

moore matters

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Sustaining Mission and Community in a 'Virtual' World

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A ministry of the Word to people

Mark Thompson / Principal

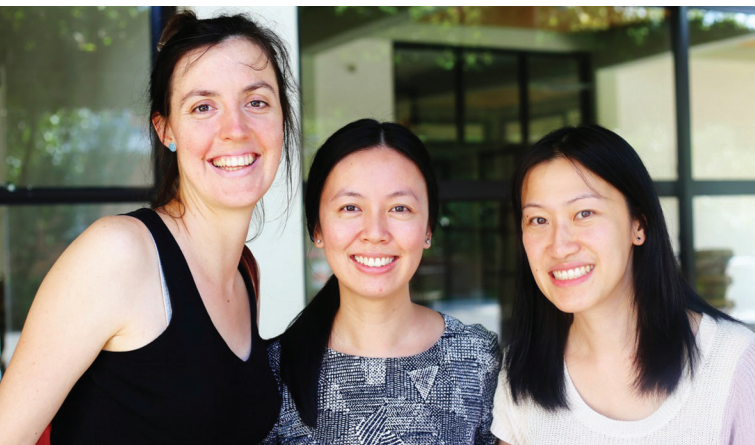
CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IS ABOUT PEOPLE. IT IS ESSENTIALLY A MINISTRY OF THE WORD OF GOD, BUT A MINISTRY OF THE WORD OF GOD *TO PEOPLE*. THAT IS ONE OF THE REASONS WHY THE PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY ELEMENT OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IS NOT SIMPLY AN OPTIONAL EXTRA.

Of course, there is much we can learn from books and podcasts, blogposts and social media. But a pastor-teacher, in whatever context they serve, has to deal with the intersection of the word of God and the lives of particular people. The way we prepare to do that must reflect what we are preparing to do, and that is why we are so committed to learning and living together at Moore College.

A friend of mine, someone who lives a long way away from Sydney, has spoken of how sometimes in church he feels like jumping up, waving his arms about and calling out to the preacher, "Hey. I'm here. I'm a real person. Stop speaking into the air and speak to me, will you?" There is a real danger that can arise when the activities

of ministry are abstracted from the people for whom the ministry is done in the first place, who are living real lives and have real concerns. That is something we want to avoid and that is another reason why learning together in the midst of living together is not only appropriate but vital. It reinforces that most basic truth.

How, then, do we respond when a worldwide pandemic means that at least for a while we cannot do what we are committed to do? What about when meeting together is forbidden, for very good reason? These last couple of months have been extraordinary for people all around the world. The COVID-19 virus has disrupted life on a scale rarely seen. All over the world social distancing (a very peculiar term) is being practised and gatherings of people have been banned. Our churches are unable to meet in the usual way. They have had to seek ways to keep in touch with each other and keep serving each other while keeping a distance from each other. There has been a lot of brilliant, creative and innovative thinking by churches all over the world. We have discovered fresh opportunities to reach more people than ever before while at the same time we all recognise that the best we can do remains recognisably



less than ideal in a number of ways as well.

What is true for our churches is true for our college as well. I have been blown away by the creativity and ingenuity of faculty, staff and students alike. Not only have we shared information and knowledge across new online platforms, but we have sought to keep contact with each other and to care for each other in this medium as well. There have been wonderful pluses we have discovered along the way. Yet none of us can wait until we can meet face to face, pass each other in corridors throughout the day, share meals with each other, stop spontaneously to pray with each other, to work and learn and live alongside each other. So what have we done?

The variety of what we have done is staggering once you start to think about it. Meetings of various types have happened online and they don't all look the same. Looking at fifteen faces on a screen and trying to engage them all at once can be tiring—and no doubt an entire morning of online activity is much more tiring than our usual morning of face to face lectures. Lectures have still been given, with creative ways of enabling comments and interaction being explored. Seminar groups where each person contributes have been taking place as well. The library has greatly expanded its electronic resources and we've adjusted our expectations in terms of assignments and other pieces of assessment. Chapel has been online, with people contributing from their own homes (songs, Bible reading, prayers and even sermons). Chaplaincy groups have met online and there has been a great deal of online prayer. One-to-one hook-ups have taken place, enabling us to keep some measure of contact with each other and each other's lives. It seems we have stepped up pastoral care of each other during this period, as we seek to ensure that no one is entirely isolated without contact from their classmates and friends. Texts, phone calls, little gifts left on the front doorstep—all of these have made a difference.

It has been particularly challenging for some to take their work or study into their homes and family lives. Little people don't always understand why mum or dad is home, but locked away and unable to spend

time with them. Small flats or houses don't necessarily provide a discrete study place away from the ebb and flow of family life. The boundary lines between work and rest, home activities and work/study activities, can become blurred. Productivity seems to plummet and that brings its own frustrations. Hours on end in the same spot is enough to increase tension and stress. Yet what has been particularly remarkable has been the way people at College have recognised these difficulties and sought to deal with them. We have learnt to cut each other far more slack in terms of what we expect from each other. It hasn't been easy, and few of us would want this to go on any longer than it has to, but there have been many encouragements among the difficulty. We thank God that College has been able to go on even in extraordinary circumstances. We are grateful for the technology and our astonishingly good IT team.

