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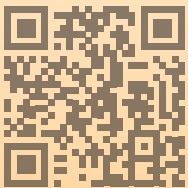
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Editorial

Welcome to the August 2023 issue of *InterSections*.

It's always worthwhile to take time out to focus our minds on Jesus. We can easily get carried away with whatever it is that keeps us busy. But as Christians it's important that we remember above all that we are Jesus' disciples. That's why this issue focuses on the cross. The cross is a symbol that we see everywhere, but how often do we think about what it actually represents? What does it mean to follow a master who died on a cross?

In our *Feature*, Nathan Holyoak considers what it would look like for the church to put the cross at the centre of our message. In *Food for Thought* Travers Coker reflects on what it means for each of us to carry our own cross. Joanne Tjipto reviews *Simply Jesus* by N.T. Wright, a book that helps us to see the story of Jesus with fresh eyes and better understand what Jesus has accomplished. We also have an extended interview on the subject of foster parenting – a wonderful example of sacrificial love in action. David and Christine Payne, together with Rebecca Wall, discuss their experiences as foster parents.

Church Scene looks at the Greater Dandenong Church of Christ in Melbourne. And in *News*, we read about the recent Fifty-N-Over Retreat in Sydney, and also the regular ANZAC day picnic held in Perth.

With this issue, we bid farewell to Jenny Ancell who stepped down from the editorial team. Jenny has been a fabulous team member since she joined in 2011. Here's a big thank you to Jenny for her superb service in God's kingdom!

The *InterSections* Team.

ChurchScene

Greater Dandenong Church of Christ, VIC

At the end of 2016, Jimmy Forbes, his wife Analene, their daughter Julie, and (son-in-law) Reggie Ganji started to meet with an Italian Christian family of three in their homes on Sunday evenings. The Forbes were then with the Belmore Road Church of Christ, while the Italian family was with the Southeast Church of Christ.

On Sunday, 10 April 2017, the group formally launched itself as a new congregation at The Castle. This is an events venue available for hire and located along Princes Highway in Greater Dandenong, in the southeast region of Melbourne.

On that Sunday, 86 people were in The Castle auditorium for this inaugural worship service. Besides the core group, other attendees included family, friends, and brothers and sisters from various congregations including Frankston, Southeast, Belmore Road in Melbourne – and even from Malaga in Perth!

However, on the following Sunday, attendance at worship dropped to 12. This was a clearer reflection of the nascent church. Over the subsequent months and years, people from other congregations (like Southeast and Belmore Road) came to worship with the church. New members were also baptised.

Today, the Greater Dandenong church has about 30–35 members comprising half a dozen nationalities. The congregation still gathers at The Castle on Sundays. There are two children's classes on Sundays: 4–7 years old and 8–10 years old. The church also meets on Wednesday evenings for a Bible study in members' homes; these meetings rotate every two months.

As Jimmy and Analene explained, the reason for striking out as a new congregation was twofold: (1) to reach out and bring back Christians who had drifted away; and (2) to start a new work in the Greater Dandenong area with a strong commitment to God and his Word.



The Castle, May 2023.
(Photo: Kok Bin Ong)

Kok Bin Ong



A census taken in 2021 reports a population of some 160,000 in Greater Dandenong. It's a region with various multicultural communities. It was felt that there was a need to have a new congregation there.

On a recent visit, I interviewed several members of the Greater Dandenong church. Below is a sampling of their responses.

How do you describe the congregation? What are its strengths?

- 'It's an open church, diverse, welcoming, surrounded by like-minded people.'
- 'The people are fun-loving, approachable. They get along well.'
- 'I was raised up in the church. It's like family here. I have watched the kids grow.'

What can the congregation do better? What are its weaknesses?

- 'Our group dynamics can be improved. People not attending church need encouragement. Sometimes there is miscommunication, and some are quite sensitive.'
- 'We need more interaction with other congregations, like joint fellowship gatherings and worship services.'
- 'Perhaps more outreach?'

Why do you come to this congregation?

- 'For our children and grandchildren. This congregation is Christ-centred. Its teaching is biblical. When we are no longer here, our grandchildren will have a good grounding in the Bible.'
- 'It is a grassroots, basic Bible church with straight, appealing teachings.'
- 'I feel the world is bad. Christianity is good. I like the church here. It's family oriented.' (This comment is from a recently baptised, younger Christian.)

