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PRISON MINISTRY WAS NOT FOR ME

Jesse Caulfield



If you told me 11 years ago that I'd be doing what I am doing now in prison ministry, I would have tried to flee like Jonah. I wrestled for months with God before talking to someone about the

possibility of getting involved in full-time prison chaplaincy. But looking back now, I am so thankful that God continued to nudge me out of my comfort zone.

Originally from Gympie, I grew up in a Christian family, but when I moved to Brisbane to do my Bachelor in IT, I was at odds with my faith and none of it really meant anything to me. That is until a friend from university, who was attending a Salvation Army Church, invited me to help out with IT support for their youth games night. I stuck around for the Sunday service the next morning and I honestly thought that my friend had set me up. During the service, I felt that the pastor was talking directly to me and pointing out things that were relevant for my life. Hearing Romans 5:8 spurred my faith in Jesus.

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

In 2006, I started part-time study at BST when an opportunity came up at the Salvation Army for a full-time prison chaplain. I really didn't think it was for me. That is until God challenged my heart. I was in an Old Testament class with John Coulson who was teaching on Jeremiah 1 and how Jeremiah had come up with multiple excuses not to go to the nations. Later that same week, at a Salvation Army youth convention, the guest speaker's main talk was on Jeremiah 1. Then, at the church service the next day, our pastor preached on Jeremiah 1! While I tried to resist God's call, by faith I knew he wanted me to do prison chaplaincy. So I spoke to my pastor after the service and they prayed for me.

I started full-time prison chaplaincy later that year and was immersed in prison training and began ministering to people I never imagined meeting as an IT graduate. My first day was really daunting. Prisons are run with the strictest security controls. Upon entering, I could feel the eyes of everyone on me. A jail facility is like a microcosm with services like TAFE, Queensland Health, and lawyers coming in for various reasons, so a prison chaplain has to work around that. We may spend up to five hours in contact with prisoners on any given day, visiting their accommodation areas supervised by the guards. There are many young guys I met who had problems with drugs and a lack of solid parenting growing up. While I had a good upbringing, I resonated with some of their struggles and recognised how much we all need God's grace.

One of the humbling aspects of prison chaplaincy is that you're meeting with people who are at the lowest point in their lives and often don't have anyone visiting them. Some have said to me, "My mates don't see me often like you guys do. And they're the reason I am here!" This opens up opportunities for rich conversations about why we do what we do. Most in the prisons struggle with the concept of God's grace as they don't see themselves as worthy. They are racked with guilt and shame and don't know how God would forgive them or reconcile what they have done in their past. These moments of vulnerability enable us to share what the Bible has to say. Often times we see change and growth that no one else knows about because we can't share it with the public.

As I started to feel like I was getting the hang of prison chaplaincy, God challenged me yet again in 2011. I was in my last year of a Master of Divinity, enrolled in a Field Education Unit when my lecturer Andrew Prince connected me with John Walker, Director of Inside Out Chaplaincy. John's role as my supervisor got me thinking about other aspects of my ministry. At the end of the six months of mentoring and supervision with John, he told me that he was retiring and that I should consider applying to take over from him. In my mind, I thought, "Who am I, God, to be doing this?" It meant that I would transition from visiting prisons to liaising with the Director General and supplying chaplaincy contracts for all prisons throughout Queensland.

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THEOLOGY OF FAITH AND WORKS



BST is excited to welcome Dr Brad Green who will teach a Master of Arts intensive on Theology of Faith and Works, 13-17 February 2017. The intensive will help students to understand and articulate the biblical teaching on works, obedience, and faithfulness in relation to the overarching biblical teaching on salvation, and to understand how these central issues apply in a ministry context. Eligible students can enrol in the subject for credit as part of an MA or a seminar unit for the MDiv, GradDip or degree courses. Christians not enrolled in a course can simply audit for \$295 and

sit in on lectures for the entire week. Dr Green teaches theology at Union University in Jackson, Tennessee. He earned his MDiv at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, his ThM at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and a PhD at Baylor University.

To find out more about our upcoming MA units, visit bst.qld.edu.au/events or contact (07) 3870 8355.

WITH CHRIST AT THE CENTRE



If you've been keeping up with Brisbane School of Theology recently,

you'll have heard a lot of talk about our new **Centre for Asian Christianity**. The vision for the Centre is simple but powerful; a place where people can come together to study, experience and share the beauty of Asian culture and learn how to minister to Asian communities, both overseas and right here in Australia.

