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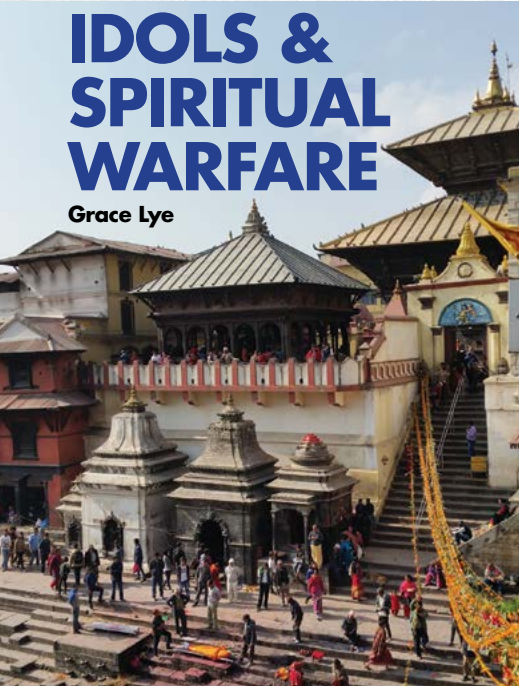
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IDOLS & SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Grace Lye



When I was growing up, I had nightmares almost every night for about ten years. I was fearful and often sensed a horrible presence in my room. I didn't tell people about it for fear of sounding weird or crazy. But when I recently shared my testimony with a group of women in Nepal, they opened up and revealed some of their experiences.

One lady saw a dark figure come upon their child, while others talked about praying for deliverance for people in villages. In Australia, it's not common for people to talk about supernatural experiences or spiritual warfare, but in Nepal, the manifestations of demonic activity are very real.

The main religion in Nepal is Hindu, where more than three million gods are worshipped and Buddhism weaved into the mix as well. I was confronted by the number of temples and overt worship of idols. In the mornings, I saw people come out of their homes with fruit and other offerings, running their hands on prayer wheels and praying at the temples.

My initial reasons for going to Nepal were really vain. I was restless and needed to travel again and my lecturer, Alan Stanley asked if anyone wanted to go with him to Nepal as part of his teaching ministry with goEast. I said yes and joined him with a group of BST students during November and December 2016. My trip was extended to six weeks as part of a cross-cultural field education placement.

This meant that I stayed longer than the other students who were only there for two weeks. The placement was part of my BST studies and

designed to help me experience the culture and learn more about how God is at work among the Nepali people.



We taught English to school-aged children and I found this very challenging. I don't feel as if I'm very good at teaching children, but thankfully, my teammate Julia had lots of teaching experience. I was delighted to see the children's willingness to learn, though it was clear that their learning was focused on memorising the content rather than comprehension. We had a program prepared but when we saw that the children were much further behind in their education than we anticipated, we had to be flexible.

Each week I joined the women's fellowship with members from the church. It was a privilege to sit with them and hear...

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BUILDING A CULTURE OF INSIGHT

Save the date for BST's annual missions conference on **Saturday, 24 June 2017**. The conference is for anyone who is interested in local and global mission or keen to support it. This year's theme is **building a culture of insight**, with keynote speaker **Rev Dr John Azumah**, Professor of World Christianity and Islam. John has a background in church ministry and is an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church of



Ghana. He completed his PhD on the history of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa at the University of Birmingham. His published works include: *The Legacy of Arab-Islam in Africa: A Quest for Inter-Religious Dialogue*; *My Neighbour's Faith: Islam Explained for Christians*; and several articles and book chapters on Islam and Christian-Muslim relations in various academic journals.