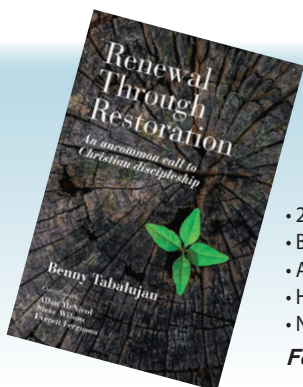
If you're ever in the Greater Dandenong area and wish to worship with the Greater Dandenong congregation, please contact Jimmy Forbes on 0403 959 242 for more details. ◇

The Greater Dandenong church is profiled by Kok Bin Ong, Melbourne, for InterSections. kokbin@gmail.com



The church after a worship service in 2021. (Photo: Reggie Ganji)

The church at its first camp at the Foothills Conference Centre, Mooroolbark, Victoria, 18-19 February 2023. (Photo: Reggie Ganji)



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Feature *The Message of the Cross*

Nathan Holyoak

If you asked random people about what the message of Christianity is, what do you suppose they would say?

In times past a common answer might have been something like, 'Christianity is about loving others and being a good person.' Today we might also hear something like, 'Christianity is a source of bigotry and repression.'

While we may lament the decline in the social standing of Christianity represented by this change, I think what's more concerning is that neither of these answers truly capture the message of Christianity. This demonstrates a failure of the church over generations to communicate faithfully the Gospel to the world, and even to itself.

So, what's the true message of the church? When Paul wrote to the church in Corinth they were divided and struggling from many worldly influences. To re-ground them Paul gave a wonderful defence of the Christian message in contrast to the world. He summarised the Gospel with the phrase, 'the message of the cross' (1 Corinthians 1:18).

To our ears, this phrase may seem abstract. It sounds like a highbrow theological expression. But to Paul's readers, the cross needed no introduction. Everyone knew what the cross represented: shame, torture, and death. The cross was the fate of the traitor, the lowest criminal. The cross was something you didn't talk about in polite company.

Why then is Paul giving the cross pride of place? What was he thinking?

Paul embraced the cross because he could see that, strangely, it was in the cross that God's power lay. *'For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.'* (1 Corinthians 1:18) The cross is where God's redemptive power is made available to all who are being saved. The cross represents more than just shame and death; it represents God's victory over them. This is the essence – the good news – of the Gospel.

It's interesting to observe how Paul's understanding of the message of the cross influenced his attitudes toward his life and the work of the church. He didn't see the shameful nature of the cross as a hindrance to his ministry. In fact, he saw it as its most important feature.

The cross meant that his ministry wasn't centred around him; his work wasn't reliant on his own eloquence or ability to persuade. Instead, it was centred around God's power as demonstrated in the cross of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:4–5).

The cruel death of Jesus on a Roman cross wasn't pretty or eloquent—so we shouldn't expect the power of the cross to be found in anything like eloquence, charisma, popularity, worldly wisdom, or human reasoning. That's how the world thinks and works. The message of the cross doesn't lend itself to a religious movement seeking social favour, upward mobility, or worldly influence. Anything we try to build on these foundations is doomed to fail (1 Corinthians 3:12–13).

This understanding seems to have been liberating for Paul. The message of the cross was bound to alienate many, but this wasn't due to any failure on Paul's part. It was a result of the inherently divisive nature of the cross: foolishness to the perishing, power to those being saved. But it also gave him a laser-like focus: *'I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.'* (1 Corinthians 2:2) The world could throw what it liked at Paul, but it couldn't distract him from sharing this message any way he could—and he let the chips fall where they may.

What would it take for the church today to be known first and foremost as people of the cross? It will mean placing Jesus at the centre of the conversation. The mission of the church isn't primarily about things like fighting culture wars, achieving social status, or gaining political influence. Like Paul, our task is to proclaim the simple message of Jesus Christ crucified.

Doing this will require us to change our attitudes towards the world as it did for Paul. Like the Greeks, we want to appear wise and sophisticated in the eyes of the world. We want to win arguments and win people's respect. Like the Jews, we want to feel comfortable and justified in our own goodness. We want to be on the right side of history and win accolades from those around us. But the message of the cross dissolves these attitudes.

To follow the cross of Christ is to admit that we're sinners and to confront the awful cost of that sin. It's to face ridicule from the world. It's to let go and trust in God's wisdom and righteousness rather than our own. Adopting this attitude can't help but change the way we engage with the world. I suspect we'll find this just as liberating as Paul did.

