In 2010 we celebrated Ridley College’s centenary. In 2014 we continue to look back on our past with thanks to God for the ways in which he has provided and for what has been achieved.

Christianity is not a set of principles, a code of ethics or even a philosophy of life. We believe not only that God is the creator of heaven and earth, but also that God has acted in human history.

In the Old Testament, teaching about God is tied to his dealings with Israel as his chosen people. The key moments in the history recounted in the Old Testament include God’s covenant promises to Abraham, the Mosaic covenant at Sinai, a new generation of Israelites entering the Promised Land under Joshua, the rule of the judges, the establishment of kingship with kings like David and Solomon, the division of the kingdom, the exiles of God’s people to Assyria and Babylonia, and the return to the Promised Land under Nehemiah, Ezra and Zerubbabel. Real events, real people.

The New Testament likewise records God at work in historical events. The Gospel of Matthew opens with a genealogy that demonstrates the continuity of “Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham” with the story of Israel. And the Kingdom of God that Jesus announces is nothing less than God’s rule breaking into human history.

When Paul talks about the essentials of the Christian message in 1 Corinthians 15 he recounts the events of the death and resurrection of Jesus: “Christ died for our sins, he was buried, he was raised on the third day.”

History is important for Christians. In one sense, we are all ‘history buffs’. The Apostles’ Creed, that ancient confession that is said by Christians around the world to this day, is a series of affirmations of the decisive work of God in the world. We affirm that God the Father made the world. We affirm that Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, was born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, and rose from the dead. We affirm our belief in God’s Holy Spirit who is currently at work in the church and the world. And we look to the end of history when Jesus will come to judge the living and the dead.

While the Return of Christ is the next act in salvation history, Christians also believe that God is at work in the world today.

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At Ridley we seek to work hard in the present because we believe that God is at work in and through our efforts and because we believe that God has been at work in the past. As Ridley’s Principal, I am acutely aware of my responsibility to protect the College’s heritage and to build on the legacy of its previous leaders.

Remembering is a big theme in the Bible. God gave the people of Israel the Passover Meal to remember their redemption from slavery in Egypt. And he gave us the Lord’s Supper to remember our salvation in Christ. We are also told to remember our leaders and to imitate their faith (Hebrews 13:7).

This Ridley Report is an opportunity to take another look back. You’ll find articles relating to two previous Principals, a retrospective from Claire Rogers on her time so far as Chair of the Ridley Board, and a report of a lecture on the impact of Billy Graham’s two Melbourne Crusades.
How Far We’ve Come

Ridley Chair, Claire Rogers gives an overview of what has been achieved at Ridley in the past seven years.

2008 Property consolidation.
We sold half the property, started a significant Foundation, and created a more integrated campus.

2009 Learning Communities.
The Anglican Institute, Missional Leadership, and eRidley Learning Communities were started to provide specialist training and support. Global Mission followed in 2012.

2010 Centenary.
A year of thanking God for 100 years of ministry and recognising the immense contribution of our predecessors.

2011 Seed launch for Marketplace Institute.
An important development that has seen the development of a culture and programs that support workers in their vocations.

2012 Ridley Certificate.
Making Ridley available to everybody with excellent foundational training in Bible and ministry online.

2013 Completion of the first 5 year vision and unveiling of the new with a focus on innovative course delivery both on and off campus.

2014 Ridley Online.
The start of an ambitious project to deliver a world-class degree program online.

I hope you agree that the past seven years have been marked by a prayerful and strategic response to the challenges and opportunities before us. Thank you for your support as we seek to serve God’s purposes over the next seven years. Only He knows what they will bring. We are trusting in Him for his provision as we pursue the next seven years of his plans for Ridley.

phone  03 9207 4800
email  info@ridley.edu.au
visit  www.ridley.edu.au
facebook.com/ridley.melbourne
twitter.com/ridleymelbourne
vimeo.com/ridleymelbourne

Jonathan Edwards Congress
Hosted at Ridley
24-28 August, 2015

Registration of interest is open: www.ridley.edu.au/JECongress
A Pioneer in Evangelical Biblical Scholarship

Remember your leaders, consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

Leon Lamb Morris was born 15th March, 1914. So this year marks the centenary of his birth. Leon Morris was Principal of Ridley College in Melbourne, Australia for 15 years from 1964 until 1979, and prior to that was Vice-Principal between 1945 and 1960. The College library is named after him and he remains to this day a scholar of great repute.

At a time when evangelical biblical scholarship was at best marginal, Leon Morris attained a worldwide reputation as a New Testament scholar of the first rank. With a Cambridge PhD, he was the first Australian to be elected to the international scholarly Society for New Testament Studies. He was one of the first wardens of Tyndale House in Cambridge, was a translator of the NIV Bible, and gave visiting lectures in colleges around the world.

Morris was a prolific author. He wrote more than 50 books, which have sold over 2 million copies. They include classic texts on the Cross of Christ and many books about the New Testament. At Ridley and in Melbourne he was known for his careful attention to the biblical texts in the original languages and for his skillful communication in a variety of contexts. He combined firm convictions about the core truths of the Christian faith with a winsome humility.

