

"From the end of the earth I call to you when my heart is faint. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." Psalm 61:2

# The Presbyterian Banner



June 2023



## This Issue

"You are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." Ephesians 2:19

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### From the Editor



The 175th Annual Meeting of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia met in Raymond Terrace from Tuesday, the 2nd of May to Friday the 5th.

Frankly, I've not been a big fan of synod meetings. But I appreciated this year's assembly.

To be sure, we had some difficult matters to deal with. And it's not like we had complete unanimity in all of our decisions. But the discussions were conducted respectfully, the matters were dealt with in a straightforward, yet considered manner, and a brotherly spirit was evident. All this, and wonderful hospitality as well!

One of the best aspects of this year's meeting was the significant number of visitors bringing greetings from other denominations.

You never know who you might fellowship with at these meetings. I was discussing the state of our culture with an older American brother I had just met, when I happened to mention how I found Rosario Butterfield's writings to be so, so helpful. Lo and behold, it turns out I was talking with the pastor who was instrumental in the Lord drawing Rosario to faith in Christ! It was a blessing to connect with him, along with our other visitors.

May the Lord allow the discussions held and the decisions made at this year's meeting to advance the cause of Christ as we move forward in his service.

Jim Klazinga

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Editor: Jim Klazinga, 3 Padua Place, Boondall, QLD 4034

Mobile: 0466 213 763 Email: [editor@pcea.org.au](mailto:editor@pcea.org.au)

Assistant Editors: Ben Klazinga and Julie Klazinga

The editor is grateful for the assistance of an informal network of Banner liaisons from various PCEA congregations.

## What is Truth? A Meditation on Psalm 12

The Retiring Moderator's Address at Synod 2023, by Trevor Leggott

The Church and Nation report makes pretty worrying reading. We recently held our Anzac Day services and reflected back, particularly on two world wars where millions were killed, and lives given in the fight to preserve our freedom and way of life. We might know something of the history of last century, and look at the world today, and wonder now what kind of world our children and grandchildren will live in. Morals and relationships, ethics and actions seem to be getting worse and worse. We face a very different world from the world that we grew up in. It's a world summed up where evil is called good and good called evil. Vice is regarded as a virtue. You can see that illustrated in our media constantly: immorality, murder, brutality, drugs, nudity, blasphemy, crude language, and now we have fake news!

Well, I think this psalm 12 is for today, and is for us.

What is David's complaint? Truth is no longer important.

David complains about the lack of godly and faithful men (read v1). It seemed to David, as it did to Elijah years later, that the godly had almost disappeared from the land. Remember how Elijah complained: “I, I only am left” (1 Kings 19:10). It seemed to David that the godly were fewer and fewer. They were in decline. There was a real dearth of godliness.

He focuses on what's being said, and He laments the lack of truth and sincerity. (Read v2-4)

Derek Kidner says David lists out 'empty talk, smooth talk, double talk and big talk'.

“Everyone utters lies to his neighbour” or “They speak idly with their neighbour”: Idle talk, empty talk ... That seems a pretty good description of our present communication. What with texting and tweeting, what is the main substance of conversation? Trivial! Too much conversation has no real significance. When the only things we talk about are empty and inconsequential, and worthless, it cheapens and demeans all human conversation.

And we can bring that back to our own conversation.

When we speak with our friends, our family and our neighbours, what depth of discussion do we have? How do we as Christians engage and seek opportunity to share something of our faith. Or do we even look for opportunity? Or worse still do we stand in pulpits week by week, and share the word of God, but on no account would we dare share such news with those we meet in our comings and goings of life. Talk about anything else, except the good news that has been committed to us to share with the world! They speak idly with their neighbour. Empty talk.

'With flattering lips and a double heart they speak.' (2b). Flattery is literally 'smooth talk'. Flattery is telling people what they want to hear. Proverbs tells us that a man who flatters his neighbour spreads a net for his feet (Prov.

29:5). The man who flatters the girl because he wants to ingratiate himself, the politician who flatters his audience because he wants their votes; and even the preacher who flatters his congregation and withholds the truth because he wants to be popular. They speak with a 'double heart'. Double talk. Such people are hypocrites and deceivers.

