

AUGUST 2017

Experienced in MINISTRY

Baptist Union of Victoria
Newsletter for mature pastors, missionaries, partners, retirees

FROM AFRICA TO AUSTRALIA!

A re-entry journey

By Graham and Pam Keen

Many of the readers of this magazine have experienced “re-entry” from a foreign culture to the then-current Australian culture. We have been asked to share our story.

I suppose that there are many commonalities but also each journey is individual.

In our mature years we served three 2-year terms in Africa that totalled just over 7 years out of culture. I include the short home assignment periods because they are not like re-immersing yourself in the home culture. While there certainly is the trauma of traffic and shopping, our focus on home assignment is still in the other place and we know that “we’re outta here” real soon. And meanwhile extremely busy with deputation and family.

Upon finishing our time in Malawi (in 2016), we had advice from a number of quarters not to make big decisions quickly but to allow ourselves time to settle. This we were able to do, partly because we owned our own home in Melbourne and partly because we had reached retirement age and so qualified for a pension from our superannuation. What we didn’t know at first was whether this would be sufficient to support us.

But we did have to make one big decision quickly—a car. We have family scattered around Australia from Sydney to Kalgoorlie via Adelaide, so we knew that we would be doing a lot of travelling. Therefore within a month we had purchased a car of suitable space and comfort for older limbs to be driving in all day. We spent about half of our time for the next few months on the road, combining family visits with speaking at supporting churches and visiting other supporters to thank them. We sometimes took



several days to drive somewhere, allowing ourselves some space and time to see parts of the country that we hadn't looked at before without pressuring ourselves to make big decisions. We enjoyed this time.

But some decisions were looming. We were sharing our home with our son and his family who had been very kindly housesitting for us during most of our absence but now seemed reluctant to want to make alternative arrangements! We also found that we weren't comfortable at our church that had a very large congregation, after being used to a weekly gathering of 10 to 15 expats on a Sunday afternoon. Also quite a few people that we knew there showed that they weren't interested in remaking our acquaintance. This hurt a bit, though we had been warned about it. However we are each blessed that a couple of people have continued to meet with each of us and encourage us in this transition.

Whilst we were fairly comfortable feeling our way into resettlement, we weren't really sure about how we were going. So it was very helpful, after about 5 months, to be able to attend a *Re-Entry Weekend* run by Missions Interlink. Here there was a community of people going through the same experiences. Some were still feeling unsettled after several years. Others had been forced by financial circumstances to find work quickly. But it was so affirming to be able to interact with others going through the same experience.

By January this year we had been home for 8 months and felt that we were in a position to make a couple of those big decisions. We had remained uncomfortable with the large Sunday morning service and so we looked at some other options, settling into a very welcoming congregation nearby (whilst still retaining a number of links with our former church). Graham was also offered some part-time work along the lines of what he had done in the 1990s. Even though we had found that our pension seemed to be sufficient for our needs, he found that employment gave a useful focus. We even got our house back to ourselves!

So overall it seems that we are re-floating well, without major stress. One big decision remains - relating to ministry. Of course there are many options but we don't want to commit to anything until we have settled into life more and formed new friendships at the church. We wait upon the Lord to show us His direction.

Experienced in Ministry Luncheon, 2017

Thursday 30 November, Coffee/Networking at 10am, Entry 10.45am
Templestowe Baptist Church, 103-105 Andersons Creek Rd, Doncaster East

- Updates from Daniel Bullock of the BUV
- Information from Meewon Yang and Melissa Rule with IGNITE Multicultural Youth and Young Adults Conference
- Book Reviews
- Remembering those who have gone to be with God during the year.