Perhaps the highlight so far has been the annual College Mission, about which you will read more in the following pages. Completely reimaged, we were able to maintain the mission focus and pursue new and creative avenues for evangelism. I hope many of you are able to access some of the resources that were produced during that week (moore.edu.au/moore-college-mission-2020).

We have adapted to the situation the Lord has placed before us. We still retain our commitments and we have tried to reflect them in the way we have dealt with each other and made use of the technology available to us. We have, nevertheless, learnt afresh how precious a thing it is to gather together face-to-face. Because ministry is about people, taking the word of God to people; and training for ministry is about people too.

Dr Mark D Thompson,
Principal

Mark D. Thompson

Lectures have still been given, with creative ways of enabling comments and interaction being explored.





In whom do we place our trust?

Trevor Cairney / Head of Foundation



Photo: RugliG | istockphoto.com

You've probably never heard of Professor William Purkey, but I suspect that you might just have heard or seen one of his 'wise' quotes. Like the following: "You've gotta dance like there's nobody watching, love like you'll never be hurt, sing like there's nobody listening, and live like it's heaven on earth." The last part of this saying is written on the sea wall at Bondi. Professor Purkey was also responsible for the term 'Invitational Education', which he explained as "an imaginative act of hope that explains how human potential can be realised".

Why have I started with this man's 'wisdom'? Because COVID-19 has demonstrated that such words are rather hollow when faced with a crisis that isn't easily solved with some smooth dancing, singing and loving! Not in Bondi or Beijing. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic this philosophy wouldn't have taken us far in life, nor led to much lifelong satisfaction. However, our experiences in Australia in the last 6 months must surely have helped us to understand that in the face of catastrophic fires, floods, drought, storms, and now arguably the deadliest pandemic for a century, slogans don't impact long term happiness that much. Doing 'happy' things, loving, and trusting in the

hope that you won't be hurt, aren't the foundations of a philosophy for life. So, how do such ideas take hold of the minds, attitudes and habits of many? And how do they offer any comfort when faced with a crisis that threatens our lives and futures? Perhaps more worrying, how do we help our children see through such hollow philosophies?

The contributions of others in this *Moore Matters* Winter edition offer wonderful reflections on life and ministry in the face of this deadly pandemic. The things that truly matter. If life is going smoothly, dancing the





night away might just offer the type of fulfilment some are seeking at that point in time. But life itself? I suspect that COVID-19 is challenging some of our preexisting assumptions as parents; and probably even those of our children. What might this mean for the way we live together in more isolated and fragmented communities? I want to ask a question of all readers (and of this writer):

What muddled philosophies do we naïvely prioritise over true wisdom and satisfaction that can only be found in the gospel?

In this edition we have varied responses to how we are to sustain mission and community in a ‘virtual’ world. As I have read and edited the articles, I’ve been struck by the collective biblical wisdom in the face of this crisis. Our Principal speaks of a priority on God’s word, and in fact, ‘word-centred’ communities. Simon Gillham discusses how to be adaptive people taking a word-based mission to the world. Lionel Windsor offers some wonderful insights into how we share our faith in a more ‘virtual’ world. Mandy Curley describes how one church has reimagined itself, and how it is now doing its missional work. And Simon Manchester speaks of the role of the Church to “get the world ready for eternity”.

As I reflected on these wonderful contributions, I wondered what (if anything) I could add. Was there still a missing piece? Perhaps there was. So I asked myself: what impact might the pandemic have on the aspirations and priorities of parents, and how we project these to our children? And even more specifically, as we’ve lived more closely with our families day by day (perhaps at times wishing to escape to individual tranquility), how well are we listening to one another? And I mean, truly listening. Not just hearing the things they say, but why they say them. What are their loves? What things please and even inspire them and us most? What are our children’s hopes and dreams for their future? Who are the people they look up to? And what are their reasons for such admiration? Who do they seek to be like? What are the great influences in their lives? How do they spend their time? And from where do they seek ‘true’ wisdom instead of hopeful slogans?

I’ve spent a lot of my life as a teacher, educator and academic, and one of my keen interests is still how learning and education are shaped within ‘communities’.