(Read v4) “With our tongue we will prevail, our lips are with us, or our lips are our own; who is master over us”. This is a claim to self-rule and self-righteousness. This is big talk. James says (3v5), 'The tongue is a little member and boasts great things.' The proud speak in proud defiance: Isn't that the language of today? “It's my life!” “It's my body!” “Nobody can tell me how I should live!” This was the language of Eden. Adam and Eve believed the blasphemous lie of Satan, 'you'll be like God'. Big talk!

Well, we can say that these are only words. But see the consequences: “The poor are plundered and the needy groan.” The result is the down-treading of the poor and needy. The tongue - words - are a weapon used to gain influence and control.

We see it today, whatever the circumstances: bullying in the workplace, domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse. And on a larger scale we might rightly fear that we are entering into an era of oppression in our country, where the cost of living a godly life, and holding Biblical convictions, will

## Meditation

“The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.” Psalm 119:130

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result in persecution.

This, all in the name of freedom and equality. Now it's the Christian who is being discriminated against for speaking out about his convictions.

And we need to look closer to home as well. We may well face challenges here on the floor of Synod where we have to discern the truth of a matter when we are given conflicting accounts. We have to give careful consideration to matters, and not be swayed by lopsided arguments that might come from those with the “gift of the gab”. Those who insist that it is their way, or no way!

David could be speaking of our world today, with the growing use of spin, and spam, and half-truth, and disinformation and false information and deceit.

It was no different in Paul's day. He said, 'There is no one who does good, no, not one.... With their tongues they have practiced deceit (Rom.3:13).

David's world also describes Jesus' world. Jesus knew the loneliness of godliness. Spurgeon said, 'No one knows, but he who has endured it, the solitude of a soul that has outstripped its fellows in zeal for the Lord of Hosts.' Another commentator says, 'One penalty of living near to God is keen pain from low lives'.

Jesus experienced the same thing himself and he lamented the corrupt state of religion - the deceit and hypocrisy. He was surrounded and attacked by clever wordsmiths. Luke tells us that 'They lay in wait for Him, and seeking to catch him in something He might say' (Luke 11: 54).

Well, where do we go? Let's look at what David did.

We could do no better: “Help Lord” v1 ... save us Yahweh ... this is a cry of desperation and urgency. Look to God.

Are you shocked and distressed at the state of our nation? Are you troubled at the world our children and grandchildren are growing up in? We live in a day when truth is not honoured, when lying is endemic, godliness is discounted.

In the introduction to our Church and Nation Report we read:

Many of us are shocked and confused at the moral decline we've witnessed in our lifetime. We find it hard to understand how it has happened so quickly, and equally hard to know how we should respond.

Until recently the Biblical (and traditional) view of marriage was between one man and one woman. Heterosexuality was the norm, and there were only two genders. Anything outside that was condemned and seen as abnormal.

But today, homosexuality and gender fluidity aren't merely tolerated: they are actively celebrated and promoted as good. The traditional Biblical understanding of marriage and gender is now considered oppressive and harmful. Teaching traditional values to children in school is increasingly considered suspect.

We too should cry, 'Help, Lord.' .... Spurgeon said, 'The death, departure or decline of godly men should be a trumpet call for more prayer'.

David appeals for God's Justice.

(Read v3). God's judgement may not always come as quickly as we would like, but when it comes it will be decisive and definite.

Jesus tells us “That for every idle word man may speak, they will give an account of it in the day of judgement.” (Matt.12:36)

David places his trust in the promises of God (read v5-6). David prays ... and God hears. And God answers. ... Now I will arise!

David contrasts Words of God with the words of the wicked (6). God's Word is pure and flawless; precious and lasting. (The reference to seven times denotes completeness). This is the inerrant word of God: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God' (2 Tim.3:16).

Spurgeon says this of the Word of God: “So clear and free from all alloy of error or unfaithfulness is the book of the words of the Lord. The Bible has passed through the furnace of persecution, literary criticism, philosophic doubt, and scientific discovery, and has lost nothing but those human interpretations which clung to it as alloy to precious ore. The experience of saints has tried it in every conceivable manner, but not a single doctrine or promise has been consumed in the most excessive heat.”

David believed in the preservation of the saints and of the church. (Read v7).

