

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

RELATING TO THE WORLD AROUND US **PAGE 2**MISSION EXPOSURE HIGHLIGHTS **PAGE 3**HOW CAN WE BE SURE GOD LOVES US? **PAGE 4**REACHING
THE MILITARY
FOR CHRIST

Ken Matthews

More than twenty years ago I was an optical mechanic, shaping and grinding parts for prescription lenses, making sure customers were fitted with the right spectacles. Today I am the Chief Commissioner for Everyman's Welfare Service, leading our representatives who offer support to the Australian Defence Force in bases throughout Australia and on overseas deployment.

The transition between these roles seems like a giant leap, one that I never imagined. It took a Bachelor of Ministries degree in between to prepare me for full-time ministry. For as long as I can remember, the desire to serve God in some way was there. When I started my Bachelor of Ministries at BST in 1996, I had no idea what I wanted to do or where I was to serve, I just knew that I had to be prepared. Part-way through my degree I had been questioning God as to what was next. Honestly, by that stage, I was cranky with God and felt discouraged because I had no clear answer about what I was supposed to be



doing. Through BST's Ministry Awareness Program (MAP) I was introduced to a number of mission organisations and ministries, but I didn't think that any of it was for me.

After grumbling and searching for answers, I sensed the Lord say this: "Ken, I want you to be prepared to walk out of Bible college without anything. Trust in me." The sensible part of me thought "fair enough" but it was a real challenge to get my head around it. A few weeks passed by and I was once again in MAP, listening to a guest speaker from Everyman's. During his talk, I felt the Lord say: "This is the one for you."

That prompting led me to apply with Everyman's while I was in my final year at BST and in 1999 I started training at Kapooka, serving the army recruits and staff at the base. I was thrown in the deep end for the first twelve months, learning the ropes of the ministry and also participating in some of the military training.

When I graduated from BST in 1998, our family (my wife and two small children) had very little funding support. I studied full-time at BST so I was unemployed for a couple of years which meant that we didn't have savings. We were completely reliant on God to provide for us as I stepped out in faith to serve with Everyman's.

I remember in that first six months my then Chief Commissioner prayed for me to get more funding

support. Two weeks after he prayed there was an influx of people who wrote in with a desire to give to the person with the lowest support at Everyman's. Since then our family has been well supported and has not lacked in any way. God has been faithful in generously providing for us.

In my role as Chief Commissioner of Everyman's my responsibility is to assess and train our representatives, provide administrative leadership and spiritual direction for the organisation, liaise with leadership in the Australian Defence Force, as well as offer pastoral care for our teams in the field. Training new Everyman's recruits involves a twelve-month probationary period where they learn about the military systems including the ranks structure, work in the recreational centres on the military bases, and travel to various locations with the Everyman's Brew Trucks that are equipped with hot and cold drinks, biscuits and reading material.

Our recreational centres, provided free of charge to service personnel, have amenities such as computer games, pool tables, and board games. We created a space that offers them a "home away from home" where they can relax with mates or find the sympathetic ear of an Everyman's representative. The Brew Trucks and recreational centres provide great opportunities for Everyman's to connect and build relationships with service personnel. As they get to know us, we often find that we are people they come to in times of personal struggle or when they have questions about life and spirituality, or simply want to have a chat.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

BUILDING A CULTURE OF BOLDNESS:
AMBASSADORS MORE THAN WARRIORS

Join us for BST's annual missions conference
with keynote speaker Dr Darrell Bock – Saturday 23 July 2016

RELATING TO THE WORLD AROUND US



Rev Dr Richard Gibson, BST Principal

Christians have always had an ambivalence towards the world around them. We know this world is "passing away," that it throws up temptations to lure us away from Jesus, and Jesus made himself very clear to his followers: "the world will hate you." Yet, this is the world Jesus made. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son."

The theme of the Christian's relationship to the world will be a theme at BST over the next few months. Two eminent New Testament scholars from the US will help us explore the complexity of our relationship to the world around us.

Tom Schreiner's one-day conference on Monday, 30 May focused on 1 Peter. It is a letter written to believers who were being marginalised, mocked and maligned because of their faith in Jesus. Yet Peter urges them to keep on engaging with

their neighbours so they could see the good lives produced by that faith. He urged them to be ready to explain their hope, the motivation for their distinctive lifestyle.

At our missions conference on Saturday, 23 July – **Building a culture of boldness** – we will be reflecting on the opposition and hostility experienced by Christians in Western culture. Darrell Bock from Dallas Theological Seminary will be urging us to be bold in speaking up for Christ, but in a manner marked by gentleness, respect and grace.

It is tempting when we feel embattled and our values challenged to respond with defensiveness, aggression and judgment. We need to remember the way the apostles of Christ engaged with those who opposed them. More importantly, we need to recall the way Jesus loved us, when we

followed the ways of the world. It was his love and kindness that allowed us to exchange our membership in the world for adoption into his family.