Perhaps a renewed focus on Christ crucified will enable us to cut through some of the preconceived ideas that exist about the church. Rather than being known as do-gooders or judgmental bigots, we might be known as the Jesus people. Even if that was used as an insult, would it be so bad? Isn't that who we really are? ◇

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Food for Thought *The Cross: Reflections on following Jesus*



It could be said that the cross was *the* defining moment of Jesus' life, that his suffering and death on those two pieces of timber was *the* focal point of his ministry. You and I would probably agree on that. However, it could also be argued that his resurrection, three days later, was *the* moment instead. And that too, you and I would probably agree on. After all, we know that each of those events has significance, and only makes sense, because they *both* happened.

In fact, if we spent more time reflecting on what Jesus did and said during his ministry, we could find many moments that would safely be categorised as significant. But dissecting them and ranking them would have little benefit as they are all interwoven and equally part of who Jesus is – God in the flesh.

We'd have the same trouble separating and picking God's 'best' attribute. How can you really separate God's justice, power, mercy, love, glory, and forgiveness and decide which one is most important? No chance. Are we still in agreement?

Am I saying that the cross is not important, not pivotal to every one of us? No! What I'm trying to say is that, in a very real way, Jesus' act on the cross was *not* any different or separate from the rest of his life. Every part of his life was lived in obedience to his Father's will (otherwise his sacrifice was not sufficient). Even when he was growing up and learning a trade, wasn't Jesus pleasing God? Certainly. But does this diminish his act of sacrifice and suffering on the cross? Not one bit. It's humbling to think that Jesus was 'bearing his cross' long before he took that hard lonely walk up to Golgotha.

We read in Matthew 16:21–26 that, at a certain point in his ministry, Jesus began to tell his disciples about what was in store for him: Jerusalem, suffering, death, and resurrection. Peter seemed to have focused on the middle two and decided that suffering and death weren't part of the plan. Jesus' rebuke was stinging. In no uncertain terms, Peter was reminded that Jesus wouldn't be deterred from his mission. His mission came as a package deal. Each element was in keeping with his Father's will.

Jesus had his cross to bear, only one part of which was what happened on *the* cross. Jesus then goes on to tell all his disciples (not just Peter) that if they (and you and I) want to follow him, then we must deny ourselves, pick up *our* cross, and follow him.

What does my cross look like? What does yours look like? I can't tell you specifically – not because it's a secret, but because I don't know. One thing I do know is that our crosses are the same in that each of us will be doing our best to follow Christ in submitting ourselves to what God calls us to do. Another thing I know is that each of us is different – we have different gifts, live in different places, struggle in different areas – in short, we lead different lives. Yet my cross and your cross come as a package deal, just as Jesus' life did.

There may be parts of our lives that we don't really want to have to deal with or go through, but Jesus modelled what it means to trust God anyway – in all of life. The step before taking up our cross is to deny ourselves. We can have many plans for what we want to do in our lives, where we want to go, and how we think it will pan out.

But when we choose to follow Jesus, all that doesn't matter anymore. Obviously, any unrighteous plans would be scrapped but anything and everything else that remains is now put in the 'if the Lord wills' basket. Taking up our cross means that whatever comes our way, whatever path God has laid out for us, is the path we must choose.

Now, I don't know about you, but it isn't always easy carrying a cross. Especially when we (or is it just me?) look around and see others who seem to have a light, smooth, plastic cross instead of a heavy, hardwood one like ours. In John 21:18–22, Jesus gave Peter a glimpse of what was in store for him and where his life would end. But Peter fell into the same trap we often do: he wanted to compare his cross with the one John was carrying. Jesus' reply was sharp: don't worry about John, pick up *your* cross, and follow *me*.

Jesus had borne his cross: he'd been tempted and tried, beaten and bruised, buried and raised (and everything else before, after, and in between). He did all this so that Peter – and you and I – would have someone perfect to imitate:

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (Hebrews 12:2–3) ◇

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InterSections is a quarterly journal designed to inform, encourage, and unite Christians in Australia seeking to restore New Testament faith and practice. The editors are responsible for selecting material for publication, but each article reflects the views of its author(s). Advertisements in *InterSections* are broadly consistent with the ethos and goals of the journal; however, they do not necessarily constitute endorsement by the journal. *InterSections* is published by Klesis Institute (© Klesis Institute, 2023). Copyright permission is given to anyone wishing to reproduce an individual article for non-commercial purposes, as long as due attribution is given to the author and *InterSections*. Klesis Institute is a division of CommAsia Australia Pty Ltd (ACN 097136171 ABN 53702023602).