In the last 20 years, I’ve looked closely at how the many communities in which we live day by day (real and virtual) shape our beliefs, hopes, futures, desires and priorities. I’ve learnt that the multiple communities that we inhabit influence the things we believe and the people in whom we trust. In a recent book of mine, *Pedagogy and Education for Life*,¹ I explored how the things our children believe, and their hopes for their futures, are shaped within the myriad of ‘real’ and virtual communities they inhabit day by day. I also explored the role of parents and teachers in truly listening to them, and their tough task of speaking into the worlds of our children, influencing their journeys towards faith in God, and the truth of the Gospel. All childhoods in any age have many influences on what we believe, and our hoped-for futures. These include friends, teachers, grandparents, public figures (sporting stars, politicians, opinion makers), and varied media. The latter of course means that today our children have many more views of the world with which to contend. Hopefully, COVID-19 has given families opportunities to talk in ways that they haven’t been able to in the ‘normal’ busyness of life. Hopefully, we’ve all learned many things about our children’s hopes for their futures, as well as our desires for them. Some families will have found living with children every day harder than they thought. Others might not want to let their children go back to school.

When it’s all over, my hope is that every family will have learned the value of some basics. Small things like finding the time to listen to our children, and being attentive to the loves, hopes and desires embedded in the

conversations we’ve had with them. Let’s not say thank goodness that’s over and revert to old ways, whatever those might be. My hope for all of us is that there may well have been new learning during COVID-19. What or whom do we place our hopes in? Do our expectations for our children reflect the wisdom of the Bible, or worldly ambitions and hollow philosophies like those of Professor Purkey? What motivates them and us day by day? Do we trust in our Lord and Saviour? Or will we continue life as it was before, perhaps complacent and allowing the priorities of our world to direct our lives and those of our children? I’m reminded of Paul’s words to the Corinthian church, one that knew far too well about the competing philosophies of the world, “If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied” (1 Corinthians 15:19).

Let’s not say thank goodness that’s over and revert to old ways... My hope for all of us is that there may well have been new learning during COVID-19.

¹ Trevor Cairney, *Pedagogy and Education For Life: A Christian Reframing of Teaching, Learning, and Formation*, Eugene (Oregon), Cascade Books, 2018.



'World Mission' and the global pandemic

Simon Gillham / Head of Department of Mission

THIS YEAR'S MOORE COLLEGE MISSION WEEK FORCED US TO THINK MORE INTENTIONALLY AND CREATIVELY ABOUT THE COMPLEXITIES OF MISSION WORK THAN WE NORMALLY DO.

Our changed context meant that we had to ditch plans that we had been working on for two years, in order to meet the new challenges and opportunities for gospel proclamation.

Our plans for mass gatherings, for invitations to dinners, for door-knocking suburbs, for visiting schools and nursing homes, all had to be shelved. But the reason we planned to do those things was just as urgent and relevant as ever: people need to hear and respond to the gospel. This is the heart of mission; we are sent into the world to proclaim the good news of the Lord Jesus. For that reason, we re-imagined our College mission as an opportunity to proclaim this news in as many online ways as possible. The aim was to help equip churches with resources to reach the lost and build up believers who are living in physical isolation.

In all times and places there is the same desperate human need of salvation from sin. We are to take the good news of the Lord Jesus, but depending on the situation, we use very different mediums and methodologies to communicate this gospel message. This has always been the reality of global mission. For all our profound differences and variations around the world, the heart of mission and the heart of Christian ministry remains the same.

The emergence of the global pandemic also reminds us again of

the need for partnership. Moore College is privileged to have partnerships in ministry with churches and institutions all around the world. These have come about mainly through networks of Moore graduates and those amongst whom they serve. Increasingly in recent years, this has been multiplied by the GAFCON network and institutions that partner with our Centre for Global Mission (CGM).

As travel advice has morphed into outright bans, opportunities for missionaries physically travelling from one place to another have dried up. Some have chosen to stay 'in the field' where they are serving, and others have made choices to return to Australia while they were still able to. Despite restrictions on

physical travel, the gospel is not chained, and opportunities abound for exercising international, cross-cultural mission work from our own homes. So there are College graduates 'attending' student meetings in Europe, teaching theology classes in the middle-east, 'meeting' evangelistically with friends in East Asia, and regularly preaching in churches in Africa—all online from Sydney.

The ministry of CGM is strategically placed to continue much of its work with partner institutions all over the world. Thankfully, the pattern of Moore providing resources online was already established. Students around the world can continue to download the app, access materials and complete automatically marked assessments. Study can continue no matter how strict the lockdown protocols are. Translation projects in French, Russian, Burmese, Swahili, and Malagasy (to name just a few),



continue to progress and hold promise of making our theological resources accessible to more of the world's people.

This season also gives us an opportunity to begin work on a new project to develop resources for training people from less literate backgrounds to exercise Word-based

Thankfully, the pattern of Moore providing resources online was already established.

coming months than would have otherwise been possible.