Dark as the days may sometimes be, the godly will not cease from the earth. The church will not go away. Christ is the Captain of the boat- despite the storms - the boat will not sink. The church cannot be destroyed. The

## Meditation

“The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.” Psalm 119:130

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Soviets tried to do it and failed; the Chinese tried to do it and failed. Now secular humanism is having a good go!

Our challenge is to be before the Lord in prayer over these things.

Deliverance 7 of the Church and Nation Report states:

Synod encourages members to

continue to pray for the Lord’s sovereign mercies that He may yet revive us, that we be given a fresh understanding of His majesty and glory, a profound understanding of our sin, a renewed sense of the wonder of God’s grace, and a high view of the centrality of the Cross.

The psalm closes with a reminder that we have to perse-

vere in prayer, even as wickedness seems to prosper. Help Lord!

Deliverance 4 of the Church and Nation Report records:

Synod encourage ministers and elders to use the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples – perhaps to conclude or finalise public prayer.

Shall we stand and join in that prayer together. Amen.

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## The PCEA 2023 Mission Awareness Tour!

Destination: India (Delhi, Chhapara, and more!)

Dates: 16th to 30th December

Approximate Cost: \$2700 (plus some meals and incidentals)

For a proposed itinerary and booking pamphlet,

Contact Dennis Muldoon at 0414 502 954, or [dkmuldoon@hotmail.com](mailto:dkmuldoon@hotmail.com)

Booking with deposit closes 30 June!

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## May Search Work

“Oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes!” Psalm 119:5

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### Senior and Intermediate

(Intermediate omit questions 1 and 5)

### Junior

#### 1 Corinthians Chapter 13

1. Name 8 things that charity [love] does not do. (3 verses)
2. Will we always see through a glass darkly [a mirror dimly]?

#### Chapter 14

3. Why is he who prophesies more edifying than he who speaks in tongues?
4. Write out the two verses in Isaiah 28 that Paul refers to in 1 Cor. 14: 21.
5. Write out two separate verses that speak of the way all things should be done in the church.
6. God is not the author of confusion, but of what ?

#### Chapter 15:1-11

7. What gospel facts did Paul receive and then deliver to the Corinthians? (2 verses only)
8. Who was the last person to see Christ after his resurrection?

#### Luke Chapter 19

1. What did Jesus say to Zacchaeus when he saw him in the tree?
2. What did the nobleman say to the servant whose pound [mina] had gained ten pounds [minas]?
3. What words did the multitude call out when Jesus came near the Mount of Olives?
4. What did Jesus say when he drove out those who bought and sold in the temple?

Find the verse(s) in the Bible that answer the questions, write/type them out, and send to:

Mrs Irene Steel

18/1-55 West Parade, West Ryde NSW 2114  
or Email: [iesteel@gmail.com](mailto:iesteel@gmail.com)

A book voucher is awarded at the end of each year to children who send in the answers.

## Visitors from Other Churches at Synod 2023

A highlight of Synod 2023 was the number of visitors who brought greetings from other churches. Four of the denominations represented were from Australia, two from the U.S.A., and one each from Scotland, Ireland, and India. Five of the greetings are focussed on here. The others will appear in next month's issue.

Synod resolved: “The Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia gives thanks to God for the churches with whom we have formal fraternal relations and for those churches with whom we have contact and resolve to pray for the Lord's blessing upon their work and witness.”

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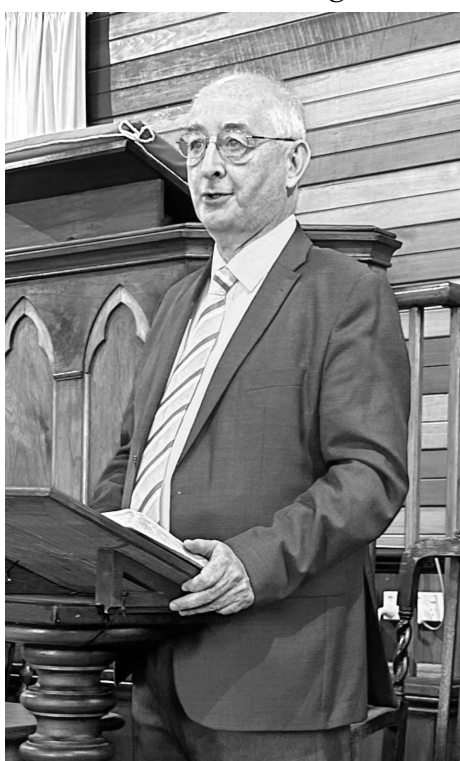
“Mr Stuart Coles from the Southern Presbyterian Church was invited to address the Synod. The Moderator welcomed him. Mr Coles brought greetings and encouragement from the church, referring to 2 Timothy 1:13. He



