

CONNECT

BST | BRISBANE
SCHOOL OF
THEOLOGY

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HIDDEN IDOLS

PAUL VANDERSEE, BST ALUMNUS

For most of my life, I was seen as a 'good boy' and so naturally, I thought I was. I didn't go 'off the rails' like some teenagers might, and always went to church and youth group.

As an adult, I was accepted and respected in my jobs. So I thought that I was okay, that is, until God revealed that my heart was black.

I was 35 when I started studying at BST, already married with three young children, and employed as the Youth and Children's Pastor at Bellbowrie Community Church. I wanted to study at Bible college to grow deeper in my knowledge of God. While I had the enthusiasm to start studies, I found out soon enough the challenges of balancing study with family life and four days of church work. So much of me wanted to give 100% to everything I was doing, but the reality was a different story.

I had to learn that I had limits and so I reluctantly lowered my self-expectations to get some balance in my life. I realised that it was okay to not get high distinctions like some other students. Instead, I decided that if I was challenged by a class or an assignment, even if I ended up with a credit or a pass, that was good enough for me. It's easy to idolise the pursuit of high grades in an academic setting, but when you're studying God's word, the academic side is secondary to how God is forming and shaping your character as you wrestle with his word and grow as a Christian.

Because I was so busy, I sometimes felt I missed important moments while my children were growing up. My wife, Sarah, tried to keep me accountable to all this. It can be easy for pastors to forget to 'switch off'. I really valued my wife's constant reminder that when I was at home, it was okay to just be a husband and father, and not be working all the time. Family life was important to my wellbeing.

Indirectly, I think a combination of studying at Bible college, juggling family responsibilities and working led to God's way of showing me some of the hidden idols with which I had to wrestle—it was a hard but humbling time. Before I started studying at BST, I had no real concept of idolatry or what it means to be truly human made in the image of God. What

I mean by this is to live for what is true and not live for idols which we allow to have power over us. God revealed that there were idols in my life. Even though for so long I thought I was a 'good boy'. Now that my studies are over and having been through this process, I understand how important it is to humble ourselves and pay attention when God is showing us

these stumbling blocks which prevent us from growing in him. Once we know what the idols are, we can then seek the truth and surrender them to God—to be transformed as we live and think differently.

Romans 12:1-2 (NIV) says:

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."



YOU CAN HELP

BST's Centre for Asian Christianity equips students like Anita for cross-cultural ministry here in Australia and overseas.

Please visit bst.qld.edu.au/donate to give to the Centre today.





SHARING IN THE **BLESSINGS** OF THE GOSPEL
REV DR RICHARD GIBSON, BST PRINCIPAL

"I have become all things to all people, so that I may by all means save some."

(1 Corinthians 9:22)

I remember struggling with these words as a young Christian. I thought it was important to be 'true to myself,' to maintain a personal authenticity in terms of my own culture, my own preferences and my own personality. Paul's flexibility scandalized me.

Since then I have learnt a lot about what drove Paul to this lifestyle. He wanted people to know Jesus. He wanted to speak in a language they understood. He didn't want his own preferences to get in the way. He was willing to give up his rights and curtail his freedom if it meant people would be more inclined to listen to his message.

Paul explains, "Now, I do all this because of the gospel..."

I now have the words to make sense of Paul's flexibility. It was love for people leading him to contextualise his life and his message; to find ways to communicate the timeless message of God's grace in Christ to people from a different language group, a different culture, a different social class, a different suburb of Brisbane.



Please pray for our students as we seek to foster this kind of loving commitment to contextualisation of the eternal gospel of Jesus. Whether they are preparing to serve God in Thailand or Taringa, Singapore or Sunnybank, Cambodia or Cairns, we long to produce graduates, who like Paul, use their freedom to "make themselves slaves to all, in order to win more people" (1 Cor 9:19).

Paul further explains his motivation: "that I may share in the gospel's blessings." The gospel brings us grace, life and freedom. But it mustn't stop there. The gospel was entrusted to us to share; to communicate to our family, neighbours, friends, workmates and our distant neighbours. We are thankful to God for the way you support BST as we seek to be faithful to this task.