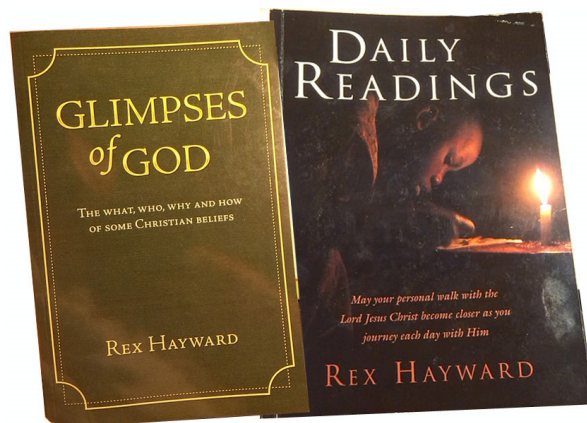
And, as we hear what God is doing in our midst, a delightful lunch.

PUT THE DATE IN YOUR DIARY NOW

WORTH READING

By Grace Munro

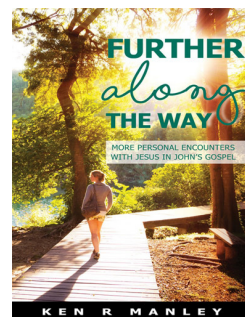
Rex Hayward has written two quite different books: *Daily Readings* and *Glimpses of God*. The first title is self-explanatory – readings for every day of the year. His self-titled ‘Devotionals’ have more of a Bible Study feel than some devotional books – and one suspects that series of sermons lie behind the studies on James, Malachi, Mark, Letters of John, Amos, Colossians, Habakkuk and Philipians. A lot of research has gone into the writing. I like the way Rex takes occasional days to stop and ask the big questions of what God is saying through the Scripture, how it applies to us, and what should we do about it. For those who want a book of Daily Readings, this is worth looking at.



Glimpses of God is quite different, and would be particularly valuable if you have friends asking about some of the major issues of faith. Does God exist and is he unique? How do God’s omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience (though Rex uses much simpler language!) and other characteristics of God relate to us? How is God one and yet three persons, and the roles of Father, Son and Spirit? Rex is careful to address different opinions in looking at these perplexing issues. He has the ability to speak to and engage with people of all ages and in all situations of life. It is helpful that Rex gives a summary page at the end of each section.

Daily Readings is available from Wycliffe Bible Translators or Rex, \$20. All proceeds go to Wycliffe Australia. *Glimpses of God* is available from Rex, \$20. If contact with Rex is by email (rexhayward@hotmail.com), the title of the book should be used as the 'subject' of the email. Address: 15 Morinda Street Ringwood East 3135, 9870 4325.

Ken Manley is obviously enjoying his retirement, as it gives him time to put into writing! Many of Ken’s works are historical in nature, and we have benefited from books such as *From Five Barley Loaves* (written with others about Global Interaction’s story), *Redeeming Love Proclaim: John Rippon and the Baptists*, *From Woolloomooloo to Eternity: A History of Australian Baptists*, *The Grace of Goodness: John Saunders Baptist Pastor and Activist Sydney 1834-1848* (written with Barbara Coe), etc. Ken’s latest book is quite different from his historical works.



It is entitled *Further Along the Way: More personal encounters with Jesus in John's Gospel*. The book is a sequel to *On the Way to Faith*. As a study group leader, it did not take me long to purchase copies for our next series. In this second book, twelve more key encounters from John’s Gospel are presented, each one encouraging a personal meeting with Jesus Christ. Some of these stories refer to groups rather than individuals – the moneychangers in the temple, the crowd fed with loaves and fishes, the brothers of Jesus, the ‘Jews’, and believers across all ages (John 17:1-26). But there are also personal encounters, such as those with Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Jesus, Judas, and ‘the disciple whom Jesus loved’. In each case, the meeting with Jesus was decisive and instructive.

For those seriously wishing to explore and experience the inner meaning and power of Christianity, the Gospel of John remains a key resource. In these twelve widely-commended studies – each with discussion questions for individual or group reflection – Ken guides the reader to not simply be informed about Jesus but to be transformed by him.

I had previously heard many of Ken’s sermons when he was Interim Pastor at Kew Baptist Church, and then used his first study book with my group. So I knew it would be worthwhile having copies. Publisher Morling Press, 2017. Available through Koorong, \$17.