notified the Synod that Rev. Tom Budgen, of the FCC, (Kilmuir and Stenscholl - Staffin) would be inducted to their Launceston charge on 24th June.”

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

“Rev. Andrew Stewart from the RPCA was invited to speak. The Moderator welcomed him. Mr Stewart brought greetings from the RPCA and encouraged the



delegates to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. He brought news of the RPCA congregations in Victoria. Mr Forbes led the court in prayer for the RPCA.”

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

“Mr Laurins Nel from the CRCA was introduced to the Moderator. The Moderator welcomed him and invited him to address the Synod. Mr Nel brought greetings and encouragement from the CRCA: Behold I set before you an open



door. Mr I Hamilton prayed for Mr Nel and the CRCA.”

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

“Mr John Terpstra from the OPC was invited to speak online. The Moderator welcomed him. Mr Terpstra brought greetings from the OPC. He spoke of the unfailing support of the Lord Jesus Christ to His Church. He spoke of growth in the OPC and their ministries... Mr Alex Steel led the court in prayer for the OPC.”

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“The Convener presented a video greeting from Rev. Geoffrey Allen, Moderator of the RPCI. He brought greetings from the RPCI and spoke of the challenges of secularism. He spoke of interests in global Reformed churches and those in Australia as well as missionary work. He closed with words from Ps 33 ‘The eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him.’ Mr Ball prayed for the work of the RPCI.”

# Our Life Together: The Relevance of Christian Interaction

The Incoming Moderator's Address at Synod 2023, by Andres Miranda

Whether we like it or not, we are social beings: our daily lives are intertwined with the lives of other people. But at the same time, human beings are individuals. This means that we live our daily lives as a process of personal experiences. These experiences are non-transferable.

On the surface, being social and being an individual appear to be contradictory conditions of existence. This apparent contradiction is further complicated by political and social theories that emphasise one aspect of human life and dismiss the other.

For example, there are political theories that demand the surrender of individual interests to social interests. The Communist system eliminates competition, and creates an attitude of cooperation unknown in the West. However, this environment does not give much room for individual expression. On the other hand, there are economic theories that promote individuality to such a degree that the sense of community is completely lost.

In the Neo-Liberalism framework, humans are transformed into isolated units of production and competition. Now, when any of these ideologies are implemented, a social reality for human development is immediately created.

The question is, are these ideologies adequate to produce social systems where all members live in harmony? I don't think they are. Human history shows that whenever social life is founded on materialist theories, we are going to have a contraction between the social and the individual.

What can we do then? The Bible

gives a clear answer. To find harmony in human relationships, individuals must become members of the kingdom of God. In this sacred society, with behaviours defined by God, one finds support and true friendship. Therefore, the question we must ask ourselves as Christians, and as social beings, is how can I make the relationships in the church better?

Before we get to that, it would be helpful to understand the causes that prevent or reduce friendly relationships in communities of faith.

## Proximity

The fundamental mechanism of a friendly environment is proximity. Due to the human desire for emotional connections, people naturally show genuine warmth and care towards a limited number of people within the inner circle. The members of this circle encourage self-formation and friendships in the relational space. In this close environment of relationships, everyone sees each other as partners in the experience of living. But there's one problem: the limited circle necessarily keeps other people out.

But why do we keep other people out of the circle? There are many reasons. One is due to the social changes that people have experienced throughout their life.

This is not the case with children. Children smile at each other, and practice friendship without emotional obstacles. They are able to quickly forget their differences, and resume the game as if nothing had happened.

It must be recognised that adults can also display this attitude when

traveling, or when we are allowed to relax. However, the interest in other people is no longer present in pure form.

