

For the World

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RIDLEY COMMUNITY / MISSION & MINISTRY COLLEGE

SUMMER 2015

Creating a Global Mission Culture

Charlie Fletcher, explains how Global Mission is part of everything we do at Ridley.

GLOBAL MISSION

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Rev Charlie Fletcher | Global Mission Dean



Ridley's involvement in global mission is not new. The College has a long and precious tradition of sending graduates into gospel work around the world. What is new is that, in the last five years, Ridley has made a more substantial and intentional commitment to creating a global mission culture. There are five dimensions to this initiative.

First, there is the curriculum. We now offer a suite of specialist global and cross-cultural mission subjects, designed to give students theological, historical and contemporary frameworks for understanding global mission, and to equip them for doing ministry in culturally diverse contexts, engaging with other religions, and using the Bible cross-culturally. In fact, we expect every Ridley student to take at least one applied cross-cultural ministry subject, because we are convinced that all ministry is cross-cultural. Global and cross-cultural mission are also integrated into other units. So, for example, students may find themselves in an Old Testament subject writing about mission in the Psalms.

Second, there are co-curricular activities that raise the profile of global mission. Our annual Global Mission Week fills the College with global mission colour, flavour and conversation. The Alfred Stanway Lecture in Global Mission, inaugurated in 2014, seeks to bring outstanding mission thinkers and leaders to Melbourne for a public lecture. The Global Mission Learning Community offers a co-curricular programme for students who are thinking seriously about global or cross-cultural mission.

Third, global mission is infused into our corporate worship. The chapel map wall is decorated with the faces of Ridley folk who currently serve in global mission. In our intercessions, we pray our way systematically around the world each semester.

Fourth, in seeking to create a global mission culture, we collaborate with many global mission organisations. We enjoy a long-standing partnership with our next-door neighbours at St Andrew's Hall, the Church Missionary Society's training college, and we are exploring new ways to leverage our partnership for the sake of the gospel around the world. Several times each semester, representatives from various mission agencies visit us informally to join in chapel, morning tea and lunch. We are privileged to welcome seasoned missionaries, senior mission leaders, and outstanding

majority world Christian leaders to college on a regular basis. For example, Global Mission Week this year included visits from the National Directors of three mission organisations and the State Directors of several others.

Fifth, there is the College community. Our increasingly diverse student body creates opportunities for cross-cultural engagement as a daily part of College life. This is partly a reflection of Melbourne's growing cultural diversity. It is also a reflection of our commitment to supporting gospel ministry in the majority world, with two postgraduate students from Myanmar in recent years, and among new immigrant populations in Australia, especially through our programme for Non-English Speaking Background students, run by Len Firth. The Ridley Chinese Certificate was also launched this year.

As Dean of Global Mission, I pray that, through developing a global mission culture, Ridley will form many men and women to be missionaries, missiologists and mission advocates. I also pray that every graduate of the college will leave Ridley more passionate about God's global mission than when they arrived. Would you join me in these prayers; for the praise of the glory of God's grace among all peoples.

For the World

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FOR THE CALENDAR**March 7**

Anglican Institute Lecture
given by John Harrower

April 16

Graduation and Commissioning

July 28

'Washed and Waiting:

The Church and Same-sex Attraction'
with Dr Wesley Hill (Trinity School of Ministry,
Pittsburgh)

August 23-25

'Unless they Hear:

The Urgency of Evangelistic Preaching'
Annual Preachers' Conference

Please check the Ridley website for times
and locations: www.ridley.edu.au/events

RECENT RIDLEY PUBLICATIONS**Rhys Bezzant**

Standing on their Shoulders
(Acorn Press)

Lindsay Wilson

Job: The Two Horizons
Old Testament Commentary
(William B. Eedermans Publishing Co.)

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Plenty of Preparation

Meet Tom (not his real name) a current Ridley Student who is studying at Ridley as part of his preparation for **overseas mission**.

PARKVILLE CAMPUS LIFE

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Ridley Student | Master of Divinity

Since I became a Christian in high school I've wanted to tell people about Jesus. During my undergraduate degrees I was greatly nurtured and shaped in my faith by the Christian Union. It was there that I met Sybil, a lovely, godly young woman who spoke French and was also interested in mission.