NOT RETIRED YET!

By Betty (Mary) Shinkfield

Betty Bennett worked in the 1950s with what is now Global Interaction in what is now Bangladesh, and married Des Shinkfield at Mymensingh on 13 March 1952. Since 1957, she has been back in Australia and tells of her ongoing involvement.

A lady made me a huge tea pot cosy for my big teapot, but the teapot fell and broke, and I thought, "That cosy would fit Bilu Babu's head, a beanie" [Bilu Babu was a key leader in the church in Bangladesh.] So I stitched up the spout and handle holes, and sent it to Birisiri, with shirts and pain tablets, etc.

Later, Beth McDonald wrote from Zambia, at the Baptist Hospital at Fiwale Hill, to say they had heard that flour was available in the town, so they "stood in a queue to get their quota". I thought, "Those busy Aussie nurses should not have to waste their time like this. Our shops need a bicycle to get around in, loaded to the ceiling as they are with flour, etc." So I sent lots of parcels, till the Customs stepped in, and now only medical supplies and used spectacles are allowed in (which they love to receive today).

I send parcels to address specific needs:

1. A letter from Tinsley Hospital, Baiyer River, PNG, said, "The only ointments, the only pain relief tablets, the only cotton wool we have, are what is in your parcel." On the back of the envelope was added, "Another parcel received, thank you!"
2. From Telefomin Hospital, PNG, the letter said, "I was detained in Mt Hagen on Saturday, because of heavy rain. The flight was cancelled, and I realised I was hot and sickening for something and needed an antibiotic. Among many other jobs such as collecting diesel, I collected the mail and found a fat envelope from Betty. I found several Ampicillin capsules, paracetamol tablets, and vitamin C tablets! God is marvellous! He meets our needs "spot on"!
3. From Tinsley Hospital, PNG, the letter read, "We were given surplus anaesthetic machines when on holidays, and arriving back at Tinsley, we collected the mail and a parcel. It contained (among ointments, etc.) anaesthetic masks, both metal and cloth, rubber tubing, clear plastic tubing – just the right size for the machines to hook up with the oxygen cylinder and to the patient.
4. Another PNG letter read, "The two tins of baby food arrived when a gastro-enteritis epidemic had made the mothers so sick they were unable to feed their babies. Doctor had flown out to buy some milk (and diesel, etc) but only one small tin was available, at a prohibitive price. God met our need, and averted tragedy!"
5. Yet another PNG letter read, "As a result of tribal fighting, 50 men were admitted over a period of a fortnight. They all had suppurating axe and bush knife wounds, and were dying. We fought night and day to save their lives, and then we ran out of bandages." So since then, a kind group of church ladies and my husband have been making bandages to post with the other items.
6. The phone rang, "Do you still send parcels? Oh good! Then, um, my daughter has just died of lung cancer, and I'm left with boxes of dressings and gravity pumps, antibiotics, pain killers. Nobody will take them, and they are too expensive to throw in the rubbish bin. Can you use them? Yes indeed. Dr Mills in Kompiam Enga Hospital in PNG received them in a parcel soon afterwards (along with Tim Tams of course).
7. So, five Baptist hospitals share 24 or more parcels each year. Each weighs at least 10 – 14 Kg. The recipients love their packets of Tim Tam biscuits enclosed!

Do you like knitting? Crocheting? Machine sewing? Flannellette? 1 meter square baby blankets are needed, to help with planting a church in Mozambique.

The parcels are best labelled clearly as 'GIFT, HOSPITAL SUPPLIES' to help clarify matters with customs.

What does God want me to do, now I'm retired? (But I don't feel like I am!)

Betty Shinkfield, 98 years old, with Des, 92 years.

(The Editor was one of Betty's recipients of her parcels many years ago when in Zambia, and they were wonderful! She was, by the way, the only parcel-sender who included Tim Tams. They were so special!)

If you would like to become involved in sending parcels, that would be wonderful. But **please check** with Global Interaction (597 Burwood Rd, Hawthorn Vic 3122) as to what is currently needed before you start your packing, as situations can change as time passes.)