The large number of situations we face in life, both good and stressful, changes the way we relate to other individuals. That is simply a fact of life. Research in social psychology clearly shows that environmental conditions have a direct influence on our personalities (Argyle, Furnham, Graham, 1981).

This point is important. Difficulty participating in social situations is not simply the result of selfishness. Stress in social settings is often related to limitations imposed by a person's past. Although, the environment is the place where the individual struggles for psychological adjustment, we should not regard the environment as totally causal. The environment is not the same as behavioural inflexibility. The human being is a social being, and capable of overcoming many limitations in the power of the Spirit.

Another reason for indecision to remain distant is what Kant calls the tension between love and respect. According to Kant, love and respect are moral forces that sometimes pull us in opposite directions (Practical Philosophy, p. 569).

This idea is insightful and underlines some of the complexities we experience in making a decision to get close to people. The tension involves two conflicting thoughts. The first is that I must approach people. I need to encourage them, and see if there's anything I can do to help.

The second thought tells us: Well, I know I have a moral and

spiritual obligation, but it’s really none of my business. I will respect their privacy and keep my distance.

You see, concern for the well-being of others moves us to create proximity, but our respect for their privacy keeps us stuck in the emotional state of indecision. For Kant, these two moral forces play an important role in our feeling of moral obligation.

In the New Testament we have the love command (Mark 12:30—31) which also creates a moral obligation. That command obviously doesn’t mean leave people alone, but give them love, give each other care and concern. It means coming close enough, to help them carry their burden and ease their pain. It’s not easy to find the right balance between showing love and showing respect.

However, very often our problem is that we don’t feel enough concern for people. Love then, demands kind actions from us. It’s clear that in order to create an atmosphere of support, encouragement, and friendship in local congregations, there must be proximity.

It’s also clear that church settings are social environments, which may be stressful for some people. We need to be aware of this problem. Tensions within the personality may manifest in all sorts of psychological disorders, including severe embarrassment, fear and pervasive anxiety.

When exposed to social situations, the individual worries that he or she will be perceived in a negative way. The person is afraid of being evaluated negatively and that they will be rejected.

When we experience personality problems, we become excessively fearful of new situations. Often the symptoms are so severe that some

people can’t speak, and express themselves effectively. They may experience panic attacks or feel in constant danger from unknown sources. Psychological literature describes people with restricted personalities as having a “mental disorder”.

Now, the categories used for healthy-mental functioning include the capacity for self-regulation, the capacity for relationships and intimacy, the capacity for affective experience, expression and communication, the capacity for self-observation, which underlines the skill of reflecting on feelings or experiences of self and others. (See, PDM, 2006).

When self-awareness is lacking there is usually a tendency towards other personality disorders. By the way, these descriptions are not intended to be used for rating, but they help pastors and clinicians to appreciate the complexity and individuality of the human person.

It’s important to remember that in modern psychology the boundary between normal people and those with mental disorder is not clear-cut. Everyone has personality problems. Everyone is involved in the process of readjusting tensions within the personality. In that sense, no one is completely “normal”. Nevertheless, there are emotional conflicts that the individuals are unable to manage on their own. This unhealthy condition usually requires specialised help.

The counsellor, or pastor should assist the person to find creative ways to enjoy greater possibilities in life. Particularly, in situations that provoke anxiety.

When the symptoms are not severe, the so-called “normal people” may be encouraged to take advantage of the following

strategies for increasing effectiveness in personal relationships. The first thing they need to understand is that the presence of supportive interactions is always regulated by a special kind of emotion.

The reaction that we have in mind is interest. This emotion is the basis of love and self-improvement. It’s an emotion that drives the person to include other people in the inner circle. As a consequence of this, the person is enabled to feel a level of confidence that they didn’t have before. The person who develops an interest in others is allowing himself or herself to love in new ways. All this, will naturally enhance the person’s belief in the significance of his own personality.

Not only that. Emotional interest also reduces the fear of the outside world. These observations based on real experience show that very often the fear “of the other”, is simply a mental element created by the mind for the sake of subjective security. I believe that interest is the emotional behaviour that transforms a social group into a network of friendly relationships.