If you would like to invite Richard or other BST faculty to guest speak at your church or event, please contact info@bst.qld.edu.au or phone (07) 3870

Pray With Us

We're conscious of our dependence on the Lord and the need to humble ourselves to pray. Would you join us in praying for these college needs?

- Pray for our students as they are part way through the semester and completing assessment items. Ask God to give them strength and encouragement as they balance studies and other commitments.
- Pray for our upcoming Master of Arts intensive with Mike Raiter who will be teaching Preaching Biblical Genres.
- Pray for our Open Night on Wednesday, 11 October. It's our opportunity to connect with Christians who have a desire to know God's word and be equipped to serve him.
- Pray for our students who are on field placement with various churches and ministries. Pray also for those who are preparing for short-term cross-cultural field placements at the end of the year.

H I D D E N
I D O L S

PAUL VANDERSEE, BST ALUMNUS



[CONTINUED]

Bible college was absolutely essential as I pursued full-time ministry. To anyone in a similar situation to me, think carefully about how to manage your first priority. Whether that's a partner or family or both. Study had the potential to be a massive imposition. If you're not able to manage your first priority now, don't study until you've got that sorted. Talk to someone you trust and always, always seek God through prayer and through his word.

Someone I was able to learn and grow from was my lecturer Dr Alan Stanley. He started out just as a lecturer to me, but over the last few years, he became a friend and mentor with whom I could talk to one-on-one outside the church. Rev Dr Andrew Prince also helped guide me through my challenging seven

years of study. He has been very patient and encouraging. Studying in an environment which is so community and people-focused made it a lot easier than it could have been if I didn't have that same support network.

I don't know what God has planned for me next. As a family, we have been looking at the options of whether there's a role for us to serve overseas. If we do anything like that, it will be a major step of faith. For me, I know that already makes me slightly nervous because it will mean giving up more idols: comfort, routine, home and a community I love. Wherever God will lead us to serve, I'm sure that he will be working on my heart, doing everything for my good, so that I can worship him with my life in a way that is pleasing to him.

Sharing The Good News

I N E A S T A S I A

OUR DESIRE FOR STUDENTS IS TO KNOW GOD'S WORD AND TAKE IT TO THE WORLD.

In the lecture rooms and through our mentoring and training program, we help students as they grapple with theology, learn how to read the Bible and apply it, and gain practical ministry skills. When it comes to the second part of our vision, "take it to the world", we rely on partnerships with leaders in churches and Christian organisations to give our students exposure to a variety of opportunities to consider as they work out how they can best serve God with their gifts and skills. One of the Christian leaders we have come to know and work closely with is Mark Chapman, the Ministry Leader for OMF's mobilisation work in Queensland and Northern Territory. We caught up with Mark to find out a little more about his ministry and his ongoing role in preparing BST students for cross-cultural service.

What do you do for OMF?

In my current role, I work closely with colleges like BST, churches and individuals as they engage in God's mission, particularly among East Asia's peoples. This includes creating awareness of the needs, the opportunities and challenges

which exist in East Asia. Some of my time is given to training, equipping and mentoring those preparing to go into cross-cultural mission. There is also a pastoral care component to my role as part of our member care ministry to missionaries returning to Australia for a period of Home Assignment or re-entering back into life here.

My wife and I served with OMF in the Philippines for 20 years in a variety of roles. We chose OMF for several reasons but the main things which stood out to us include OMF's commitment to contextualisation, appropriate lifestyle and non-solicitation for finance. OMF's mission to "share the good news of Jesus Christ in all its fullness with East Asia's peoples to the glory of God" still resonates deeply with us today.

We returned to Australia for a term of service in June 2014 and are passionate to help mobilise a new generation of cross-cultural workers. We have also commenced a monthly missions discussion and mentoring group for young adults where we explore inter-cultural issues at a deeper level. Intentionally seeking out young people in

whom God is stirring up an awareness of mission at various churches, conferences, camps and high schools has also been a key aspect in this effort.

How do you maintain regular contact with people at BST?

When we returned from the Philippines in 2014, my wife also began postgraduate studies at BST so we both got to know students very well on campus. Being part of the life at BST has been a key aspect in getting alongside those who have stepped out and are seeking God's direction. Participating in college camps, mission days, Ministry Awareness Program and active involvement on the Board of Reference for the Centre for Asian Christianity, have all helped to shape and inform my ministry focus.