WORKSHOPS AND GROUPS

In 2016, the Experienced in Ministry team ran a workshop on "Preparing for Retirement", and those who attended found it helpful.

Would you be interested in being part of a:

- Reading group?
- Theological Discussion Group?
- Peer group for older/retired pastors and missionaries, primarily for mutual support?
- Discussions about potential roles for retired people?

- What would be a topic which you would find helpful if we were to run another workshop?
- Is there something else which would encourage and help you as you move toward or live in retirement?

Please let Alan Marr know your preferences, and the leadership group will see what can be done to meet that need: alan.marr@myinbox.net.au, 0407 095 695

BIRTHDAYS

We include these dates so that you have the opportunity contact the people on the day of their birthday. If you would like your birthday included, please contact us and give us the date.

LATE AUGUST: 16 Tom Malone, 17 John Simpson, 19 Barrie Sutton and Marion Himbury, 20 Ray McDonald, 23 Gladys Seawright, 25 Howard Wilkins, 29 Stuart Robinson, 20 Paul Longfield.

SEPTEMBER: 1 Judith Gill, 4 Joy Shannon, 7 Alison Morley, 11 Gwyn Milne, 24 Ian Paxton, 27 Neville Kellam, 29 Don Steck.

OCTOBER: 1 June Robertson and Steve Taylor, 3 Ken Manley, 6 Tim Brown, 8 Alex White, 12 Jennifer Evans, 14 Barry McDonald, 20 Bill Leng, 22 Brian McKelvie, 23 Gwenith Alexander, 24 Edith Brown and Bob Payne, 25 Harry Monroe.

NOVEMBER: 2 Muriel Poupard, 3 Maria Smith, Judy Forbes and Trevor Walmsley, 15 Alison Payne, 19 Lorna Marx and Newton Daddow, 20 Dorothy Pell, 21 Robert Colman, 23 Dorothy Kellam, 24 Al Patino, 25 Alice Wilkinson and Frances Holland, 28 Julie Sutton and Paul Downie, 30 Jocelyn Tinsley.

DECEMBER: 2 Helen Wilcox, 3 Raymond Taylor, 4 Jeff Wilkinson, 5 Rowland Croucher, 6 Judy Wright, 9 Tony Cupit, 10 Mona Sprigg, 14 David Moreland, 17 Richard Dangerfield, 18 Malcolm Collins, 20 Bronwyn Prout, 25 Christine Wade, 26 Kath Malone.

WE REMEMBER THEM WITH GRATITUDE

WHITE, Ellen, died late in July. Ellen was born into the Sherriff family in Tasmania which was well known in Christian circles. Her and her family's influence led to Alex coming to faith in Christ, and she and Alex shared in ministry together in Smithton, Latrobe, Mentone and Earlwood. Ellen balanced her role as wife and mother to an ever-expanding family (six children) with Sunday School teaching, women's ministry, music and ever-generous hospitality.

When they retired from employed ministry in 1986, they continued to be fully involved in church life, latterly at Pakenham Baptist. One of Ellen's children said at the funeral, "Mum had a firm simple faith. Never simplistic, but a rock solid simple pattern. Faith in a Saviour who forgives and is able to redeem his people. Trust in a totally dependable Father whose promises were ever sure."

Her family will remember forever not only her love and amazing generosity, but also all she taught them by word and example about prayer, Scripture reading and faith.

DATARIO, Lida, 13 December 1950 – 26 July 2017. In the Philippines, Lida gained a Masters of Education and worked as a pre-school teacher, latterly in the Montessori style of education. As a volunteer chaplain with the Philippine Constabulary Evangelical Ministry she met Eddie Datario and his first wife, Renee. Some time after Renee's death, Eddie and Lida began to correspond.

She arrived in Australia in 1986 as Eddie's new wife, and as step-mother to Eduardo and Miriam: a new country, new culture, an established family situation. Taking on the role of wife and mother, and with Sam's arrival soon afterwards, Lida later worked with the National Council of Churches in Melbourne for 13 years, then the Royal Australian Air Force at Laverton as Technical Officer for 16 years.