The emotion of interest is essentially an action that directs us to come close to people. It’s the emotion that allows other people to appear in our field of vision. To allow someone to appear in our field of vision doesn’t mean blind acceptance. It only means that others are now acknowledged in their existence.

This shows that a basic change in emotion entails a basic shift in the relational dynamics of the members in the church-community. Emotions specify the behaviour that we display in relational spaces.

We need to recognise, however, that in some individuals the desire to keep their distance may be



pathological. And the main source of anxiety seems to be the anticipation of being exposed to the scrutiny of others in social interactions. The fear may be real and based on past experiences or imagined (See, p. 203-204 in 5th ed.; DSM-5).

The problem with strong feelings, especially the reaction of fear, is that they control our perception. We can no longer see clearly when our perception is controlled by fear.

## Language

It is clear that human beings are emotional beings who crave attachment. But the emotion of proximity does not exhaust the nature of the social phenomenon. Human existence recognises another quality that allows social development. This is the capacity for language.

The way we understand and give meaning to life comes from language.

We often underestimate the capacity for language. We assume that language is a human property that develops in isolation. This is wrong. Language is born of social interactions between human beings. When we talk, a social space is created.

In language, we coordinate actions, and make the human personality grow. The human being is a social being that cannot develop outside of conversations.

Language is relational. Communication, emotional behaviours come up all the time. That is why it is good to keep in mind that language is a form of human social action. Language is a tool that provides structure for mutual orientation.

I don't think that it would be an exaggeration to say that we regulate the way that we live in language.

The New Testament recognises the conditioning nature of language. In passages such as Ephesians 5:19—2, and Colossians 4.6, the apostle Paul implies that the quality of co-existence as Christians is determined by the content of linguistic interactions.

The apostle is aware that everything we do as social beings we do in conversations, and conversations have an influence on our emotional state. Therefore, if we want to create spaces of encouragement and friendships, we must get rid of trivial conversations.

Not only that, it must be understood that the production of spiritual language is the method that God has established to perfect our personality and to help us face the challenges of life as a community.

Very well, if we accept that human beings are social beings, with the ability to enhance the social space through the use of language, we must create and participate in conversations. If this ability is limited by fear and self-consciousness, it is important to seek help in order experience freedom in public interactions.

## Concluding Remarks

Although what we have said up to now contains the basics for understanding the social phenomenon and what often prevents participation in social relationships, I think some final reflections could be added:

First, the human being is a fundamentally social being. There is no such thing as a human outside of the social. To be a human, you have to grow up among humans who interact in language.

But this is not enough to become a well-integrated human. Something else is needed. A spiritual community is needed that

gives full expression to the law of love in the action of proximity. If this love is missing, there will be no true socialization and human beings will separate.

Biblical love embraces those that usually remain outside the “inner circle.”

There's no doubt that the type of Christian we're going to be, depends largely on how we behave in the company of others. In church environments where interaction is encouraged, individual progress, collective growth, mutual help, and the joy of loving, will always be blessings that continually expand congregational life.

On the other hand, if we belong to a community where behaviours of isolation and apathy are validated, unfortunately that will be the context that determines our way of being as Christians. The social only happens in the emotion of proximity, and language.

These things take the human being out of the purely biological, and make possible a world of interaction where the human beings can develop their Christian identity and spiritual virtues.

Secondly, if we accept the Bible as the foundation of genuine human interactions, then we must accept the following implications. (1) A group of people that meets without interactions of empathy and friendship is not a community with behaviours defined by Scripture, (2) A group of people who validate with their conduct the joy of Christian fellowship is a special community. (3) And finally, I'm sure that those who are persuaded of the truth of the gospel know that social harmony doesn't arise from the search for utopias, or personal satisfaction, but from behaviours totally conditioned by the language of God.

## June Prayer Points

“Keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.” Ephesians 6:18

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*Note: The prayer points this month are all on matters pertaining to what took place at the May synod meeting. Unless otherwise noted, matters “in quotation marks” are taken from the Minutes, available online at [pcea.org.au](http://pcea.org.au).*

**Thursday, 1st:** “The Moderator, Rev Trevor Leggott... constituted the meeting, leading in prayer.” Give thanks for Trevor’s service as moderator over the previous year.