Date: Saturday, 24 June 2017, 9am-4pm
Cost: \$45 early bird (ends 2 June);
\$25 concession (alumni, students and pensioners)

Register online at:
bst.qld.edu.au/missionsconference





FOSTERING CROSS-CULTURAL AWARENESS

Rev Dr Richard Gibson, BST Principal

On Thursday, 9 March, OMF representatives from Myanmar and Queensland gathered with twelve BST students and a couple of faculty, for our second *Walking the Journey* evening. We heard about the challenges of reaching Buddhists in Myanmar and reflected on the impact of culture shock and culture stress. It was a great night.

Experiences like these help us to foster cross-cultural awareness that we want to see growing at BST, through our mission weeks and field

placements. You can read about Grace's profound experience of Nepal in this edition. Some of you have made generous gifts to help students like Edmond travel to Japan.

At our *Walking the Journey* evening, it was very satisfying to see our students seizing opportunities to think through issues of cross-cultural communication and adaptation. It was a privilege to be exposed to vast experience in the Asian context, across a number of countries. But the highlight was the way students were talking with each other about their plans, their hopes, and their anxieties.

I learnt very early in pastoral ministry that all Christian service is inevitably cross-cultural. I found myself in the western suburbs of Sydney and discovered that people looked at the world differently, spoke differently, lived differently. It took me a while to realise that I had a lot of listening, praying, learning and discussing to do if I was to become effective. Familiar ways of explaining the meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection didn't always communicate what I thought they did.

As Australia becomes more multi-cultural and more diverse, we want to prepare all our BST students for the challenges ahead. Whether they live and serve in Brisbane or relocate their lives to Cambodia or Spain, we know that they will benefit from training in cross-cultural effectiveness.

This isn't our idea. After his resurrection, Jesus pointed to the Old Testament and the three great necessities. The Christ had to die, he had to be raised from the dead, and "repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations" (Luke 24:47). Jesus set the agenda for his followers and for a place like BST. To communicate repentance and forgiveness to the nations of the world takes courage, initiative, cross-cultural sensitivity and effective communication.

Pray for our students as they prepare for a life of service for the one they owe their life to. Pray their model and inspiration would be the one, who "became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the nations might glorify God for his mercy" (Romans 15:8-9).

IDOLS & SPIRITUAL WARFARE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)



...their stories. I was amazed at their readiness to be vulnerable amongst each other. The women really did life together, openly speaking about their struggles when it came to prayer requests. The women sung and prayed together.

I sensed that being part of the minority in this part of the world spurred them for deeper connection amongst other believers, relishing every opportunity for fellowship. I know that sometimes I take my freedom as a Christian for granted and don't necessarily have the burning desire to pray and worship with other believers. Seeing how the Nepalis do fellowship encouraged me in my faith.

The most humbling experience for me on the trip was going to the Christian-run leprosy hospital and meeting a woman in her late 40s who suffered severely from the disease. On our first tour of the hospital, the woman caught my eyes and I felt prompted by the Lord to approach her. She didn't speak English and I

didn't know a word of Nepali, but through some hand gestures, I was able to tell her that I was a Christian and offered to pray with her. I took her hands that had been curled up and crippled so badly as a result of the disease and prayed for healing, and that God would open her heart to the message of Christ. As I held her hands and stroked it, tears were streaming down her face.

When I hugged her after the prayer, she burst into tears and clung to me. All I could feel was God's love for her. I got a glimpse of her suffering, being an outcast even amongst the people in her village. It was well known that those with leprosy are often ostracised and people fear to touch or go near them. When the interpreter for our group finally come over to where I was with this lady, he was able to share the gospel. She was so thankful she wanted to bow down to us, but the interpreter quickly stopped her. In Nepal, so often the Christian God is just thought of as another God, so it was good for the interpreter to explain the difference and clarify why we do not bow down to idols or to people, instead we give Jesus all the glory.