How many BST students are currently applying to serve with OMF?

There are two couples, and two individuals who are now appointees with OMF. This means that they have gone through the candidate procedure and are now in the next stage of partnership development in order to be sent out fully supported.

In addition to this, we have two individuals preparing to go on a short-term trip later this year. Both of whom are preparing for long-term mission engagement. Also, we have two BST faculty members who are appointees with OMF and will be heading out mid next year for long-term service.

What are some of the immediate needs for OMF?

Everywhere we look in the areas where OMF works, there are immediate/urgent needs, but for us, it's more important for people to seek out God's leading and guiding to a particular country or ministry rather than just filling an urgent need. When the difficulties, challenges and opposition come, then we go back to that affirmation of God's leading in the first place which enables us to press on. Having said that, we are longing to see more workers raised up for the countries where the teams are small and the opportunities are great. This includes places like Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and several predominantly Muslim areas in East Asia. To see many of the opportunities available within OMF check out our website:

<https://opportunities.omf.org/opportunities-search>



Please e-mail communications@bst.qld.edu.au to subscribe to our e-news or to update your details.



Your gifts

— IN ACTION! —

Thank you to everyone who so generously donated to our 2017 Library Appeal. Thanks to your support we received an incredible \$19,000 in gifts, which will provide hundreds of new resources for our library and allow us to increase our library assistant Buffy's hours by an extra day a week until the end of the year!

We are blessed to have such a faithful and committed BST family.

Thank you!



Recently I have been reading, and meditating and praying from, Isaiah 24-27, sometimes called Isaiah’s “Apocalypse.” While there is little that is fully apocalyptic about these chapters, they are certainly eschatological, describing worldwide divine judgment and salvation at the end of history. By God’s Spirit Isaiah provides for his own people a vision of the future that will enable them, if they desire, to walk in God’s ways through the troublesome times in which they are living—with ungodly living, social injustice, and the advance from the north of the powerful Assyrian empire.

Isaiah’s vision focusses on two cities: the city that God will devastate (Isa 24: 10, 25:2, 12; 26:5; 27:10), and the city that he will establish—Mount Zion (24:23; 25:6-7, 10; 27:13), Jerusalem (24:23; 27:13). The

former city is what people have established apart from God, a culture where they have “transgressed [his] laws, violated [his] statutes, broken the everlasting covenant” (24:5). This city will be condemned by God; it has no future. God’s city is established by him, a “strong city” (26:1) where he reigns (24:23) and where he “will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples” (25:6), where he “will swallow up death for all time” (25:8), where his people will live (26:1-4) and worship him (25:9; 27:13).

I have been deeply challenged by Isaiah’s vision. Do I “see” the two cities? And what city am I living for? Will I be enticed by the city without God, and live for what it offers me?

To read John Coulson’s full article, visit bst.qld.edu.au/twocities.

EVENINGS

PREACHING BIBLICAL GENRES (MASTER OF ARTS INTENSIVE)

MONDAY TO FRIDAY
28 AUGUST-1 SEPTEMBER 2017
8.30 AM-3 PM DAILY

This unit will explore the different literary genres in scripture (e.g., narrative, wisdom, prophecy) and how to appropriately interpret them. Students will also learn how to preach different biblical genres to a modern audience taking into account worldview and culture.

Rev Mike Raiter

OPEN NIGHT

WEDNESDAY
11 OCTOBER 2017
6 PM FOR A GUIDED TOUR
6.30 PM START FOR LECTURES
7.40 PM FOR SUPPER, FOLLOWED BY AN INFORMATION SESSION

If you or someone you know is interested in growing deeper in their knowledge of the Bible, or has a keen desire to be prepared for ministry or cross-cultural work, come along to our Open Night and find out about the courses on offer and get a taste of a lecture taught in English or Mandarin.

Dr Alan Stanley, Biblical Theology and Interpretation lecturer; Dr Wally Wang, Chinese program lecturer

END OF YEAR DINNER

WEDNESDAY
8 NOVEMBER 2017
6 PM FOR 6.30 PM START
TOOWONG BOWLS CLUB

Celebrate the end of the academic year with us as we share the highlights from 2017 and give thanks to what God has done in and through our college community this year.

Students and faculty