While we praise God for these ministry opportunities, we must also recognise that many of our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world are affected far more dramatically than we are. While practising physical isolation is an inconvenience to us, for those living in urban slums it is an impossibility. While we encourage one another to carefully and regularly wash our hands with soap and water for twenty seconds at a time, spare a thought for those with no access to

the Word of God has been faithfully proclaimed and the running comments attest to the Spirit's work in the hearers' lives. I've been stirred by hearing from pastors who aren't able to record anything, but have worked out they can preach by text message, and then congregation members forward the messages on to one another. Churches are working together in unprecedented ways to share resources so that all their people might hear the Word.

Praise God that the good news of the Lord Jesus is exactly what people need to hear now, as always. Praise



ministries. Too often our models for ministry training rely on people already having highly developed skills in literacy before they begin. This is an issue in Australia, but an even more significant issue in many majority world nations where people don't enjoy the kinds of educational privileges that we often take for granted. As CGM Director, Malcolm Richards is putting together a team of people with experience in these kinds of ministries. They're working with our global partners to develop a new suite of resources that will be better suited to meet this largely unmet need. COVID-19 has provided many of these experts with more flexible time to devote to the work over the

soap or running water. The financial pressures on all our Christian ministries are real and are likely to present significant difficulty for some time yet, but many pastors around the world serve in situations where there is no electronic giving. Without physical gatherings, they have no access to cash or gifts of food from their congregations, and there is no government social security to fall back on. We must pray that the God of the harvest would provide for the workers who have been sent.

In the middle of all of this, so many encouraging stories are emerging. I've enjoyed watching church services broadcast from cities and villages in Africa, where

God that even physical lockdowns do not chain the Word, and cannot prevent his people from serving one another all over the world. Pray that in his mercy God would not only prevent loss of life now, but call many from death to eternal life. Pray that he might be pleased to use us and all the resources of Moore College to those ends.



The 'new normal' and the same old story

Lionel Windsor / Lecturer in New Testament and Greek

"I JUST WANT TO SEE MY FRIENDS!" THIS WAS THE FRUSTRATED—AND COMPLETELY UNDERSTANDABLE—CRY FROM ONE OF OUR TEENAGERS AS WE ENTERED ANOTHER WEEK OF ISOLATION WITH NO CLEAR END IN SIGHT. ALTHOUGH THESE FRIENDS HAD BEEN CHATTING (AND GAMING) ONLINE, THEY KNEW IT WAS A FAR CRY FROM SEEING EACH OTHER.

Yet this is the 'new normal' under COVID-19. By necessity rather than choice, online interactions are rapidly taking the place of physical contact. And this is all happening in the midst of other serious challenges: uncertainty about finances, job losses, unfulfilled dreams, loneliness, increased anxiety, depression, bereavement, and the ever-present fear of sickness and death itself.

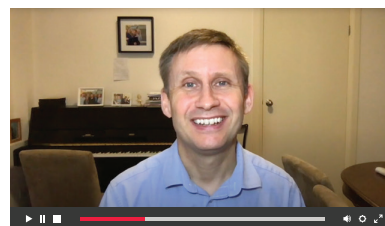
In one sense, this 'new normal' is not entirely new. Throughout history, humans have been subject to sickness, sadness, sin, futility, frustration and the looming prospect of death. While in modern times we've often been able to ignore this reality and pretend we're invincible and immortal, this modern sense of self-sufficiency has now been shattered. A Christian friend of mine, who had a baby close to the start of the COVID-19 restrictions, has been chatting via Zoom with her new mums' group. She's discovered that many who had originally identified as atheists, or didn't want to talk about God, are now thinking and talking openly about God, religion, life, and death.

So the 'new normal' presents us with a real opportunity to share the same old story: the gospel of Jesus Christ. Right now, we don't have to

work especially hard to convince people they need saving. People know there's something deeply wrong with the world and our lives. Into this situation of shattered illusions, we have a wonderful gospel to speak and share. And communication technology, for all its frustrations and challenges, gives us many opportunities to bring the gospel into people's lives in new and creative ways.

The challenges of online evangelism

Now there are real challenges when it comes to online evangelism. Evangelism is about sharing a message about a person: Jesus Christ, who is Lord and Saviour. This is best done in the context of relationships—as real people to real people about a real person. Relationships work most naturally when we're physically present. Of course, relationships can be established and fostered online. But it's not exactly the same. While it's amazingly efficient—you can connect instantly with anyone in the world—the nuance, depth and richness of the interaction is far lower. Online relationships are (often literally) two-dimensional rather than three-dimensional: instant and efficient, but 'thinner', less satisfying, and less natural.



We shouldn't be surprised when we feel frustrated or strung out by online communication.

As many have discovered recently, online video conversations can be exhausting. Text-based interaction (e.g. Facebook) is even more fraught: there are fewer face-to-face cues, and so more potential for wrongly assuming motives, misunderstanding, anger, polarisation, envy and anxiety. So we shouldn't be surprised when we feel frustrated or strung out by online communication. We all need to be disciplined about resting and limiting our time online. In fact, some people have realised they need to *pull back* on their online communication during these times. Maybe you've decided just to pick



up the phone and chat to friends more often. If so, that's fantastic!