**Friday, 2nd:** [From the minutes for Tuesday, 2 May] “The Moderator advised the Court that Rev. Kenneth MacLeod had died in Maclean Hospital in the late afternoon.” Give thanks for Rev MacLeod’s service in the PCEA, and pray for his family.

**Saturday, 3rd:** “The Clerk reported that the Rev. Andres Miranda had been appointed Moderator-Elect.” Give thanks for Andres’ leadership as moderator, and pray for him as he serves in this role until Synod 2024.

**Sunday, 4th:** Give thanks for the work of David Kerridge at synod as clerk, and pray for him as he continues to serve in this role.

**Monday, 5th:** A Memorial Minute for Rev. Raymond Murray was incorporated into the permanent record (see The Presbyterian Banner, August 2022, pages 6-7). Synod also approved a memorial minute to Miss Heather Beaton (see The Presbyterian Banner, February 2023, page 9). Give thanks for service provided by these faithful servants.

**Tuesday, 6th:** From the Law and Advisory Report: “Synod... appointed a panel [last year] to formulate guidelines on Divorce, Separation and Remarriage for the PCEA... We need prayer for wisdom and help to carry out our task faithfully.” Pray for the continuing work of this panel.

**Wednesday, 7th:** “The [Law and

Advisory] committee reminds all presbyteries to carry out their responsibilities in safe church basic training for office-bearers and children’s workers.” Pray for the safe church training undergone by leaders in our congregations.

**Thursday, 8th:** From the Training of Ministry Committee Report: “Our prayer is that the Lord will continue to send forth labourers to our corner of the vineyard for the glory of His name and the growth of our denomination.”

**Friday, 9th:** The Southern Presbytery overtured the Synod to confirm Zach Dotson’s reception as a candidate for the ministry. “It was moved, seconded and carried that the crave of the overture be granted.” Pray for Zach as he works toward becoming a minister in the PCEA.

**Saturday, 10th:** “Rev. Andrew Stewart... brought greetings from the RPCA and encouraged the delegates.” Give thanks for our ongoing relationship with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Australia, and pray for their three congregations, all located in Victoria. Also, “Rev. Bruce Backensto... was invited to speak and brought greetings from the RPCNA.” Give thanks for the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America and pray for our relationship with them.

**Sunday, 11th:** “Mr Stuart Coles from the Southern Presbyterian Church was invited to address the Synod.” Pray for our ongoing relationship with the SPC. Pray for their two congregations, both in Tasmania. Also, “Mr John Terpstra from the OPC was invited to speak online.” Give thanks for our ongoing relationship with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

**Monday, 12th:** It was resolved that “Synod continues to pray for the children and youth in the Church and

the work of the [Youth and Fellowship] committee in building relationships between congregations as members of Christ’s body.”

**Tuesday, 13th:** It was resolved that “Synod gives thanks and pray for those are involved in the work of teaching Sunday-school and youth classes.” Also, it was resolved that “Synod thank Irene Steel for her dedication to the scripture search work and Nic and Amelia O’Dell for birthday card greeting and uphold them in prayer.”

**Wednesday, 14th:** “Synod instructs Sessions and Deacons’ Courts to keep a close eye on ministers’ leave entitlements to ensure ministers do not suffer burn out through failure to take it, and that Presbyteries keep this in mind in the annual examination of records.” Pray for wisdom for the ministers and the Deacons’ Courts in ensuring sufficient time for leave.

**Thursday, 15th:** “The General Treasurer presented his report. It was resolved to receive the report.” Pray for John Audet as he continues to serve as General Treasurer. Also, it was resolved that “We record our thanks to God for temporal blessings granted especially during the time of pandemic restrictions during 2022.”

**Friday, 16th:** It was resolved that “Synod commend to our people giving by bequest to aid the extension of the Gospel in Australia and overseas.” Pray for wisdom in the consideration of this matter.

**Saturday, 17th:** “Mr Laurins Nel... brought greetings and encouragement from the CRCA.” Give thanks for the Christian Reformed Churches in Australia and pray for our relationship with them. Also, “Mr John Ferguson from the Associated Presbyterian Churches (APC)... brought greetings and encouragement from the APC. He spoke of the APC’s formation and

## June Prayer Points

“Keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.” Ephesians 6:18

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congregations in Scotland.” Give thanks and pray for our relationship with the APC.