Morris still has much to teach us. Hebrews 13:7 urges us:

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you.
Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

My own reflections on Leon Morris go back to my time as a doctoral student in Cambridge in the late 1980s. Feeling at sea in an intimidating environment of critical scholarship, I was thankful for Tyndale House and its standing influence. Whereas today evangelical biblical scholars are numerous and their contributions are generally taken seriously in the academy, this was not always the case.

It felt to me that I had an invidious choice to make. I could either hold to the inspiration of the Bible or investigate the texts of the Bible as historical documents in their ancient literary context. What I needed were examples of those who did both with integrity.


I recall vividly pouring over Morris on John and being greatly encouraged by the clarity of his exegesis, the honesty with which he grappled with exegetical difficulties and the attention not only to historical matters, but also to literary and theological issues. Morris’s treatment of John remains a model of scholarship in the service of both the academy and the church. If evangelical biblical scholarship today offers something of value to the task of strengthening God’s people and promoting the gospel, which I believe it does, we owe a great deal to pioneers like Leon Morris.

A series of articles in tribute to the life and work of Leon Morris are on the Ridley blog: www.ridley.edu.au/morris

honouring former Principal Peter Adam by naming a classroom after him.

The Reverend Dr Canon Peter Adam OAM is one of the most significant leaders in the Anglican Church in Australia today.

Peter’s association with Ridley goes back to his time as a student in the late 1960s, which culminated in his ordination in 1970. He went on to complete a doctorate at the University of Durham, to lecture in theology at St John’s College in Durham, and then to serve as Vicar at St Jude’s in Carlton for 20 years from 1982.

From 2002-2012 Peter was Ridley’s eighth Principal and was the College’s first alumnus to be Principal. Peter’s approach to communicating the Christian faith has been highly influential, and is the subject of several of his books, including, Speaking God’s Words (1996), Hearing God’s Words (2004), and Written for Us (2008).

Peter’s passion for preaching and teaching God’s Word is legendary. At the Ridley College Annual Dinner it was announced that the room in which he did the bulk of his teaching at Ridley is to be named after him. From now on Stanway Alpha will be known as Adam. And Stanway Beta will be simply Stanway.

The Board is pleased to recognize Peter’s contribution to the life and work of Ridley College with this permanent reminder.
Ridley College has a number of ties with this famous evangelical figure. This year’s Charles Perry Lecture examined Graham’s two Australian Crusades.

Melbourne Cricket Ground’s largest ever crowd attended Billy Graham’s famous 1959 Crusade. The Crusade made a significant impact on the churches, public culture, and the lives of over 130,000 Australians who made a ‘decision for Christ’. But what happened when the evangelist returned ten years later? What did it mean to ‘Hear Billy’ for the second time, in the very different world of late-1960s Melbourne?

The Charles Perry Lecture this year, given by Mr Hugh Chilton, a Research fellow at the Scots College in Sydney, examined what it meant to hear Billy Graham for the second time as an American evangelist, at a critical period both in the life of Australian churches and in the relationship between Australia, the United States and the world.

In his lecture, Chilton explained how the second Crusade has been viewed as “something of a non-event”. This was due to a growing sense of Australian ‘new nationalism’, which spurned subservience to American foreign policy abroad and acquiescence to ‘Americanization’ at home.

Beyond the details of his Australian Crusades, the ministry of Billy Graham is a wonderful lens through which to understand the growth of the evangelical movement since the Second World War, the nature of Cold War politics, the growth of the church in the majority world, homiletic and missiological strategies, and the strengths and weaknesses of revivalist culture.

The Charles Perry lecture is held every two years in association with the Jonathan Edwards Center, The Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion and St’ James’ Old Cathedral, Melbourne’s oldest church. As one of Ridley’s Centres of Excellence, the Jonathan Edwards Center fosters the study of evangelical history for the sake of contemporary ministry, and will be hosting an international congress on the texts and teachings of Edwards at the College in August 2015.

Did you know...

The Ridley Archives is home to a telegram from Billy Graham to Stuart Barton Babbage stamped by the Chief Telegraph office on October 2, 1957. The telegram serves as Graham’s acceptance to come to Australia for his first Australian Crusade. Babbage was Principal of Ridley at the time as well as Dean of St Paul’s Cathedral.

The Ridley Archives also holds a series of personal letters between Babbage and Graham, concerning the Melbourne mission, an invitation to Babbage to be involved in the 1961 Philadelphia Crusade, and a scrapbook of newspaper articles on the 1959 Crusade, presented to Babbage as a gift for his chairmanship of the Crusade Committee.

The Rev Dr S Barton Babbage
Dean of Melbourne
StPauls Cathedral Melbourne Victoria

After careful and prayerful consideration our team has decided that we should confirm our acceptance of your gracious invitation and begin preparations for a visit to Australia in 1959 to carry on the ministry of evangelism to which you have invited us Mr Bevan will coordinate all details of arrangements and is writing at once our suggestion is that the press be advised October 4 please convey our sincere greetings to every member your committee = Billy Gram