The opportunities of online communication

But even with the challenges, there are amazing opportunities in online evangelism. We can instantly reach many people at once with the gospel—not just friends, but people we might never meet this side of eternity. And right now, people really are listening. My church is finding that many people from different places and backgrounds are connecting with our online 'church' events and evangelistic courses. My own personal blog, which includes a series of reflections about the gospel (based on Ephesians) and an associated podcast, has had a significant, sustained increase in visits and downloads since the COVID-19 crisis started. So people are open to the gospel, and they're listening.

Of course, online evangelism isn't just about big church events or

blogs or podcasts. It can also happen in individual, simple ways. For example, at the start of the isolation period, we decided to upload some regular YouTube videos of our family eating meals, having fun and talking about how we're coping and what we're struggling with—and of course how our trust and hope in Jesus Christ makes a difference in our lives. This helps people to connect, and enables us to share Jesus in a natural way, in the context of real life.

Some simple ideas

Maybe there is something you could do to share Jesus online? Life might already be full of challenges, so I'm not suggesting you add to the burden. Perhaps you could simply look at what kinds of online connections you already have, and try to be more deliberate about sharing the gospel within those connections?

This can be as simple as going onto a social media platform,

sharing something you're enjoying in life, and how you're thankful to God for it. Or, perhaps you could decide to share what you find hard right now, and relate that to your faith and hope in Jesus. Don't underestimate how powerful this is: at a time when many people are finding little joy and hope, it shows how Jesus makes a difference in your life. Perhaps you might simply decide to 'like' and 'share' more links

My church is finding that many people from different places and backgrounds are connecting with our online 'church'.

that communicate the gospel in some way—videos, articles, online church events, etc.—along with a brief comment about why you like it yourself. If you have the capacity, you might try something completely new. Some friends filmed their family cooking for a church event, posted this to social media and invited viewers to a church activity. A colleague has decided to read and reflect on a Psalm a day and share this online.

In all this, keep remembering that God is at work in his world through his Spirit and his word, bringing salvation and changing lives. This gives us confidence to take up online opportunities to speak the gospel into the lives of others, even when life is hard. It also gives us a reason to be disciplined, to rest, and to pray: recognising our limits, repenting of our sin, resting securely in his grace, and reflecting on his love for us in Jesus Christ.

Want to read more?

I explore some of these ideas in two of my books: *Gospel Speech: A Fresh Look at the Relationship Between Every Christian and Evangelism* (Matthias Media, 2015) and *Gospel Speech Online: Speaking the Truth in Love in a Digital World* (Matthias Media, 2017).



The missional work of the church in a pandemic

Mandy Curley / Assistant Minister, Christ Church Gladesville



THERE IS NOTHING LIKE A WORLDWIDE PANDEMIC TO HELP YOU RETHINK THE WAY YOU LOVE AND CARE FOR YOUR CHURCH MEMBERS, GATHER TOGETHER, AND REACH OUT WHEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ARE PROHIBITED.

Christ Church Gladesville, like churches all over the world, has worked hard to reimagine what it does and how to do it. It's a fairly well-resourced, medium to large church of about 400 adults, 100+ children and youth gathering on the average Sunday with around 100 youth and 40 kids on Fridays. But there have been challenges. Below are some reflections on what we've done that you might be able to adapt in your own churches.

Considering the way forward, it was recognized that the most important thing was to do the essentials of church well. In a time of rapid change and uncertainty we aimed to be something familiar and reassuring in people's lives. We knew we needed to continue to be God's people gathering

together around his word to spur one another on and celebrate his salvation and rule. Thinking from first principles about our ministry, we asked ourselves "what would be most helpful for our church members in the current, and evolving situation?". With many of society's worldly securities immediately shaken, we reflected upon the opportunity that churches had to share the love of Jesus, and the more certain hope of the gospel, that cannot be taken away by viruses or anything else.

Under the providence of God, we had already planned to implement live streaming of our Sunday gatherings for both pastoral care and missional reasons. Our 'Stream Team' accelerated the plans so that our first live streamed service happened on the last week we were able to meet together in the church building.

Since then we have continued to have our Sunday gatherings live (but without a congregation) and streamed. We wanted what we did on Sunday to be in the moment, and not feel the pressure of having everything perfect and packaged. We're not producing a

show, rather we are helping our church family in this strange time to do what we do each week—gather together, albeit for now, virtually, around the word of God. From YouTube chat where people can check in and say hello before the stream starts, to weekly Instagram photo challenges, and a question hotline with live questions after the sermon, we have been trying to keep a sense of community. Our evening congregation has regularly had a Zoom virtual supper after the stream. In the morning service, we've encouraged people to pick up the phone and call someone after church or gather online for morning tea. One member hosts a Zoom viewing of the stream so those without the internet can dial in to hear the service.