**Sunday, 18th:** “Synod expresses its concern regarding the current threat facing the independency of Christian Schools if the recommendations of the Australian Law Reform Commission are adopted. Synod prays that Christian Schools be permitted to continue to exercise freedom to appoint staff members who are in agreement with its doctrines and beliefs. We also affirm that every child is made in the image of God and should therefore be treated with dignity and respect and be encouraged to discover the full potential of their identity in light of the Bible’s teaching.”

**Monday, 19th:** “Synod recognises the distress of those families who have a family member who struggles with their sexual identity. We pray that they may receive the appropriate medical and/or spiritual counsel, so that ultimately, they may affirm their God given gender and come to discover fullness of life in Christ.”

**Tuesday, 20th:** “Synod affirms its belief that marriage as God intended is between a man and a woman and pledges to uphold and promote the Biblical teaching on human sexuality. Synod also encourages sessions to ensure that our congregations are welcoming places for all to attend; to be sensitive toward those who are same sex attracted, or who may grapple with other temptations; and to provide the support necessary to encourage such to live a chaste and obedient life.”

**Wednesday, 21st:** “Synod encourage ministers and elders to use the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples – perhaps to conclude or finalise public prayer. The congregation might also be encouraged to ‘seal up’

the praises and prayers with a heartfelt ‘Amen!’”

**Thursday, 22nd:** “As Synod anticipates the coronation of King Charles III on 6th May 2023 in Westminster Abbey, we assure him of our prayers so that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way (1 Tim. 2: 1-2). We pray that he, by God’s grace, will be enabled to maintain the solemn vows made (Eccl. 5: 4-5); and to defend and contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). We pray that he may rule with the same attitude as the King of kings who humbled Himself and became a servant (Phil. 2: 3-8). Long live the king. God save the king.”

**Friday, 23rd:** “Synod is thankful for the work of the Australian Christian Lobby (ACL), Family Voice, and other such organisations, which are committed to upholding and defending Christian values in the ‘marketplace.’”

**Saturday, 24th:** “Synod encourages members to continue to pray for the Lord’s sovereign mercies that He may yet revive us, that we be given a fresh understanding of His majesty and glory, a profound understanding of our sin, a renewed sense of the wonder of God’s grace, and a high view of the centrality of the Cross.”

**Sunday, 25th:** It was resolved that “Synod appoint Saturday 29th July 2023 as a Day of Prayer to seek the Lord’s mercy and favour.” Pray for the preparations being made for this year’s PCEA Day of Prayer.

**Monday, 26th:** “Synod records its thanks to the editor of the Presbyterian Banner... and resolves to pray for him in his editorial work, and for the witness of the magazine.” “Synod continues to endorse The Presbyterian Banner as

the official magazine of the PCEA and encourages members and adherents to read it and contribute material to it.”

**Tuesday, 27th:** It was resolved “That the Synod commend the PCEA website to delegates and congregations and they be encouraged to participate in the life of the church online by active registration, collaboration and comment.” Give thanks for the website, and pray for the work of David Kerridge as webmaster.

**Wednesday, 28th:** “Rev. Matthew Winzer from the Australian Free Church... spoke of the history of the AFC and brought greetings.” It was resolved that “Synod approves the [Inter-Church Relations] Committee’s ongoing discussions with the Australian Free Church in seeking a closer relationship between our denominations.” Please pray for these discussions.

**Thursday, 29th:** “The Synod gives thanks to the Lord for the opportunity and privilege to be involved in the work of missions at home and abroad, both in giving, in praying, and being directly involved during this past year.” Give thanks for this year’s Missions evening and for the encouraging report offered by Samit Mishra and Pradeep Kumar on behalf of the Presbyterian Free Church of Central India.

**Friday, 30th:** “The Rev. John Forbes was nominated and voted as Moderator-Elect for 2024.” Pray for John as Moderator-elect. Also, “It was agreed that the next Annual Synod take place in the Raymond Terrace Church of the Hunter Congregation from Tuesday 7th to 10th May, 2024.” Give thanks for the hosting provided by the Hunter congregation, and for their willingness to host the meeting again next year.



