



Learning more of the story that's formed us

I began this intentional journey of formation thinking that my reason for pursuing theological study was to deepen my 'head knowledge' and build an intellectual foundation from which to converse, teach and minister. 'Story of the Church' was one such subject that I thought would fill the head but leave my heart wanting. However, as the journey through history unfolded, I felt deep stirrings within my soul like never before.

Through allowing myself to see our Christian story in its entirety, I found deep companionship and inspiration in those that have walked before me. People who truly know the struggle of the Christian journey and that deep sense of conviction when we hear God speak into our hearts. History revealed moments of incredible joy and celebration, persecution and hopelessness and times when the sin of self-centeredness clouded an authentic response to Christ's call. I came to understand that as we embrace history as a whole, we embrace an encounter with God in all its fullness. A God who is not just present in the 'good bits' but is there in the struggle, in our failings, in our sin.

There comes deep spiritual and theological significance in acknowledging the importance of the whole journey, the whole metanarrative. In learning the stories of different people who have sought to follow Christ and be his disciples through different cultures and periods of history, we begin to understand the story of salvation - God's redemption, forgiveness and transformation of sinful humans.

Learning the history of our story reveals a deeper insight into God's faithfulness, the struggle of discipleship, a remembering of those moments when we felt lost and yet somehow we were raised from the cross of utter hopelessness. Not knowing the complete history of our Christian story is like meeting someone as a young child and then reconnecting with them at the end of their life. What has happened that has impacted their view of God, their practice of faith, their overarching perspective of life? How will we understand the person we now engage with if we do not take the time to listen to their story?

As we allow ourselves the opportunity to listen to the whole of the Christian story we learn more of the faithfulness, power, compassion, humanity and divinity of God. And, as we learn of our Creator, we learn of our own identity, who we really are in Christ. How then, can the study of history be purely intellectual? Rather, when we are willing to face truth in all its vulnerability, rawness, tears, and celebrations we begin to perceive God and the community of the Body of Christ from all the ages, bigger than we can ever imagine. We allow God to speak to us and minister to us through testimonies of those who have walked before us, and to transform our hearts, minds and souls in ways we could never fathom.

Together may we seek to learn more of the story that has formed us. May we hear the ancient voices of the Desert Fathers and Mothers whisper their words of wisdom from the caves of their inner struggle. May we hear the cries and smell the burning flesh of those who have suffered and been martyred for their convictions, may our hearts break and learn from the atrocities that Christians have committed upon those of other faiths and each other. May we be truly inspired by the actions of people such as William Wilberforce, Lord Shaftesbury, John Wesley and Martin Luther King Jr. who have sought to break the chains of oppression and bring God's transforming love and liberty to all classes and races. May we stand with unbelievers in the marketplace listening to the passion and evangelical sermons of John Whitefield and the Wesley's and, as Charles Spurgeon proclaims, may our hearts be stirred by the flames of revival, groaning, "O Lord, revive, thy work." As we gather in our churches of today may our spirits cry "Amazing Grace how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see."

Verity Riessen is a Master of Divinity student at Tabor College. She is an Elder at the Blackwood Church of Christ.



Introducing Mr Alan Young

President Elect, Churches of Christ in SA & NT Inc

It is with pleasure we announce that Alan Young has been appointed as the incoming President of Churches of Christ in SA & NT. Alan's appointment comes following the overwhelming endorsement of Conference Delegates. He will be inducted into the role of President by the outgoing President, Doug Walladge, at the Conference AGM on Saturday 18th November 2017.

Alan takes up this role at an important time in the history of our Movement in South Australia. His wisdom and experience in leadership and organisational change will be invaluable as we continue to review the way we live and serve together as a Conference of Churches. **Thank you Alan for your willingness to lead and serve us in this capacity.**

Here's an introduction to Alan ... in his own words.

My parents were missionaries on the aboriginal lands in Central Australia and Kimberley region.

I was raised on a scrub block west of Keith, in the Upper South East. At fifteen, I came to the City to continue my schooling and at sixteen became a member of the Hawthorn Church of Christ. I trained as a teacher and on my marriage to Margaret (Eagle) we attended Flinders Park Church of Christ. This was followed by a time at Naracoorte where I was Secretary to the South East Conference.

Since 1982 we have been members of Blackwood Church of Christ, fulfilling many leadership roles.

Most of my working career has been as a School Principal or District Superintendent of Education.

In 2002 – 2004 I worked as deputy team leader in a major AusAid project in Flores, Indonesia, building the capacity of educational leaders in basic education in a very remote area. (The 300 schools had neither water nor electricity.) We have also worked in Samoa. We continue to mentor key Christian leaders in both countries.