No-one ever experienced the complexity of this relationship with the world more powerfully than Jesus. He came to the world he made, was rejected and executed. But in the process he gathered together people out of the world to belong to him. Then and now, he calls them to show the same kind of sacrificial love to the world around them so that people might make their way out of the darkness of this world into the light of his love.

We need to remember the way the apostles of Christ engaged with those who opposed them

If you would like to invite Richard or other faculty to guest speak at your church or special event please email info@bst.qld.edu.au or contact us on: **(07) 3870 8355**.

REACHING THE MILITARY FOR CHRIST (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)



I was deployed in Timor with a unit in early 2000 and one night a young mechanic knocked on my tent asking for a chocolate bar. He sat and chatted with me for a time and I had the privilege of sharing the gospel with him. He thought long and hard about it, but he went away not too sure if it was for him. The Lord encouraged me that it was not time wasted. A lot of what we do is sowing seeds. We are meeting people who haven't

A lot of what we do is sowing seeds

even thought about whether they want God, but those small windows of opportunity to share the gospel is a real privilege.

Our life in the ministry hasn't been without challenges. I was moved to various bases which meant that I had to uproot my family a number of times from their friends and their schools. That was especially difficult for my children when they were teenagers. More recently,

my wife was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer that is incurable. She will need to have surgeries and chemo baths, potentially for the rest of her life.

As we have trusted in God in every aspect of our life and ministry, especially through the challenging times, we continue to look to him for our strength and our hope. There's nothing more that I desire than to know that I am walking for the Lord, and that my serving him is not just for now but also for eternity.

To find out more about Everyman's Welfare Service or to donate to the ministry, visit everymans.org.au or contact (02) 6055 2988.



EVERYMAN'S WELFARE SERVICE
Serving the Australian Defence Force



MISSION EXPOSURE HIGHLIGHTS

Phil - Bachelor of Ministry student

I was deeply impacted by the work of Christian missionaries to East Asia who are involved in ministering to victims of human trafficking, particularly women caught up in prostitution, and children being trafficked for their organs and sometimes mutilated and forced to beg on the streets. I was humbled by these Christians who are very qualified and could get good jobs anywhere in the world, but they have chosen to give it all up and risk their lives to reach victims of human trafficking, for Christ. Another aspect of our mission exposure that made an impression on me was experiencing the rural areas, seeing people live in third world conditions with basic resources and some not having access to running water and electricity. I have witnessed poverty and deplorable living conditions on visits to other countries in the past, but I was very touched by the challenges that faced missionaries working in this particular area of East Asia.

Nick - Diploma of Ministry student

The East Asia trip was a great experience for me. My eyes were opened to the many challenges that people faced living in a developing country and made me appreciate that we have it so much easier in the West. Visiting Christians in the rural areas was a highlight as I felt encouraged by their attitude despite some of the hardships they have endured. The mission exposure gave me the opportunity to bond with my fellow students, hear more of their testimonies, and enjoy a few laughs on some of the scarier stretches of road as we ventured out into the countryside.

Meagan - Master of Divinity student

While there are many highlights that I could list from our team's visit to East Asia, what I particularly appreciated was witnessing the church being involved in community development and outreach. We heard many gut-wrenching stories about the struggles of people living with deep brokenness and witnessed the church responding to these needs in beautiful and life-impacting ways. We also got to meet Christian expatriates providing pastoral care training and counselling to nationals and other expatriates. They are equipping and empowering other Christians to work with vulnerable people groups; recognising the great need for pastoral care not only for those who are vulnerable in the community but also people serving in ministry in East Asia.



Daniel - Bachelor of Ministry student

Going on the mission exposure at North Pine Baptist Church was an all-round great experience where I had the opportunity to preach on 1 John 2:1-11 during one of their services, share my testimony at a men's breakfast, visit some of the church families, join the home groups, and to help out with the youth group on a Friday night where I was able to give a short devotion for the kids. Not only did I feel welcomed and loved by the church, but by the whole BST team as well. The highlight of my week was simply spending time listening, talking, working as a team and forming stronger friendships with various students and faculty from BST and North Pine.

Isaac - Master of Divinity student

Our team had the great pleasure of serving with CPEC (Coopers Plains Evangelical Church) in their many ministries and getting to know their church leaders. It was a highlight to see the spiritual maturity of their youth which challenged me about my walk with Christ. We also helped out with English conversation classes where we met people from different cultural backgrounds. On a separate occasion I was moved after hearing the testimony of an Afghan refugee and his struggles in coming to Australia. It helped me to appreciate what a privilege it is to live in Australia and how easily we can take that for granted.