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News *Fifty-N-Over Retreat, Sydney (NSW)*

Not everyone qualifies to attend this event (and many are reluctant to admit they do qualify) because this is an annual retreat for those 50 and over! In 2024, this retreat will celebrate 40 years since its inception.

This retreat, the 'heart child' of two sisters, Jenny Ancell and Judy Bebe, was formulated to provide seniors among Churches of Christ with an annual time of fellowship, inspiration, and encouragement. Activities include lessons from God's Word, singing, prayer time, craft sessions, cricket for seniors, early morning exercise classes, the always popular Saturday night auction, and a very competitive and fun trivia night. All this is powered by delicious catered food!

The retreats have brought together Christians from many different places including a few who have been quite isolated from their brothers and sisters in Christ. Participants have therefore come to enjoy an appreciation of what God is doing in the lives of his children all over the country, and indeed all over the world.



Finding a suitable venue that caters to seniors, some of whom have special needs, has not always been an easy task. For the last two years, retreaters have enjoyed the tranquil setting of the Mount Carmel Retreat Centre at Varroville on the southern outskirts of Sydney.

The retreat is a four-day event, beginning on a Friday afternoon and finishing on Monday after lunch, over the first weekend of May. A dedicated board comprising brothers and sisters in Christ meets several times throughout the year to plan this very special time. Please direct enquiries for future retreats to Warren Thorburn (0414 893 330) or Alan Bottle (0422 106 065). ◇

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Anzac Day Picnic, Perth (WA)

Believers in Perth have been gathering together at Kings Park on Anzac Day (April 25) at 11am to fellowship in God's creation for as long as I can remember. It started as a city-wide picnic for Christians to have an opportunity to see each other in a different setting, share some food, kick the footy, and just relax. April in Perth is often unpredictable. Every year we have the threat of rain, but just about every year it clears and we have a great time. I believe the time of pandemic restrictions was the only occasion the inter-congregational Anzac Day picnic was cancelled.

This year it did rain on Anzac Day. So, for the first time I can recall, we moved the gathering to our church building. Inside we played board games and made some precious memories. In my life, I aim to be inclusive of all God's people and I'd really love to see all those who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ in Perth, as well as any visitors to Perth, come and join us. ◇

Paul Tyers, Malaga Church of Christ, WA tyers.paul@gmail.com





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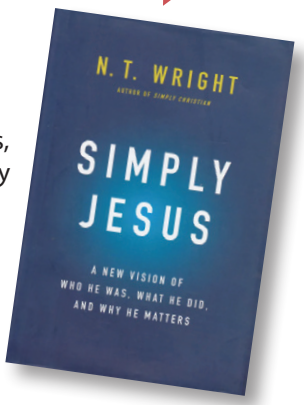
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Simply Jesus: A new vision of who he was, what he did, and why he matters, by N.T. Wright (HarperOne, 2011)



Many Christians today spend a significant amount of time reading about Jesus, praying with Jesus, talking about Jesus, and meditating on Jesus. Yet N.T. Wright argues that many of us may not really understand who Jesus was, what he did, and why it matters today. Wright suggests that we often unknowingly create our own versions of Jesus due to a lack of understanding of the historical and cultural contexts of biblical times.

In *Simply Jesus*, Wright provides answers to these three key questions. His short answer is this: Jesus is king; Jesus came to earth to proclaim his kingship; and Jesus rules his kingdom on earth today through his followers.

Wright explains that Jesus' kingship and kingdom were and still are so radically different when compared to human expectations. The Romans believed that Caesar was god and king; they couldn't accept Jesus as king if he didn't have an army, weapons, and territory. The first century Jews had waited long for a Messiah to save them from foreign oppression; they couldn't accept Jesus as king if he didn't physically overthrow the Romans. Today, too many Christians accept Jesus as king in their hearts but feel that his power and rule only exist in a faraway heaven. Others can't accept Jesus is king if he allows evil and suffering to abound on earth.

Yet, according to Scripture, Jesus has established himself as king and he manages his kingdom in a way everyone least expects. King Jesus did defeat the enemy, but not the enemy anyone imagined. He defeated Satan – who's behind all evil in this world – by defeating death on the cross. King Jesus possesses an impressive army, but not one dressed in military uniforms like earthly armies. Instead, his army is represented by the church and comprises the broken and contrite. King Jesus owns the finest weapons, but not ones that can be easily seen or held. Instead, his weapons conquer body, heart, and soul through forgiveness, healing, and love.

