



**Staff >** Gary Eastment | Chaplain 0409 725 193  
Gus Robinson | Assoc. Minister 0409 926 524  
Tam Ramsay | Women/Children 0431 092 152  
Michael Hemans | Youth 0403 273 750

**Office >** Matthew Knights & Pam Dawson 6787 4015  
[unechurch@une.edu.au](mailto:unechurch@une.edu.au) | [pdawson3@une.edu.au](mailto:pdawson3@une.edu.au)

**Web >** [www.unechurch.org](http://www.unechurch.org) (unechurch | unechurch213)

**Facebook >** [www.facebook.com/unechurch/](http://www.facebook.com/unechurch/)

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## Knowing begins with Knowing God

### Romans 8:28-30

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

**This column is written in response to Julia Baird's reporting on the ABC this week.**

If you haven't caught it, do search for it with your favourite search engine.

I admit one of my first responses to Julia Baird's reporting about domestic violence in the church was defensiveness. It's true that she has a long

record of being an outside and attacking voice on conservative evangelicalism. Even so, we should receive this critique humbly and with thanks. A few thoughts in this limited space ...



**1. The Problem of Domestic Violence is real, and tragic.** We are naive and unloving if we put our heads in the sand and imagine this doesn't happen within our church communities. Baird is not making the figures, nor her stories, up. I have my own stories I have pastored through. This is a society-wide issue that crosses socio-economic and cultural boundaries. That it might happen amongst us should not be considered impossible. It can be flagrant and easy to see - it can also be more subtle, embedded in the midst of manipulation, truth twisting and threats and thus harder to see. In every case, it is destructive to marriages, families and lives.

**2. Domestic Violence is contrary to Scripture.**

Does this even need to be said? Sadly, yes. Some male abusers abuse the Bible to justify their abuse. In the name of order and headship they excuse violence, harsh words, threats and sexual manipulation.

This is egregious, appalling behaviour.

Husbands are called to lay down their lives for the good of their wives, as they model themselves on the one who laid down His life for all of us, Jesus. Christ-like husbands are courageous initiators and humble bearers of responsibility, in the name of the flourishing of their wives and families.

This truth is reflected in the figures Baird cites: regularly church attending protestant men are the least likely of the groups compared to be abusive. This suggests against one of the main themes of the article(s); that biblical teaching around headship and submission create opportunities for, and drive, abuse. In other words, it seems that men who take this teaching seriously are the least

*You are not trapped in an abuse situation by what God says in the Bible.*

likely to be abusers (while those on the fringe of church life - non-regular attending protestant men - are the most likely). Clearly, church leaders need to do a good job of teaching clearly and with nuance on headship and submission.

To be clear: there is no room among god's people for lovers of self, abusive, heartless, without self control, brutal men and women. Such people are 'disqualified regarding the faith' (2 Tim 3). If you are such a person and abusive in your relationship, you need to stop lying to yourself and others, destroying your marriage and family, and offending the Gospel. The Gospel calls you to start the process of repentance. The God who stands against you in your violence will respond in mercy to those who turn in humility back to Him.

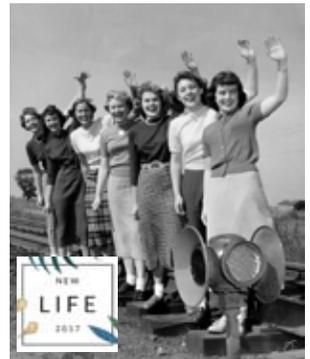
**3. If you a victim of domestic violence,** I want to convey this to you directly: if you approach me to get help: I will protect your privacy; I will work with you to make church a safe place to be, including not allowing the abuser to attend church; I will seek to support you pastorally, and connect you to professional help where necessary; we will ensure you are welcomed in services and small groups for fellowship and friendship - we don't want you to be isolated.

You need to know that the Bible does not require you to stay in the home with an abuser. Creating safety for healing, and an opportunity for repentance and change is important and biblical. Further, I believe an unrepentant and on-going abusive spouse will, at some point, destroy their marriage. You are not trapped in an abuse situation by what God says in the Bible.

My prayer is that we can be a community of light and truth, safety and healing.

Gary Eastment

## Upcoming & Notes



• **New Life 2017 Christian Women's Conference Aug 25 & 26** > @ Carinya Christian School Tamworth. Organised by the Anglican Diocese of Armidale. New Life aims to provide quality Bible teaching to encourage women in their relationship with Jesus and equip them to serve Him in their local communities. Theme: *'Waiting for the Day'* - Studies in the book of 2 Thess and on prayer. Flyers in church foyer. **Early bird rate closes 30th July.** Rego and more info at [newlifeconference.org.au/](http://newlifeconference.org.au/)

• **The Mark Drama (two performances) 7pm THIS Tues July 25 and Wed July 26 Lazenby Hall UNE** > Christians United (our student-led group on campus) are putting on this production at Madgwick Hall UNE, with the help of a director from Wollongong. This has been a powerful evangelistic tool around the world for some years, introducing people to Jesus in the text of Mark's Gospel presented in dramatic form. You are warmly invited, on the basis you bring someone who needs to hear the gospel. **There is no cost, but please contact Annie on [anastasia.blossom@gmail.com](mailto:anastasia.blossom@gmail.com) for more information or to let her know you'd like to come.**

• **St Marks uneChurch family Prayer Meeting 7.30pm August 1** > Block out your diary for an hour for this all-of-church gathering to give thanks, and ask for the Lords continued blessing on our world, our mission and for each other. Please make the effort.

• **Confirmation with Bishop Rick Lewers October 22** > Contact Matt in the Office 6787 4015.

• **Colin Buchanan Concerts** > PLC Astra Arts Centre. *Kids Concert 2pm Friday 11 Aug* \$8pp tickets. *Adults/Family Concert 7pm Saturday 12 Aug* \$20pp. Tickets [www.trybooking.com](http://www.trybooking.com)

• **Young Life Dinner Saturday Sept 2** > St Peters Cathedral Parish Hall 6.00pm for 6.30pm start. Cost \$20 (two-course dinner + non-alcoholic drinks). If you wish to host a table or help with catering, please contact Gillian Traise on 0414 674 519 or [gill@ioha.com.au](mailto:gill@ioha.com.au)

## Family Prayer

• **Baking** > Henry & Candy Yeomans (due end July); Heidi & Hunter Gerberich.

• **'Tent' Wear & Repair** (2 Cor. 5) > Matthew Devenish-Meares; Samantha Guilbert; Luke McCleneghan; David Meares; Owen Chapman.

• **Betrothed** > Annikki Reader & Joel Klein Aug 19 (Birnbach in Germany); Ben Lukins & Laura Millican Dec 9. • **SunAM Prayer Ministry** > See Robert Baker.

## Family Finances | July 8 - 14

<b>Giving 8/7-14/7</b>	<b>\$7332</b>
Average amount needed to meet Budget per week	<b>\$8,484</b>
<b>Overall Giving 1/7-14/7</b>	<b>\$18,004</b>
Average amount needed to meet Budget for this period	<b>\$16,968</b>

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