On retirement I spent ten years conducting bus tours around Australia for Seniors which led me into my current role of deputy Chair of Life Care.



What do I bring to the role?

- * I am a lay person who has a strong faith in Christ as my Saviour. I believe we are here to fulfil His Commission.
 - * As Christians I believe we need to support each other and share our journeys. Where appropriate we need to pool our resources for the common good of the Movement.
 - * Leadership and support for our young people is critical in building healthy contemporary churches in a time when people are seeking spiritual growth and understanding.
 - * Through my work I have had to be strategic in working with communities to develop current models of educational delivery and implement changes to ensure sustainability.
 - * I am positive, optimistic and keen to work with others who feel convicted to follow in the steps of Christ.
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Save the Dates!

Churches of Christ in SA & NT

Convention 2017

November 16-18



CareWorks

Celebration and AGM

Thursday 16th,

Western Communities Church of Christ – Mile End

Guest Speaker: Mark Henley—Manager Advocacy,

Uniting Communities and Energy Advocate, Uniting Care Australia



Conference of Churches of Christ Gatherings

at Marion Church of Christ, Cnr Marion Rd & Alawoona Ave, Mitchell Park

Celebration—Friday 17

Presentations, Discussions & AGM—Saturday 18

SMG Regional Manager

SMG is seeking a full time Regional Manager to facilitate the effectiveness, growth, resourcing and development of Chaplaincy Services through the engagement of Pastoral Care Workers in partnership with the combined Christian Church Support Groups across SA. The role includes collaboration with a wide variety of people including Schools and Inter-Church Support Groups, providing support, training and encouragement to Pastoral Care Workers and undertaking their performance reviews.

Applicants should have a demonstrated ability to communicate effectively the vision and mission of SMG and the chaplaincy program, and work collaboratively and respectfully with people of different beliefs and values.

Please contact Human Resources Manager Helen Bates E: helen@smg.asn.au or Ph: 8378 6800 for further information or to receive a job and person specification.

Anti-Poverty Week

15 - 21 October 2017

The main aims of Anti-Poverty Week are to:

- Strengthen public understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty and hardship around the world and in Australia; and
- Encourage research, discussion and action to address these problems, including action by individuals, communities, organisations and governments.

Everyone is encouraged to help reduce poverty and hardship by organising an activity during the Week or taking part in an activity organised by others.

<http://www.antipovertyweek.org.au/>

Database & Administration Assistant (16 hours per week)



Are you interested in being part of a team committed to supporting mission and development projects around the world? If so, this position maybe right for you. It is a permanent part-time position of 16 hours per week centrally located in Adelaide, and supporting the Administration office in the activities necessary for the work of Global Mission Partners. The successful applicant will be part of a small reception team and manage Salesforce, the database GMP uses.

Global Mission Partners is the mission agency of Churches of Christ in Australia, involved in Indigenous projects, international church partnerships and ministry, and in community development in Australia and Overseas. (For more information please visit our website www.gmp.org.au).

Applications must address the following selection criteria: an interest in global mission, efficient and accurate data entry skills, strong attention to detail, excellent organisational skills, experience in database management, personal reliability, and contributing to and working as part of a committed team. The successful applicant will report to the Finance and Administration Manager.

Remuneration is based on the Clerks – Private Sector Award 2010, subject to relevant experience and qualifications. The exact days will be negotiated with the successful applicant, but are flexible.

To apply please send an application, and a brief resume including the names and contact details of two referees. Applications close at 5pm on Monday 14th August and may be sent to Lisa Szepessy, Finance and Administration Manager, PO Box 341, TORRENSVILLE PLAZA SA 5031 or lisa@gmp.org.au. Enquiries on (08) 8352 3466.

Call to Pray

It is a good thing when you can pray for someone. It not only calls on God to be active in their situation, but it has an effect on us, the people praying.

You are invited to join with people across our churches in praying for one another.

For August, pray for:

Noarlunga Centre, Northern Communities of Hope, Northwestern Community, One Church (at Keith), Owen Community.

The Challenge



Poverty is a lack of choice.

For one month, experience that lack of choice.

Check out <https://safewaterseptember.org.au> to join us and sign up to take the challenge now!

If you want to learn more about the challenge including things like whether you can have communion, milk on your cereal or sparkling water, we recommend heading to our resources page, downloading the [Challenge-Taker Guide](#) and reading the FAQs! If you still have other questions - we'd love to hear them! You can email us at info@embody.org.au.