I was so impressed with the faith of the Nepali Christians. One Sunday, we hiked up a mountain and reached a Hindu temple right at the top which overlooked Kathmandu. The pastor of the church led us in prayer for the city and sung praise songs together. I was really touched by their sincere and prayerful ways. As I looked down at the city, I thought of the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel 37. I was grieved that so many in Kathmandu did not know Jesus—to me it was a valley of dead people, dead in their sins (Ephesians 2:1) unaware of the life-giving truth found only through Jesus Christ. But God in his grace has made way for the gospel to be heard in Nepal, despite the challenges that Christians have faced there. I was humbled to see how God is at work through his people.



GRADUATE NEWS

When he's not dressed in overalls and flannies, rocking out with the Smashing Bumpkins, Jimmy Smith-Cottrell is changing nappies and preaching sermons. The father of three kids (under the age of five), just finished his Bachelor of Theology at BST. It took Jimmy five years to finish his degree—if you do the math, then you'd be correct in thinking he and his wife managed to have two extra kids in that time. We caught up with him to find out what's next...

Now that college is over for you, how do you feel?

I have mixed feelings about finishing. On one hand, I am so glad that all the studies are done. There were times—especially close to exams and assignment deadlines—when I felt the pressure and almost quit! But, I will miss the aspect of growing and learning in the lecture rooms. In a lot of my lectures with Alan Stanley, he would stop the lecture to make sure that we not only understood the content academically, but that we also developed a heart understanding. I liked that BST lecturers didn't treat their teaching as a purely academic exercise. I also feel confident in knowing that even though I've finished my studies, I can still contact the BST lecturers and ask for their opinions and advice on sermons and other questions I may have.

So, now that college is over, what do you hope to do this year?

Life Centre Church (LCC) in North Lakes has just appointed me to a full-time role as Executive Pastor. What that looks like is a combination

of providing support to the Senior Pastor, preaching, pastoral care, and helping the church with its systems and management processes. My wife is also taking on a midwifery course part-time, so as a family we want to support her through that, especially as she has been so gracious with me throughout my degree.

Tell us a little more about your church?

I've been at LCC for three years and now in my second year on staff (previously employed on a part-time basis while I was studying). The senior leadership and members of the church have invested so much love and care into our family. One of the stand out things that I noticed was how much they cared about the people in the church and their desire to invest in relationships. I also love that they are gospel-centred and focused on getting to know people in our neighbourhoods. As a small church with limited resources, our focus is on balancing church ministry, family life and investing in the people in our communities.

If you could go back in time and give advice to yourself when you first started at BST, what would you say?

I'd tell the younger (more handsome) version of myself to start assessments early and to be



disciplined in language learning (i.e., when they say do an hour of Greek every day, do it!). I would also say not to let the head knowledge overtake the heart knowledge. And finally, throw yourself in the life of the college because I resisted that for the first half of my degree. Because I had previously been in pastoral roles, I didn't think that a lot of the community activities were really necessary for me. But, when I finally jumped in and participated wholeheartedly in the community at BST, I couldn't believe how great it was. I was always looked after by the staff and faculty and formed great friendships with fellow students.

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

CENTRE FOR ASIAN CHRISTIANITY UPDATE



Since the launch of the Centre for Asian Christianity in July last year, we've met with people involved in ministry to Asia and those who have extensive

experience serving in Asia. This included a trip to Bangkok and the Philippines, where our Centre Director, Rev Dr Andrew Prince was able to find out more about the training and ministry opportunities for Christians in those regions.

We welcomed guest speakers to BST who have served in places like Eurasia, Mongolia, Indonesia, Thailand and Myanmar. A Board of Reference was also established with representatives who have ministry experience in or are from China, Hong Kong, Philippines,

Thailand and Cambodia. The purpose of this group of people is to help steer the direction for the Centre as we equip and resource Christians for effective contextual Asian ministry.

BST remains committed to training Christians to know God's word and take it to the world. Our Centre for Asian Christianity is a ministry arm of the college with a specific focus to partner with select organisations engaged in missions to Asia and to foster training pathways for our students who have a heart for reaching Asians. Our Board of Reference will help us do this with the Centre.