Of course, there's a whole lot of work that needs to go into making this vision a reality: we need books and resources; we need to update and enlarge our current curriculum and create new courses of study; we need to develop and expand our faculty, and eventually even create a new space for students and educators to gather, learn and exchange ideas. "We're very excited

to see what God will do," says Rev Dr Andrew Prince, Director for the Centre. "It's a big vision, and it is only possible because we have a very big God." Since the Centre was officially launched on July 23, Andrew and the team have been hard at work, and are in the process of developing a new subject - **Contextual Asian Mission** - which should begin in Semester 2 of 2017. The team is also working hard to incorporate a deeper understanding of Asian culture into the existing BST curriculum.

Andrew is delighted with how students, staff and supporters have already embraced the vision of the Centre. "It's been really exciting," Andrew says. "We had more than 20 men and women join us for our first 'Walking the Journey' dinner - it's for those who are seriously contemplating cross-cultural service.

And people have already been giving generously towards the Centre, helping to meet the \$50,000 operational costs we will need for 2017." Right now, the Centre is organising a BST mission to Japan from March 18 - April 1, in conjunction with Pioneers. The team will be involved in language and culture learning, church planting, university ministry and theological education. Due to the higher costs in Japan, the Centre would like to reduce the burden of the costs to students by subsidising some of the costs.

If you would like to support this mission, we welcome your prayers and encouragement. Of course, you are also welcome to contribute financially to the Centre by donating online at bst.qld.edu.au/centre or if you received our recent letter, use the tear-off slip. Thank you for your continued support!

BST DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Last month, Phil Peterson joined BST as our new Development Officer working in the office part-time. Phil grew up in the highlands of Papua New Guinea where his parents were serving as missionaries before returning to Australia in 1995. He loves to read and has a passion for writing which prompted him to complete a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Writing Production at QUT.

He then went on to work for Scripture Union Qld as their Media & Communications Manager. Phil has since branched out further into the not-for-profit world, taking on several

roles in the fundraising and communications space, as well as pursuing his own freelance endeavours, working on behalf of Christian charities to help create successful appeals and fundraising campaigns.

Phil loves to help equip and resource organisations for ministry, and is excited to help raise awareness and support (both prayerful and financial) for BST.



He and his wife, Monique, have an energetic young son who runs them both ragged. Now that Phil has finished his Diploma of Graphic Design, he is rediscovering the concept of 'free time', which he mostly spends with family and friends, watching movies, playing board games or dancing to The Wiggles with his little boy.

If you would like to contact Phil about prayer and financial support for BST, email ppeterson@bst.qld.edu.au or contact **(07) 3870 8355**.

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PRISON MINISTRY WAS NOT FOR ME

I felt so underqualified to be taking on a management role while I was so young and still at Bible college. But, in God's gracious way, he used other people to prompt me on separate occasions. I was convinced that this is what God wanted me to do next, so by faith, I applied for the job and was appointed to the role in 2011.

Inside Out Prison Chaplaincy is now a ministry arm of Carinity. I am seconded to the State Chaplaincy Board and serve as their chairperson overseeing the entity on behalf of all churches in Queensland, supplying chaplains to 16 prisons from as far north as Mareeba to down south close

to the border. As a chaplaincy coordinator, my job is to recruit, train, supervise and retire volunteer chaplains. Our chaplains range from ex-missionaries, retired pastors, to business owners, and semi-retired professionals—people who have a passion to reach prisoners for Jesus.

Any Christians thinking about volunteering as a prison chaplain simply need to have a commitment to offering one day a week to visit a prison facility and be trained by us. There are no special qualifications required, I certainly didn't have any when I started out! But God in his gracious leading expanded my heart and enabled

me to step out in faith to do a ministry that I never imagined doing as a young person with a business qualification. I have met some prisoners who have become so on fire for God that they themselves become like missionaries in jail and we have the privilege of walking alongside them as they reach out to others.

To find out more about Inside Out Prison Chaplaincy, or to volunteer, visit insideoutchaplaincy.org.au or contact **(07) 3067 7271**.

WATCH CLOSELY!

Rev Dr Richard Gibson, BST Principal

When I was ordained, my mother gave me a precious gift. It was a framed piece of paper with beautiful, ornate calligraphy. It read, "Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers" (1 Timothy 4:16).

Paul wanted his favourite protégé, Timothy, to make progress and be a good servant of Christ Jesus. That's what mum wanted for me. She knew that the God she had served all her adult life wanted all people to be saved. She prayed that I would invest my life in a way that would encourage people to be saved: watching my life and my doctrine.

At a recent faculty retreat, we read these words as we worked through portions of Paul's letter. We realised this was what we needed to do for the sake of our students and the sake of the gospel. There are no greater priorities for us as teachers than to preach the truth about Jesus clearly and to live in a way that matches the message.