Upon graduating, I taught for three years, consolidating the skills I learned at university, hoping they would be useful in my future work overseas. During this time I also completed a postgraduate qualification in teaching English as an additional language, and married Sybil, who was completing a graduate qualification. The next step in our ministry training was for me to do a two-year traineeship with Christian Union, while Sybil started work as a music teacher.

I sometimes felt that my preparation for mission was taking forever, so it was a relief to finally begin theological study last year. I chose Ridley because I had been so encouraged by the Ridley graduates I encountered during my time at Christian Union.

I remember the first day of my Greek intensive, playing a very simple name game with the whole class. The next day the lecturer knew everyone's names. It always took me a lot longer than that to learn names when I was a teacher, so imagine my surprise when my other lecturers repeated the performance!

This level of attention to students is just one thing that makes me grateful for Ridley's faculty. It continues to be a highlight of College life for me to study, worship, eat, and joke with such learned and godly men and women.

In my second year I have benefited especially from the experience of a number of faculty and guests who have long missionary careers behind them. I have access to an enormous bank of wisdom and practical knowledge, and have learned so much about approaches to mission as well as personal spiritual practice. It is through a Ridley guest that Sybil and I heard about the needs and opportunities in the country where we hope to serve.

Our plan now is for Sybil to teach for one more year (she loves her job) while I complete my third year at Ridley. After that we hope to head off for a two-year term to Africa where we want eventually to bring the Gospel to a people who have no other way of hearing it. During this first term we hope to learn, amongst other things, some culture, some language, and some strategies to cope with the heat! After that we plan to return to Australia for a year, so Sybil can do some theological study and I can finish off my degree and learn some French before we head back in earnest. We hold these plans loosely, but find it helpful to have a goal toward which we can work.

Please pray for us!

Feeding Passion

With Ridley's long standing history of **training missionaries**, there are currently graduates serving all over the world.

MISSIONARIES

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Kate and Tavis Beer, Arthur and Tamie Davis
Ridley Graduates

At Ridley, the chapel wall hosts a map of the world, with a scattering of missionary support postcards of graduates who have headed outside of Victoria. One of the postcards is of the Beer family, who have ventured to the Northern Territory to work as part of the Ministry Development team. The Davis family are also on the wall. They are serving in student ministry in Tanzania. Here, the two families reflect on how their time at Ridley prepared them for their current work.

Kate and Tavis Beer says "Ridley fed our passion for teaching and pastorally caring for those around us". Kate continues, "Passion is fed by people, and it was great to spend time with people who are also on the same journey. For this reason we really appreciated the small groups, and meal and chapel times. We met inspiring people, who we could talk, dream and pray with."



Arthur and Tamie Davis see their time at Ridley enabled them to reaffirm the legitimacy of campus ministry and the need for it. Arthur says, "Ridley afforded us the opportunity to understand the place of mission societies. When pastoring congregations and church planting is the norm, the church does not always recognise the need for Christians to move outside those local bodies. This is one of the biggest issues we are currently navigating in Tanzania. It was during our time at Ridley that we were able to reaffirm the legitimacy of campus ministry and the need for it."

It was more than the community that helped the Beers and the Davis's prepare for cross cultural ministry, Kate and Tavis say "Through its subjects and lecturers, Ridley sharpened our theological reflection and biblical interpretation. We use what we learned in our

training and mentoring of Aboriginal ministers in the Top End. Even in the regular preaching and leading of worship, we continue to draw upon what we were taught.

Arthur and Tamie recall subjects that have made a lasting impact for their work. "The Wisdom Literature course we did with Lindsay Wilson at Ridley has been the single biggest factor in helping us to grapple with Tanzanian theology." They say, "Maybe three quarters of the sermons we heard in our first year in Tanzania quoted from Proverbs! Tanzanians are obsessed with the good life, more controversially known as 'prosperity'. It's easy as a westerner to outright reject talk of prosperity as greed, or to speak about it in only spiritual terms, but neither of these approaches are useful in Tanzania for a range of reasons. Doing Wisdom Literature helped us to see that a good life lived God's way is actually a strong biblical theme, and that the Tanzanian interest in it is a valid and even vital Christian pursuit."

Both the Beers and the Davis's recognise how Ridley shaped them to be able to think through their context and the challenges that they face every day. "Ridley also gave us a handle on how to think through the 'why' questions of church practice, which in our context is diverse and multi factorial" say the Beers. The Davis's say "A significant factor we now look back on is that as we did various church history courses with Rhys Bezzant, we kept running across Christian forebears who, on a host of issues, thought quite differently from us or our theological camp. Respect for different people and views was modelled to us and we were equipped to listen to them, appreciate them, and learn from them as part of the Christian body. These are skills we employ every day in cross-cultural ministry in Tanzania."