It's been a steep learning curve, but the Stream Team has in many ways been our dream team, putting in hours of work to ensure we can still meet. We are very thankful for the many people with technical skills that have made this possible.

Our kids' ministry has worked hard to connect with our families. Google Classrooms has been the main method for delivering

material, and we're partnering with parents to teach their kids from the Bible. To build a sense of community, on Sunday there is a live scavenger hunt to participate in and upload photos. Our Friday group has a live element, with leaders, kids and families interacting together. We've also had fun together through the holidays with twice weekly 'Zoomba' (Zumba via Zoom). During the week, leaders are video calling families to hear how they are going. In Term 2 we're having a weekly Zoom call after

needing to connect at this time. Leaders are adapting studies, and following up and connecting with people.

While our growth groups are doing the lion's share of pastoral care, we've also linked up every member of our church who is not in a group with some members of the same congregation to actively stay in touch. A weekly mail run, delivering printed versions of the sermon to members who don't have internet/email keeps them connected, and we've increased our

it was great to connect with people who have made Christ Church their home in recent months.

Term 2 will see us launching our second Faith Explored course (our first wholly online). This is our newcomers Bible Study for people who join our church and is a follow up to Christianity Explored. We've invited 16 people to join us, which is really exciting.

People have been eager to invite people to church online, actively sharing on social media about their faith. To connect with the

community, we've been filming interviews with local businesses about the impact of the virus on them. Straight after Easter we launched our second Christianity Explored of the year and have a group of 5 meeting together online.

Members have initiated weekly Men's and Women's prayer meetings online, and

the live stream for each age group, where kids and their families will get to connect with other families and their leaders.

Our youth ministry launched 2 new weekly podcasts: 'Bring it Back' helping the youth to think theologically and 'Bring it Out' with a mission focus. Growth Groups are meeting weekly online, and on Friday night there is a pre-recorded youth service with a talk, drama and prayer time.

Most of our Growth Groups have moved online. We've seen a spike in attendance in the first few weeks of moving online. This is perhaps a combination of availability and a real sense of

regular emails to the church. We've also had lots of people volunteering to deliver essential supplies to those who are self-isolating.

We've moved some of our training online, including an Intro Night for Term 2 where John Woodhouse helped us to understand 1 Samuel as we prepared to look at the second half of the book. As part of our Pastoral Care training series, Lyn Worsley from the Resilience Centre ran a seminar on Building Resilience in Adults, with over 180 people attending from church and our wider community.

We ran our first 'Online New Members Night'. It wasn't quite as good as being physically present, but

the Prayer and Pastoral Care teams for each congregation continue to meet. If anything, we've been more fervent in public prayer, and concerned to contact and pray for our link missionaries.

We are really thankful for how our church family has been able to care for and minister to one another and reach out to the community in this strange time of not being able to physically gather. We are also thankful for the technology that has made that possible. And yet, we long for the day when we will once again be physically gathered. What a day that will be!



An interview with Simon Manchester

REV SIMON MANCHESTER WAS APPOINTED IN MARCH AS SENIOR MENTOR IN PREACHING WITHIN THE JOHN CHAPMAN PREACHING INITIATIVE. SIMON IS AVAILABLE TO OFFER CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK ON SERMONS AND TO COACH PREACHERS IN THEIR REGULAR MINISTRIES.

This new key role has been made possible by generous donors who have benefitted from Simon's ministry over many years. It is a significant appointment for the College and has been welcomed enthusiastically by the Principal Dr Mark Thompson.

"Simon Manchester's richly biblical and pastoral preaching is appreciated not only in Sydney but around the world. We are privileged to have him help us equip and shape future preachers of God's word."



Recently, we had the chance to interview Simon (Editor)

1. How did your training at Moore College help you to communicate God's Word?

The College taught me the importance of the text, languages, proper exegesis and biblical framework. The Principal while I was at College (1976-1979) was Broughton Knox who was clear on what he could do (teach the truth) and what he couldn't do (preach engagingly). He would say to us "do what I say, not what I do!".

The models for good theology

were inside the College but the models for good preaching were outside. Someone like John Chapman (who combined good theology with good preaching) was so far ahead of the average preacher that his preaching around the Diocese set the bar for everyone and even the College lecturers would borrow his phrases and repeat them as if they were him!

The training at Moore included the "catechist" system, which linked you to a church on Sundays. If you worked with a helpful preacher you were very blessed. If you got to do Sunday preaching you learned by

trial and error to get better. In my first two years at Moore I served at a branch church, led the service and preached every single Sunday. It was good practice, not training.

2. How did your time after College develop your preaching ministry?

I was helped by going straight from College to work in Wollongong with David Peterson. We both left College (he as a lecturer and I as a student) to work at St Michael's Pro-Cathedral and he trained me in the great discipline of having



a sermon outline to the office by Friday morning. His example in exegesis and pastoral application was foundational.

