

Friends of Burrill 2015

Greetings,

Much has happened since my last report. Sadly, our President Gordon Dutton passed away last year and his wife Thelma passed away this year. Both were aged well into their nineties. Gordon and Thelma served The Bush Missionary Society for over sixty years and for most of those years, Gordon was our president. The funeral services were a celebration of life-long faithfulness in service of The Lord Jesus Christ. We thank God for their godly example and testimony. Geoff and Martha Boye and their three children, continue to serve with CMS in Tanzania where Geoff is doing some teaching in a local Bible college. Roy and Darlene Dallos and their family, concluded their time with us at the end of June this year and Roy is planning to work again in the local building trade while Darlene will continue to teach at the local Christian school.

Replacing Roy and Darlene we welcome Robbie and Celeste Luscombe and their daughter Ebony. Robbie and Celeste come to us from Gerringong in NSW. As a family they have been involved in Parish ministry at Shoalhaven Heads and Gerringong. They has also worked with the Anglican youth department and operating conference centres. We look forward to them developing their own unique ministry alongside Nathan and Lauren and their family



This year a little girl, Layla, was added to Nathan and Lauren's family, and she is much loved by her elder brother, Lucas. Kerry and I welcomed the birth of our second grandchild, Lexi, a sister to Sienna. Nathan and Lauren continue to exercise sound leadership in a friendly and hospitable manner as they manage the site and are actively involved in the local Anglican Church. Lauren leads a Bible study for 'young mums and bubs' in the Chapel on Monday mornings where a large group gathers to study the Gospel of John. Nathan has been active in a local men's group and is a keen speaker at a number of youth activities. We are very grateful for Nathan and Lauren's keenness and giftedness in enhancing a gospel-centered ministry among the locals and visitors to our site.

Whilst Roy and Darlene were active in improving and renovating the kitchens at the Conference centre, Nathan and others have been busy in renovating motel rooms, which has proved to be a much-needed blessing of practical comfort in both facilities. We are grateful to the staff for all that has been achieved in the last few years.



Kerry and I continue to be active in our Bible teaching ministry. Kerry leads a women's Bible study on Monday afternoons at Termeil and speaks at Ladies' dinners and evangelistic outreaches at various locations. Kerry teaches Marriage and family in our ministry in the Former Soviet Union's Republics and Northern India. My preaching and Teaching ministry is done locally, interstate and overseas. I am preaching on a regular basis with the Presbyterian Churches from Batemans Bay to Narooma whilst continuing to be part of the wider church scene including two trips to Western Australia.

In 2013 we were involved in nine days of mission with the Karrinyup Church of Christ where I was the Keynote speaker. In 2014 I spoke at the Keswick Convention in Esperance on the subject of 'Interpreting Apocalyptic Literature'. I continue to do Men's and Ladies Dinners and Bible teaching weekends at various locations. On Tuesday and Thursday nights I lead adult mixed Bible studies in Ulladulla and Bawley Point.

My teaching ministry overseas is now in its fifteenth year and Kerry and I are both grateful to our willing and competent staff who continue to carry the load of management at The Pines in our absence. The Ministry of 'Sunday evenings around God's word' during the tourist seasons continues to be well attended and much appreciated by both adults and children alike. We also enjoy and value the faithful group of young people who conduct the 'Scripture Union family Mission' on the site during December-January.

Our facility continues to be well maintained despite very limited funds and ever-increasing costs. A popular children's playground was installed on the site with the financial assistance of some generous friends from the local area along with the hard work of Nathan, Roy and others. Kerry and I are now entering our 30th year of service at The Pines for The Bush Missionary Society. We were aged 29 and 30 when we began our work here. Time has gone by too quickly, and we often wonder where the years have gone. For the last 18 months I have been writing a book entitled; 'Under the Fig Tree, 365 Devotional expositions on the scriptures.' It has been 20 plus years in development and now I am finally putting it into shape. Hopefully it will be in print next year. The team here has been supported and encouraged by men like Gordon Dutton and Tom Falconer as directors and too many others to name. We have a good team of staff workers and others who are keen to improve the site and be faithful to our Mission statement that declares our commission to: 'Further the scriptural knowledge of Jesus Christ without reference to sectarian differences.'

Please continue to pray for Nathan and Lauren, Robbie and Celeste, Les and Kerry and our families. We value any support that can be provided and your patronage to the facility. God bless,

Les Stewart, on behalf of the team.

DEVOTIONAL – John1:43–51

‘We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’ John1: 45.

It is interesting to note that John the Gospel writer reminds us that Jesus has gone into Galilee, fulfilling the word of the Prophet Isaiah that the Light of Messiah will begin to shine in Galilee with the words; ‘the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations, the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light’ (Isaiah 9:1–2) Phillip responds immediately to Jesus call, ‘Follow me’, and we are told that he and Andrew and Peter are from the city of Bethsaida, a city along with Chorazin that Jesus scolded strongly for their ‘hardness of heart.’ These cities may have been typified by godlessness and indifference but Jesus in his wisdom called these men from questionable backgrounds to come and follow Him, eventually being part of the band of witnesses that would turn the first century world upside down with their faithful preaching of the Gospel.

It is clear that Nathaniel is pondering the great things that are happening around him. John the Baptist has arrived on the scene with his ‘Fire and Brimstone’ style of preaching which has thrown ‘the cat among the pigeons’ in Palestine, especially among the religious elite. (John1:19). His comment regarding Nazareth, a Galilean town that is mentioned nowhere in the Old Testament, seems to be sarcastic, but may well be simply be an honest attempt to search the scriptures regarding the origin of the Messiah. In Jesus own words, He speaks in glowing terms of Nathaniel’s character for his honesty and reflection on the events taking place; ‘Behold an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile’. After Jesus commends Nathaniel for his time of meditation and contemplation ‘under the Fig tree’ Nathaniel says without doubt or confusion that Jesus is ‘the Son of God the King of Israel.’

There is much encouragement for us in these verses. These men simply asked their friend to ‘Come and see’ Jesus for himself. Phillip, Andrew and Peter were convinced that Jesus was the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets and they had absolute confidence that Jesus and His words were sufficient to convince and save their friend. Today, we live in an age of overwhelming skepticism and ambivalence to Biblical truth. The wealth of our nation has bred apathy into the community that by and large has no interest in truth and renovation of character. The text before us reminds us that the words of Jesus are powerful in the lives of men and women. As followers of Jesus, we have no power to convince or change people’s thinking or bring spiritual life and new birth into human hearts. Our task is simply to bring the words of Jesus into the lives of others. We are his witnesses in the community.

We can be confident to put a copy of the Bible into the hands of our friends and neighbours. We can be confident to simply explain the gospel to others or invite them along to hear the preaching and teaching of the scriptures at various gatherings. We can be confident to invite people to be a part of Christian activities and fellowships where folk can see the love of Christ at work as we accept 'all comers' knowing the universal need of all to repent and believe the Gospel.

The simplicity of these men along with their conviction of the truth of Jesus is a clear reminder for us all to appeal to communities to 'Come and see' for themselves, 'Jesus of Nazareth.'