Lida was a dedicated, tireless and devoted church worker, engaging in many aspects of pastoral work, and leading the choir. At Footscray, she trained young people to play the *Bandoria*, the major instrument used with the Philippine Rondalla band created by her husband. The band played at Lida's funeral. She and Eddie then served for ten years at Reservoir. Even while receiving treatment for cancer, she continued to be as engaged as much as possible in church life.

She was generous, and much loved by all her children, and they and Eddie feel her loss deeply. Her sister-in-law stated at the funeral, "She always told me to seek first the Kingdom of God."

FLETCHER, Doris, OAM, 26 January 1925 – 27 July 2017. Doris was passionate in following Christ. She was a prophetic voice reminding Baptists and others of the plight of refugees and modelling a practical response to their needs. Like many other true saints in the church, out of a heart filled with compassion and love, she could sometimes be uncompromising, forceful and blunt, but she got things done and many lives were blessed because of her. Doris was instrumental in setting up the Baptist New Settlers Women's Fellowship which specialised in

helping refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. She had a significant role in the establishment, for example, of the Baptist Vietnamese congregations of Melbourne. In 1990 she received the Medal of the Order of Australia for her work over 30 years. She was an inspiration to many people, and a fine example of what a life committed to Jesus is like.



Doris, pictured in 2008 at an Order of Australia Association regional multifaith service, with Rabbi Jonathan Keren-Black OAM and Father Grant Morrow OAM.

CROUCHER, Rev Jan, 1937- August 1, 2017 “A Legacy of Love.” (Written by Gwyn Milne)

Jan’s family, represented by husband Rowland, daughters Amanda and Lindy, and three granddaughters, along with Hal Grix from the East Doncaster church all paid heartfelt tribute to a gracious and loving lady at Crossway on August 10th at a large gathering to celebrate and remember her.

Jan was part of a large and quite disadvantaged family who grew up in various country areas of Australia. She overcame this by doing well at school and becoming a teacher along with Rowland whom she met at Bathurst Teachers’ College.

In due course Jan became a pastor’s wife at Narwee (NSW), then for a short time at the oldest Baptist church in Central Sydney before the family moved to Victoria where Rowland became the Senior Pastor at Blackburn Baptist (now Crossway). Jan became an integral part of the growth of that church by exercising her gifts, particularly of encouragement, pastoral care and hospitality. Along with four children of their own the Croucher home became a haven for many people as Jan welcomed family, friends, strangers and outsiders with gentle warmth, care and generosity. (It seems her chocolate chip biscuits became legendary! And their large house was always busy with guests.)

At the time when women were beginning to exercise leadership as ordained pastors, Jan responded to a call to pastoral ministry and was among the first few women to be ordained to Baptist ministry in Victoria. She became a much loved and respected preacher, pastor and wise friend to people of all ages at Heathmont, Syndal, Boronia and, even when illness overtook her, at East Doncaster.

People of all ages met to remember her ministry, her love and her kindness at the celebration of her life. Many happy memories were shared.

Her quiet influence has certainly left what her grieving family have said – “A Legacy of Love”. We remember Jan with love and her family as they grieve.

PLEASE CONTACT US

The next *Experienced in Ministry* newsletter is planned for November 2017.

We would love to hear your reactions and responses!

- In particular, I would love to hear from the **spouses of Pastor’s** who have faced the challenges of moving churches and/or their partner’s retirement. It is more complicated than for many others whose partners move or retire. Your experience could help others who are going through the same thing.
- **Have your read a good book lately? Or seen a good film?** As people who have been involved in ministry, let us share the good things we are discovering. Why not give us a comment, or write a short review, and how the book or film has inspired you, and what has changed in your life as a result.
- If you have been receiving this newsletter by mail, and are able and willing to receive it by email, please pass on your email address.
- If you hear of any news of our peers, or if you change addresses, please pass the news on.

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