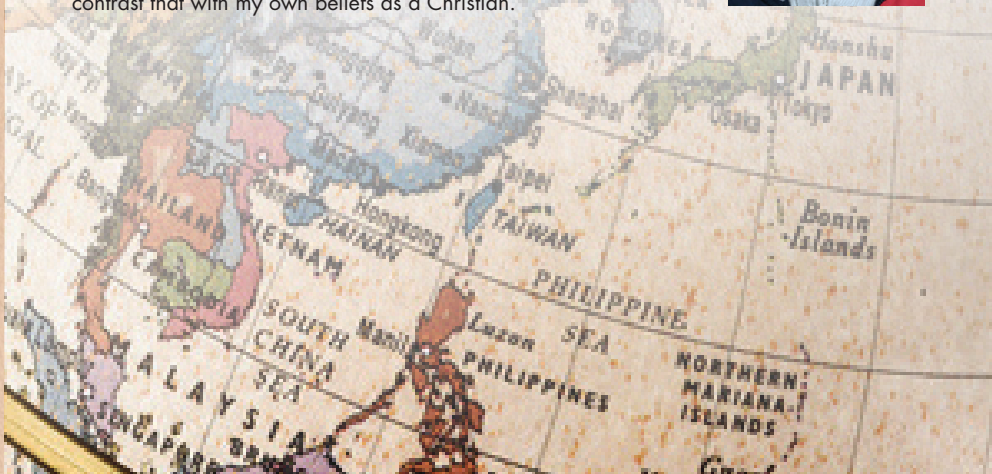


Karen - Master of Divinity student

It was such a privilege to work alongside Warialda Anglican Church and share in the vision for God's work in their town. It was a full week to say the least, church services, nursing home visits, vacation care, home groups, community service, a pop-up shop in the middle of town, women's and men's nights, a bush dance and a family fun day. Each yielded its own obstacles and fruit. It was pretty special to come as strangers and leave as brothers and sisters, sharing our stories and the challenges and joys we experienced during the week. Warialda, you'll be in our prayers.

Chris - Diploma of Ministry student

Mission exposure week at Coopers Plains Evangelical Church was a good opportunity to see the structure and the ministries of a church other than my own church. I loved getting to know my fellow students better as we prayed, worshipped, ate together and looked out for each other as we served. I also learned a lot from visiting a Sikh temple, hearing about their belief and theology, and being able to contrast that with my own beliefs as a Christian.



HOW CAN WE BE SURE GOD LOVES US?

I am reading a book on how to love your children. It points out that even though parents may tell their children regularly that they love them unconditionally, this does not necessarily translate into children feeling loved, according to research and the experience of counsellors working with children. As a parent who often tells my kids I love them this has always bothered me. I want my children to feel loved when I say, "I love you." How could they feel otherwise? Then I stumbled on the answer. I was working on my computer and my son Jackson came alongside to talk. I engaged him in conversation but all the while continuing to look straight ahead at the computer. Then it hit me. I mean really hit me, like a bolt of lightning straight

to the heart. I felt like I had discovered one of life's most perplexing questions. You see, from my point of view, I was doing what most men are incapable of doing. I was multitasking: working and conversing. But think of Jackson looking at the side of my head. Whether I intended it or not he was hearing: "I love my work more than you." That's how children can grow up being told that they are unconditionally loved and yet not believe or feel it. This got me thinking about God. I know God loves me. But honestly, all too often I feel like I know this truth better intellectually than experientially. That's a problem for more reasons than I have time to explain here. But here's one: we can never experience God's presence, life, and power unless

we first grasp his love for us in Christ in an experiential way (Ephesians 3:18-19).

So why is it that God's love for us often seems to be something we know better in our minds than in our hearts? Is there something to be learned from my experience with Jackson? At first the answer would appear to be an unequivocal no. If my children feel unloved because I have failed them in some way, then it's my fault. But if we feel like God does not love us, surely God is not to blame.



Visit bst.qld.edu.au/blog to read more of Dr Alan Stanley's blog.

EVENTS

Building a culture of boldness: ambassadors more than warriors BST's annual missions conference

**Saturday
23 July 2016
9am - 4pm**

Our desire is to foster a culture of boldness in the face of militant Islam, aggressive secularism, rampant materialism, and sheer apathy. At a time when there are many reasons to keep our mouths shut, we want to encourage Christians to reflect on all the reasons they have to speak, and speak boldly.

- Darrell Bock (DTS), Wendy Francis (ACL), Mark & Susan Chapman (OMF), Glenn Hohnberg and Scott Pasley (City Bible Forum), Steve House (Anglicare), CMS, Student Life

Jesus According to the Gospels (MA Intensive)

**Monday - Friday
25 - 29 July 2016
8.30am - 3pm**

Study the life of Christ as described in the Synoptic Gospels and John, and gain a deeper appreciation of Jesus' ministry.
- Darrell Bock

Theological Anthropology (MA intensive)

**Monday - Friday
15 - 19 August 2016
8.30am - 3pm**

What makes us human? What makes a fulfilled and complete human life? What is our destiny? Answering these questions lead us into some of the most interesting and contested debates of the past century. The Bible's perspective has been openly challenged and in many places, simply eclipsed.
- Michael Jensen

Open Night

**Wednesday
5 October 2016
6.30pm - 8.45pm**

Curious whether Bible college is the right next step? Come along to this event and meet our faculty and staff. Sit in on a lecture, enjoy complimentary supper and hear more about our study program.
- Alan Stanley, Jason Atkinson

Visit bst.qld.edu.au/events for more information on upcoming events or contact us on **(07) 3870 8355**.

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