In sum, Jesus' kingdom exists. And it's not in a faraway space. Instead, his kingdom is at work at this very moment, on earth as it is in heaven.

I was one of those Christians mentioned in Wright's book: I grew up all my life thinking that Jesus' kingdom exists in a faraway heaven. I felt that my life on earth was something to suffer and tolerate in the hope that I will eventually end up in the right place. I knew Jesus was king but didn't see or feel his kingdom's presence on earth.

Reading Wright's book wasn't simple for me. I found it difficult to understand several arguments in the book because of a lack of understanding of Old Testament prophecies, scholarly controversies, and biblical history. Yet, persevering with the book has improved my understanding. Now Jesus' kingdom has been redefined in my life.

Previously, the church felt like a group of weary people hanging onto a rope waiting for a Saviour to sweep us up into a confined heaven filled with gold and jewels. Now, I see glimmers of heaven on earth. The church rules with Jesus and the church is victorious in Jesus. Everything on earth submits to King Jesus – nature, believers, and unbelievers – even if it's not entirely obvious to all. Jesus allows evil and suffering to continue even as he expects his church to share in his pain and glory. Through God's Spirit, the church abides in love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control – thus giving Christians true victory over sin and death.

Go ahead, pick-up Wright's book. And hang in there to the end! ◇

Joanne Tjipto is married to Alvin and they are blessed with three young boys. The Tjiptos are part of Belmore Road Church of Christ in suburban Melbourne. shuwen12@gmail.com



REVITALISING THE CHURCH

The Elders of Belmore Road Church of Christ are pleased to host the **2023 Asia Pacific Elders, Deacons and Spouses Forum**
Venue: Belmore Road Church of Christ, 100 Rostrevor Parade, Mount Albert North, Victoria.
For more information contact Alan Rowley (APEDS2023@gmail.com or +61 419 264 931)

On Foster Parenting

In this interview, we ask three Christians about their experiences of foster parenting. David & Christine Payne are based in Melbourne, Victoria, and foster parent several children; Rebecca Wall is single and undertakes foster parenting while working as a schoolteacher in Albury, NSW.



How long have you been fostering children and what motivated you to undertake it?

David & Christine: A number of years ago we were members of the Gosford church (NSW). One of the main missions of the congregation was to support people in the community who were finding life challenging. This included a large outreach ministry focused on community youth. Several of them spent time in our home with our family, some needed meals, and some needed accommodation for days – others for months.

When we came to Melbourne, that passion continued. In 2014, we decided to register for foster care and then completed carer training through Anglicare Victoria. Since then we have cared for six children in different capacities. We've benefited from the support of many who have partnered with us in various ways over the years and especially our own children who have always been involved in and supportive of this mission.

Rebecca: I have been fostering for just over eight years now. I had it in my mind for quite a long time to foster children. I felt this is an area that I have the capacity to provide help. I saw a lot of need for it in my work as a schoolteacher. Once I had my own home, I was able to start looking into becoming a foster carer. I started out by providing respite care once a month. This quickly turned into becoming a full-time placement.

What are some key challenges you've faced in fostering children?

David & Christine: We're grateful that God has put these children in our lives but saddened by the circumstances that made this necessary. Raising someone else's child is challenging and carries a huge responsibility with it. Every child in foster care is suffering from trauma, often through abuse, neglect, and/or abandonment. You're bringing this trauma into your own life and carrying much of it for them while they learn to live with it.

By its nature, foster care is enshrined in a complex government and legal framework. Some of the decisions made on the children's behalf are hard to understand. It's also challenging to accept that some children won't respond to love, security, and safety. But the effort is worth it. God wants us to be faithful to the commitment, not to the result.

Rebecca: One of the key challenges I've faced was suddenly being a parent when I didn't have any parenting experience! I sort of started in reverse since my first full-time placement was 17 years old. I imagine it's very different from parenting one's own biological children as you can nurture them right from the start.

I also had to learn how parent in a way that was much different from what I had originally imagined. It took a lot of time and effort for me to change and grow to be someone who was trauma-informed – someone who can approach challenging behaviours with empathy, curiosity, and understanding.

What aspects of fostering children have been particularly satisfying for you?

David & Christine: A child who has been traumatised has the potential to live life being defined as a victim. Seeing a child choose to not be defined by how others have adversely treated them is very special – that's satisfying. We often see them become more confident, learning that they are of value and deserving of love and support – they come to understand that their situation is not their fault. Transformation takes place.