God Give You Strength

A Ridley student, has recently spent some time overseas working with **Syrian refugees**. She can't be named, but can share some of her experiences.

SHORT TERM MISSION EXPERIENCE

Ridley Student | Working overseas with Syrian refugees

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I am currently in the final throes of my Bachelor of Theology. In reflecting on how Ridley has helped to equip me for my time overseas, I am struck by the way God so often moves in ways and places we aren't expecting.

I initially applied to Ridley with plans to take just one subject, maybe two. But it was in my entrance interview with Richard Trist, when he described the pathways available in the Bachelor of Theology, that I realized my plan might not play out as I had imagined, and soon I was committed to an entire degree.

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In my second semester, the opportunity arose to go on a Ridley Study Tour through the Middle East and Mediterranean, and I leapt at it! It was while on this trip that my heart was captured anew by the nations in the region (having grown up overseas, this part of the world has always been a big part of my life) and I started to wonder if I should consider working in the area. In the meantime, I enjoyed the chance to delve into my study. Theology subjects helped me discover the beautiful complexity of God, the centrality of the Trinity, and how to not panic in theological debates. Church history taught me to love the church again. Exegesis and biblical languages taught me how careful and deliberate God had been with His word, and how much we learn about Him through it. And cross-cultural subjects built on my experience of growing up overseas, helping me to see the biblical and theological basis for the work that we do.

This year, the opportunity to return to the overseas region came up, and although I had planned to do student work, God opened the door for me to work with Syrian refugees for several months. Although it was worlds away from Ridley, I was and am deeply thankful for the foundation laid here, onto which I was

able to build the deeper understanding of Christ's suffering and comfort that my time working with refugees gave me. The following is a piece I wrote on that lesson during my time overseas.

I look at myself in the mirror, in the bathroom at the refugee centre where I help out. I've come in here to hide away a little, to step out of the fluster and hustle for a moment. As I dab at my sweat-smudged makeup, I think to myself that anger is a funny emotion.

We arrived this morning to an overwhelming scene of about 60 (mostly Syrian) women crowding the courtyard, all manner of children in tow. I am one of only two English-Arabic speakers on team today and after a morning of translating with my very limited Arabic, and repeatedly saying "I'm very sorry, but we can't help you with anything else", I'm quite a variety of angries.

I'm angry with the crowd for making me so overwhelmed. I'm angry with myself for getting flustered; for having money but not being able to hand it out to one and all. I'm frustrated with my limited Arabic, which drops in capacity the more stressed I become. I'm annoyed that all I'm thinking right now is how much I hate disappointing people ... How is this suddenly about me?!

Sometimes I'd be caught in a sea of hands, tapping me on the shoulder or tugging on my arm, while I try to answer questions about when they might be seen, or whether we can provide more assistance, or would I please tell the manager about their seven children, and husband in prison in Syria? On this insanely busy day, the women crowd around the registration table, determined to be heard. "Please, sit down!", the other translator urges, as eager faces lean in, wanting to make sure they are all getting fair treatment.

By the end of four or five hours I don't want to talk to anyone, preferring to sit in a corner with my eyes tight shut. The last of the women have been assisted, as far as possible. When I got home later I spent a little while in the foetal position, then unwound over language homework and TV. But despite all of the flusters and splutters of the day, the thought I return to is not about anger, frustration, injustice or exhaustion. It's about the sacredness in Arabic greetings.

Syrians in particular are a very polite people. At the end of virtually every interview with a refugee who was asking for assistance we couldn't provide, they would stand and say "Thank you" or "Peace be with you". And as they left, with frustration fading from their eyes, they would simply say, "God give you strength". It's a frequently used line, but each time it is said the words make the normal sacred and remind us both of the bigger picture. And as I respond with the set reply, the words teach us to offer grace to each other.

Some, understandably, will still leave angry or hopeless. But I'm comforted to remember that it's God who gives strength, and God who loves more than I ever could. And I am humbled that these most vulnerable of people are the ones reminding me.



A line of Syrian refugees crossing the border of Hungary and Austria on their way to Germany. Hungary, Central Europe, 6 September 2015.

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