This is what we pray for our students too. We invite you to be praying for this as they study

here at BST. We long to produce graduates who "preach the word in season and out of season" (2 Timothy 4:2), and "live quiet and peaceful lives in all godliness and holiness" (1 Timothy 2:2). We want them to share God's great desire to see people saved.

Paul said of Timothy to the Christians in Philippi, "I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare.

For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ" (2:20-21). There is no higher praise. There is no greater ambition.

We know the damage done to the gospel when the lives of Christian leaders fail to match the message they preach; when hypocrisy and corruption are exposed. Please join with us in praying for consistent, Christ-like qualities in our faculty, our staff, and especially our students at BST. It's the kind of prayer you could make for your children, grandchildren, and young people at your church.

"Please join with us in praying for consistent, Christ-like qualities."



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**.

APPRECIATING EARLY CHRISTIANITY

Phil Coates
Bachelor of Ministry student



Standing where Paul and the early Christians suffered and died for their faith adds a new dimension. I haven't been to the historical places where Jesus walked, so following in Paul's footsteps on the Greece and Turkey Study Tour with BST in September was the next best thing. Visiting the places where Paul ministered for a time helped to shape my appreciation for the early Christians who had to make life and death choices at a time when the Bible was incomplete.

When Paul was writing letters to the Church in Corinth it was a big deal for people to turn from society's ways. The large marble temple on the hill in Corinth would have shone like a beacon as a constant

reminder of pagan worship. Their culture was entrenched in the worship of false gods and pagan sacrifices. To turn their back on the pagan way of life would have made them outcasts, sticking out like sore thumbs, which often cost them their lives. They were ostracised and persecuted for refusing to renounce their beliefs.

I hope that if I was in a position to die for my faith, that I would also lay down my life for God with the same courage and conviction. Ultimately, it is God's power that will transform our attitude and give us courage to face death for our beliefs, like the early Christians. The trip opened my eyes to the context of how early Christians experienced the gospel, in a way that a

message delivered at home couldn't do. Gaining a clear understanding of how early Christians lived in Paul's time allowed us to learn the context of who and what issues were being addressed in the New Testament, so we can apply it correctly to our lives today.

I am looking forward to BST's Reformation tour in 2018 and soak up more of Church History.

Please email:
communications@bst.qld.edu.au
to keep up with college news or to update your details.

THREE LESSONS ON FAITH AND WORKS

I have been interested in this subject for the last 20 years. It began when I was studying the Gospels at seminary. Jesus seemed to speak a different language, especially in the Synoptic Gospels, than what I was used to. For instance, to a lawyer who believed one must love God and one's neighbour in order to inherit eternal life, Jesus replied, "Correct. Do this and you will live" (Luke 10:26). I'm not sure *that* would have been my answer. I could get my head around loving God but to love your neighbour made me uncomfortable. A rich young man asked the same question and Jesus told him to "Sell everything you have and give to the poor" (Luke

18:22). I definitely wouldn't have given that answer. These aren't isolated examples; there are many passages in the Gospels that enforce what Jesus tells these two men. And so I began my doctoral dissertation which sought to explain *The Relationship Between Works and Salvation in the Synoptic Gospels*.

This is the kind of thing Dr Brad Green will be looking at in the MA intensive during 13-17 February 2017. If this is a subject that you're interested in, don't miss it.

So what have I learned since being engrossed in

this area of study for the last 20 years? Take a look at these three lessons (more detail in our blog online).

Lesson #1: The relationship between faith and works can't be reduced to one scenario.

Lesson #2: The emphasis on the relationship between faith and works must be on faith.

Lesson #3: We must communicate the relationship between faith and works with pastoral sensitivity.



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

EVENTS

Theology of Faith and Works

- Master of Arts Intensive -

Monday to Friday
13-17 February 2017
8.30am-3.30pm daily
BST Toowong

Save the date for this MA intensive with Brad Green. Study the unit for credit or simply audit and sit in on the lectures.

Graduation Ceremony

Tuesday
28 February 2017
6.30 for 7pm start
City North Baptist Church
52 Yiada Street, Kedron Qld

Join us as we celebrate the achievements of those who completed their studies in 2016.

Spirituality for Christian Ministry

- Master of Arts Intensive -

Monday to Friday
6-10 March 2017
8.30am-3.30pm daily
BST Toowong

Save the date for this MA intensive with Stuart Devenish. Study the unit for credit or simply audit and sit in on the lectures.

Making Sense of Islam

- Master of Arts Intensive -

Monday to Friday
26-30 June 2017
8.30am-3.30pm daily
BST Toowong

Save the date for this MA intensive with John Azumah. Study the unit for credit or simply audit and sit in on the lectures.

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

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