life Clubs

Geoff Sole

African Update

Regarding Buduburam, I have been invited to go to the Ghanaian National Conference in August and plan to help launch Life Clubs in Ghana then. I'm currently working on a Ghanaian Life Club manual with **Emmanuel Okai**. (I'm also currently working on draft Zimbabwean and Zambian manuals as well.)

I have a draft PNG Life Club manual on my desktop which I can do some more work on, if requested.

The Lilongwe (capital of Malawi) congregation had their first Life Club two days ago.

Mark and Rod will be introducing Life Clubs using the Malawi edition on their next trip to PNG. Feedback from the young people will help Geoff in producing a PNG-friendly edition of the manual.

Buduburam

\$3,300 has been sent in April to Buduburam for the educational needs of the church community.

Pentecost

At our normal Sydney venue, we will be holding a Pentecost service on Sunday June 4th. It will start at 2.30pm.

The service will be Skyped.

As a youngster, I felt that I would like to be a teacher but things did not pan out that way. I always planned to go back to school at some stage and further my education but life got in the way.

I have held various jobs throughout my life, including working as a telephonist at Wollongong Telephone Exchange. This was in the days before we could make long distance phone calls from home. I was one of the young ladies saying 'number please?' before then connecting you to a long distance number in Sydney or elsewhere.

After many years of child rearing I decided that as I had always wanted to teach, when the twins started school, off I went to the University of Wollongong.

I wondered how it would all work out, but my sister always said to me, 'how hard could it be?' Well, sometimes it was quite hard, writing essays on the kitchen table, the twins running around in the midst of everything.

Permanent positions were hard to find for teachers in the Illawarra district and as I couldn't travel far because of family commitments, I worked as a casual teacher in many different high schools in the Wollongong area. This was sometimes extremely stressful and taught me to rely on God's Holy Spirit, just to get through the day.

When the twins were older I was able to accept a permanent appointment in the Campbelltown area.

This was a steep learning curve again as I not only had to travel more than an hour each way, I had to establish myself in a new position.

A few years later, I was able to transfer to Kiama High School on the South Coast. This was at a time when transfers within the department were hard to obtain. Quite a few of my colleagues thought it was a 'miracle' that I was transferred there. Little did they know how right they were. I remained at Kiama High School until last year.

I loved teaching English and I especially enjoyed teaching poetry. The background to much of our English literature is steeped in biblical references and allusions and I was able to explain this in detail to students.

Many English teachers would arrive at their senior English class, Bible in hand, ready to explain the background to the texts. Some of these teachers were professed atheists! It always seemed to me that God was having a secret joke as the teachers felt compelled to study the origins of the texts.

Some teachers asked me to explain some of this background to their students. I loved to do this, of course. Senior students too, often asked questions about the Bible when they realised I was a Christian.

It was always a fine line to walk, between being who I am and yet not offending others. Teaching seems to be a rather anti-Christian profession, at least in this country. My colleagues, however, seemed to respect me and my sometimes unpopular views.

Although I have only taught for about 20 years, I feel that God has given me many opportunities and He has allowed me to play a small part in shaping Australians of the future.

A sample of an anti-war poem by **Wilfred Owen** that was set for study for the Higher School Certificate:

The Parable of The Old Man and The Young

So Abram rose, and clave the wood, and went,
And took the fire with him, and the knife,
And as they sojourned both of them together,
Isaac the first-born spake and said, My Father,
Behold the preparations, fire and iron,
But where the lamb for this burnt-offering?
Then Abram bound the youth with belts and straps,
And builded parapets and trenches there,

And stretch'd forth the knife to slay his son,
When lo! an Angel called him out of heaven,
Saying, Lay not thy hand upon the lad,
Neither do anything to him, thy son.
Behold! Caught in a thicket by its horns,
A Ram. Offer the Ram of Pride instead.

But the old man would not so, but slew his son,
And half the seed of Europe, one by one.

This was probably my favourite poem to teach!

Editor's Note: We thank you, Jan, for your service to the young people you taught.

Strategic Plans and Budgets

In the next few weeks the strategic plans and budgets for 2017-8 will be discussed in each congregation.

Some Thoughts on Retirement

by Jan D'Amico



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Thank to Stevie Jackson (See Exodus 16)
DUDE, THAT'S NOT MANNA