We are thankful for the many people who have come alongside in support of the vision for the Centre, whether through prayer, financial support

or volunteering as part of the Board of Reference. We continue to seek the Lord in every aspect of this ministry.

Please pray for...

- Our mission exposure trip to Japan (18 March—3 April) with students who are contemplating serving in Asia.
- Dr Wally Wang, Director of Chinese Program, will visit Singapore in May/June to attend a conference on education.
- A new subject, "Contextual Asian Ministry", which will be taught in Semester 2.
- ATA president, Dr Theresa Lua will visit BST in July.

To find out more about the Centre, visit bst.qld.edu.au/centre.

CARING FOR PEOPLE IN ASIA



Dr Vivian Soesilo, BST's pastoral care lecturer in the Chinese program, regularly travels to Indonesia where she is involved in pastoral ministry and lectures at Southeast Asia Bible Seminary.

Vivian completed a Master of Arts in Counselling and has extensive experience in children, individual and marriage counselling. She also has theological qualifications from Asbury Theological Seminary and Union Theological Seminary. We recently caught up with Vivian to find out briefly some of the pastoral care issues that she's encountered in an Asian context.

Expectations of church leaders

When providing pastoral care in any context, people require a lot of your time and attention. Amongst Asians, there is an expectation that the pastor will be available at any time of day or night to be there for members of the church and their families. In many cases, it's also expected that the pastor and the pastor's spouse provide pastoral care together. Working closely with people means that you may also form close personal bonds, so the pastoral care giver needs to be aware of this and maintain professionalism while still being sensitive to the needs of people who require care. For example, boundaries can be crossed when the pastoral care giver

exchanges text messages about daily matters or even eating meals alone with a member of the opposite sex. This is generally a big no-no in an Asian context.

The influence of the pastoral care giver is an important consideration when engaging with vulnerable people. Healthy professional boundaries are needed to protect those who are in a vulnerable position and to avoid situations of potential conflicts of interest or exerting undue influence over someone's personal circumstances.

To read more of Vivian's blog, visit bst.qld.edu.au/blog.

EVENTS

Open Night

Wednesday
10 May 2017
6:30pm – 8:45pm

If you or someone you know wants to grow in their knowledge of the Bible or prepare for ministry, our Open Night is an opportunity to hear more about the courses on offer and get a taste of lectures in English or Mandarin.

Rev Dr Richard Gibson
(Pastoral Epistles)
Dr Wally Wang
(Chinese lecture)
Mr Bill Gilliver
(Church History)

Building a Culture of Insight

Saturday
24 June 2017
9:00am – 4:00pm

Gain insight into Islam and the challenges that face us today. You'll hear from those who are experienced in engaging with people from Muslim backgrounds.

Rev Dr John Azumah
(keynote speaker)
Elective speakers

Making Sense of Islam

(Master of Arts intensive)

Monday to Friday
26–30 June 2017
8:30am – 3:30pm
daily

This MA unit will provide an historical and theological survey of Islam, including the development of Islamic religious thought and practice. Students will develop a better understanding of major theological tenets and historical events that have shaped the Islamic faith.

Rev Dr John Azumah

Current Issues in Old Testament Theology

(Master of Arts intensive)

Monday to Friday
31 July – 4 August 2017
8:30am – 3:00pm
daily

This unit is recommended to prospective MA students who desire to add a further important theological dimension to the area of Biblical Studies. It's also relevant for pastors, lay people, and students of the Bible who are serious about the field of Biblical Theology as it relates to understanding the Old Testament and its place within the Bible today.

Dr Ted Woods

Foundations of Pastoral Care

(Chinese program intensive)

Every Saturday
for six weeks
commencing
12 August 2017

This intensive will be taught in Mandarin and cover biblical foundations of pastoral care, issues in pastoral theology, and the nature of people and families in various life stages.

Dr Vivian Soesilo

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

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