My next curacy with Dick Lucas in London was a revolutionary time because he paid attention to the text in a way that I had never seen then, nor since. He would cut through to the significance of the Word in a way that gripped the mind and heart.

My times as a Senior Minister (in Lalor Park and North Sydney) have simply allowed me the week by week privilege and responsibility of teaching the Word as well as growing in the doing of it; being fed by the Word and continuing to learn.

3. In these strange times of COVID-19, what do you think should be preached?

People need to hear about God. This is the time when problems and fears are presented as the most important subjects in the world and they are not! The lifting up of the Lord in His greatness and goodness is our key task.

This is not the time to be preaching an 'SES' God who simply responds to a crisis and comes in to help with comfort, wringing His hands in apology that all this has happened. The Lord's mastery of the universe is comprehensive; nothing is out of His control. He actually "brings prosperity and creates disaster" (Isaiah 45:7) and He owes nothing to anybody. Let people see

His majesty and they might then say, "what must we do?"

Preachers must beware of presenting a feeble God as much as a heartless God.

4. How might preachers/pastoral workers help individual Christians as they struggle?

The huge focus on 'danger' and the strange 'isolation' is a cocktail for many fears. Locked up with ourselves we can become very intense and even unbalanced. A good pastor will alleviate some of this by describing the realities of fear (from personal experience) on the backdrop of God's character and very great promises. We must also make clear that though all suffering is linked back to the Fall, there is no neat explanation (like judgment) for this pandemic. Remember Job.

I am persuaded that this testing time (sifting, pruning, refining time) will help to reveal the shallowness of life for many non-Christians, and shallowness of faith in many Christians. This is the kindness of God, to wake many to their mortality and the realities of eternity and to help many Christians into a deeper fellowship than ever.

5. How might Christians grow in the weeks/months ahead?

Of course, the churches are learning to communicate with online services – from clunky to

classy! And God bless the youth and children's initiatives as well. All this is good and hopefully temporary.

But individual Christians can learn – with more time on their hands – how to plan their prayers and execute their plans. This is the time to realise that 15 second prayers each morning are not enough. This is the time to search the scriptures for answers, not just 'fridge magnet' comforts. Christian books perhaps bought on a whim can now be read more easily. Pastoral care by text, phone, Skype or Zoom is good for others and also for us. But before you call, plan what you will ask or say to really provide comfort.

In these strange times, the Lord in His wisdom has much to teach us; let's be good students.

6. When the church re-gathers what should be put in place?

Much thanksgiving to God for all that He has done to protect and restore.

Plenty of opportunities for people to share lessons learned.

Greater awareness of the role of the church to get the world ready for eternity.

And a renewed devotion to preaching the Word – given that it gave us the foundation to stand on through the pandemic and provides the light we all need in a dark world.

As Carl Trueman says "the task of the church is to mug people with reality". This will be needed when the world foolishly thinks all problems are solved, and even more foolishly, thinks it did the solving.



Graduation 2020

Michael Sadler / Alumni Officer



In his great kindness to us, the Lord allowed us to hold the Moore College Graduation 2020 in early March before Coronavirus lockdown measures truly began. Social distancing restrictions led to a series of extraordinary greetings in place of regular handshakes, but we can be very thankful that they did not prevent us from meeting together to celebrate the achievements of the 88 graduates and to pray for them as they head out into the world for the work God has prepared for them.

Once again, God has sent Moore College graduates across Australia and into all the world with locations of the new graduates including: Sydney, the Blue Mountains, Wollongong, Newcastle, Canberra, Armidale, Victoria, the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast, Rockhampton, Adelaide, Perth, North West Australia, New Zealand, South East Asia, Hong Kong, East Asia, South Africa and Northern Ireland.

God has given them a broad range of tasks to fulfil also. This year's graduates are now working in churches, schools, universities, the armed forces, theological colleges and hospitals. They're working as bible translators, evangelists, rectors, assistant ministers, youth ministers, lay ministers, software developers, administrators, journalists, scripture teachers and chaplains. They are ministering in English, Arabic, Chinese and Japanese. All are now further prepared and equipped for ministry and service of Jesus.

On the evening, former Principal John Woodhouse

preached from 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5, reminding graduates of the immense value and need of the work that they are going to do: moore.edu.au/resources/what-are-they-going-to-do-graduation-address-2020.

This was Archbishop Glenn Davies' last graduation as Archbishop and as Chairman of the Moore College Governing Board. There were many affectionate reflections from his long period of involvement and leadership of the College. He may now be back next year handing out testamurs due to the extension of his term as Archbishop, so watch this space.

A major highlight of the evening was the awarding of the online Diploma of Biblical Theology for the first time. Thirteen students received the award, although only four of them were able to attend the evening. Most were unable to attend because they live hundreds if not thousands of kilometres away. Praise God that students from across Australia and the World can receive the blessing of this accredited Moore College course.