Many of these children have never heard of God and having the privilege of introducing them to God is also

very satisfying. The journey helps us to have greater understanding of how God loves us in our brokenness and is faithful in that love through all the challenges along the way. God opens our hearts and provides the strength we need to walk through each day with a child – whether or not they stay on.

Rebecca: The most satisfying part of fostering has been seeing the young people I care for overcome the challenges in their lives and grow – even if the growth is small. When I look back and see where they have come from to where they are now, I'm so proud of them all. I'm proud of them because I know what they've had to overcome.

What makes good foster parents?

David & Christine: Caring for a child means more than providing meals and a roof over a child's head. It's important for carers to open their hearts to a child as if the child is their own – even though they may leave. It's important to understand that, in some circumstances, the goal of foster care is family reunification.

Character traits and attitudes like resilience, patience, self-control, the ability not to overreact, consistency, and being sacrificial and wise are required to be good foster parents. Many of us don't have these traits mastered when we start but, through the journey of foster care, God gives these qualities to us. It's important for foster children to hear and see that they are loved.

Rebecca: Good foster parents are people who can put aside their own expectations and go into foster parenting being flexible and adaptable. Many worry about becoming too attached. It's true you can become too attached; and sometimes it doesn't work out the way you wish. But I don't think anyone will ever regret opening up their hearts and homes to young people who need it.

I also think good foster parents place value in building positive relationships with the biological families of the children – if this is possible. Being able to know where the children are from and connecting to their identity is invaluable. This helps the sense of self and worth of the young people in care.

How can other Christians – who may not be in a position to foster children – assist you in your efforts to be a good foster parent?

David & Christine: When you enter a church community with children who aren't your own, it's natural for others to be curious about them. However, foster children may carry with them difficult family histories, so it's helpful for others to respect the privacy of the child's journey as it's their story to reveal if or when they choose.

It's also important to understand that being part of a church community is foreign to many of these children. They may not have the same behaviours and responses as children raised in Christian families. Having a tolerance for unexpected responses can help children to feel like they belong and are valued.

Foster care is often characterised by periods of unregulated behaviour, and medical and therapeutic care. These periods put great strain on foster carers and can be supported by prayer and practical offers of assistance.

Rebecca: Other Christians can be supportive by building positive relationships with the young people as mentors or role models. Perhaps even offer to take the kids out for a bit in order to provide some respite for the full-time carers. Support can also be offered through prayer or even just a phone call to check in and see how everyone is going. I think having a support network to call upon if needed is vital. Having Christians I can talk to has been so helpful to me.

What can the church do to help?

David & Christine: In Australia right now there are thousands of children in need of care from harmful and conflicted environments. Once you witness the enormity of the problem, you can never un-see it. Christians can show the love of Christ to the world by helping these children.

There are many options available to help in foster care. Foster carers can have children in their homes for extended periods. Short term options are available through emergency and respite care. People may like to mentor or help a child with homework or be a buddy. This supports the child by

providing a broader network of safe adults and can support carers who may just need a break for a few hours. Child protection departments and care agencies can provide training and highlight needs in the fostering community where churches can help.

Rebecca: It would be worthwhile if the church can provide some education around foster care. This can improve overall understanding of the issues carers and young people in their care face.

Which biblical principles are especially helpful for foster parenting?

David & Christine: During the Exodus, God created an alternative community which contrasted the way of life in world empires like Egypt. The alternative community was characterised by the principles of loving God and loving your neighbour. According to Jesus, his disciples are to be the manifestation of these principles. Leviticus 19:9–18, Isaiah 58:1–12, and Luke 10:25–37 all record what loving your neighbour actually means.

Foster care is also a reflection of the redemptive work God has done in our own lives. Despite our sin, dysfunction, bad responses, and projection of hurt onto self and others, God took us in – through Christ – as adopted children. Romans 8:12–17 describes this beautifully.

Rebecca: I think many biblical principles are helpful when foster parenting. The main one I often remember is James 1:2–4 about considering it all joy when you encounter various trials. It reminds me to be grateful for the challenges raised through foster parenting. This has helped me grow in patience. It has expanded my capacity to love not just the young people I care for but also their families. And it has given me an opportunity to witness growth, change, healing, and hope. ◇

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Heidelberg West Church of Christ, Melbourne, is looking for a full time preacher. Interested? Contact:

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Expressions of interest invited.

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- Assist with evangelism in the Coffs coast region.
- Participate in the preaching and teaching program in the Coffs congregation.

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