We'd like to encourage all graduates to keep in touch with each other and with the College. We have a dedicated Alumni webpage: moore.edu.au/alumni/ and alumni members can contact me on alumni@moore.edu.au. In eager anticipation of the time when we're able to meet again in person, we've already begun planning reunion events for 2021.

Please join me in giving thanks to God and in praying for our most recent graduates.

In what do we trust?

The stock markets and the Australian dollar have both been taking a battering in recent weeks as the world has woken up to the harsh reality that COVID-19 is a global pandemic that will take lives and impact the global economy. Like you, I've witnessed varied responses to the daily spiral towards crisis. For many there might not have been much concern at first, about a virus that was somewhere else. However, worry increased as we heard of its fast spread and many deaths. Even then, some saw it as something affecting others, not them directly. How fast things have changed in just 8 weeks.

But what are people truly concerned about? Are we concerned about economic impacts, or the physical ramifications to millions of lives caused by this pandemic? Even now, as I try to negotiate a daily walk along familiar and once deserted paths, I'm dodging people with animals, scooters and bicycles, who seem oblivious to personal risk, and are maybe not concerned enough about their risk to others. I'm not sure how widely people care about risks to the frail and elderly, brothers and sisters in far flung nations, or strangers living in poverty in developing nations.

I hope and pray that few of our brothers and sisters have contracted COVID-19. But even if we don't catch the virus, we will be affected by it. As I write, I'm conscious that many Christian organisations have been affected. For some, it has meant doing new things, and trusting in God to get them through. I'm praying for specific organisations doing good work. Some of our readers and supporters may have seen death far too close to home. I hope collectively, that our primary concern will be for those directly impacted by the virus. That is, not just those within our families, but also across our communities, our networks of relationships, and indeed strangers in other nations.

Please continue to pray for the varied Christian



organisations that we might support. At Moore we continue to need your partnership and help, but we also understand that there are financial challenges for others as well. It might be that, for those not directly impacted either in health or financially, this will be an opportunity for added generosity, to compensate for those who have less potential to give. Our needs continue as before, and we are extremely grateful for the generous support of so many. Our key priorities right now are:

- » Scholarship support for our students
- » General purpose giving that we can allocate to specific needs
- » Student accommodation as we plan to replace John Chapman House by 2023

And please join me in praying for:

- » Brothers and sisters affected by COVID-19
- » The College and its students, faculty and staff
- » A shared commitment to God's word
- » Hope in the Gospel for eternal salvation
- » The desire to care for and follow up others in need

Please feel free to contact me if there's anything I can pray for you, or if you have any questions. You can email me at trevor.cairney@moore.edu.au or phone my direct line at +61 (0)2 9577 9900 (please leave a message if I'm not available to pick up the phone).

Trevor Cairney
Head
Moore College Foundation



My Moore gift

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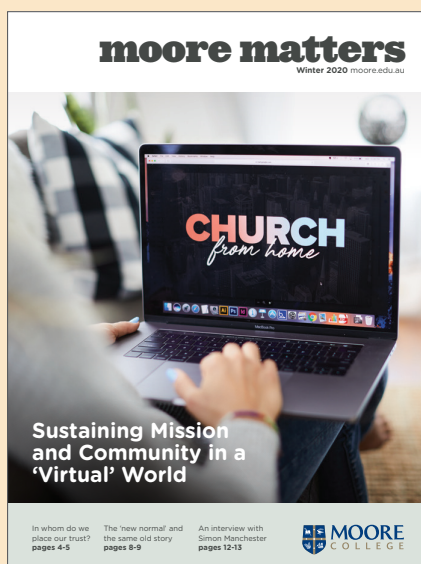
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About Moore College

Moore College exists to train men and women to take the good news of Jesus Christ to the world. Since 1856, more than 5,000 students have graduated from the College and have been sent out by God. Moore College has equipped men and women to serve in over 50 countries across the World. Today over 3,500 students are enrolled in our courses globally.



Dates for your diary 2020

JUNE

Saturday 20 Men praying for Moore

JULY

Tuesday 14 July – Tuesday 25 Aug PTC lecture series:
John's Gospel

AUGUST

Sunday 2 Moore College Sunday

SEPTEMBER

Monday 7 – Wednesday 9 John Chapman
Preaching Clinic 1

Wednesday 9 – Friday 11 John Chapman
Preaching Clinic 2

Tuesday 15 Sept – Tuesday 27 Oct PTC lecture series:
Early Church History

Wednesday 16 Retiring for Work:
P&A Centre talk with
Peter & Christine Jensen

For more information or to book now,
go to moore.edu.au/events.

**MOORE
COLLEGE
SUNDAY
2020**
2 August

Will you pray?



moore.edu.au/mcs

Moore College equips men and women to present a sure and certain hope to a world in need

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. Matthew 28:19-20



Will you partner with us in this great mission?

moore.edu.au/support-moore

