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Reformation Series - 'Grace & Faith Alone'

Psalm 86 & Romans 1:1-17

But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness... Ps 86

... concerning his Son ... Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. Rom 1

Vern William's Memorial Service 1pm TODAY

Join us as we celebrate the life of by far the longest serving and a foundation member of our church family here at St Mark's.

"I know that God is there and that's the thing." Vern 95



Why is evangelism among university students so crucial? One reason is because of the unique openness the university experience creates in students' lives. During undergraduate



years, young adults usually experience a new level of independence from family and other childhood connections. For many, it's the first time out of the house and being fully responsible for their daily decisions and actions. Most students go to college not to stay the same but to set their own course in life, so there's an openness to big questions and different ideas, even radically new ones.

Young adults at this stage of life have always been asking at least four such big questions:

1. Who am I? (looking inward)
2. What's the point or meaning of things? (looking outward)
3. Whom should I be with and love? (looking sideways)
4. And, in the light of the first three answers, what should I do with my life? (looking forward)



Those who don't go to college often accept the answers their families and home communities assign to them. University students certainly have social pressure on them from their background, but they're given much more space and opportunity to make significant changes.

Unprecedented Questions

While students have always wrestled with some form of these basic questions, our late-modern secular culture has intensified the dynamics. Consider Amherst College in Massachusetts, which explains its mission like this: *"Since 1821, we've been helping our students find their own voices, discover their own truths, and forge their own paths in the world."* It would be hard to find a more blatant expression of what has been called *"expressive individualism."* (And we strongly doubt the college founders in 1821 thought they were helping students *"discover their own truths!"*)

Nevertheless, this mission shows that, more than ever, universities create environments that encourage students to rethink the beliefs of their upbringing, including their meaning in life, values, and identity. That, of course, is a challenge to students who come into undergraduate courses with a Christian faith. But it also means students from other backgrounds and communities are dislodged from them and are freer to consider the claims of Christianity than they would've been at home.

Also, while it may be considered impolite in much of society to try to convert people to your belief system, on university campuses this is essentially what everyone's trying to do to everyone else, with vigour. The free market of ideas and the discussions that ensue inside and outside the lecture room aren't value-neutral exchanges, but rather places of persuasion where individuals debate and accept differing explanations of the good, the true, and the beautiful. Evangelism fits right in.

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Ample Time

Another reason evangelism is crucial during university years shouldn't be overlooked. It concerns time. College students' life patterns give them ample time for discussion, questioning, study, and inquiry, a luxury most people don't have. Today's students will insist they're overwhelmingly busy, but every man or woman who graduates from college and enters the marketplace looks back and realizes their schedule was actually more flexible than it would ever be again.

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So we must strike while the iron is hot. University undergraduates have both the freedom and the bandwidth required to consider abandoning one comprehensive set of beliefs about life and adopting a whole new one. Later in life their worldview "settles in" through vocational choices and longer-term friendships and new family ties. This makes it far harder to get anything like the focused attention and energy necessary to examine the foundations of one's entire life.

The university, then, is in many ways uniquely suited for evangelism. There's no other place in our culture that affords listeners the space and freedom, time and posture, to talk about the Meaning of It All.

Access to the World

There's one last reason why we should make university evangelism a high priority. Today there are enormous numbers of international students flocking to receive Western educations. One reason we should reach out to them has already been noted. Away from their home cultures and communities, they're far more accessible and open to considering the claims of Christianity than they've ever been before or, possibly, will be again. Indeed, many students who opt for a Western education have every intention of weighing worldview options and other religions.



And there's another thing to bear in mind. A significant percentage of international students return to their countries and assume positions of influence. Colleges always talk about "training future leaders" but in this case it's largely true. Student evangelists can engage in international missions to dozens of countries without the need for a single passport. There's no better way to "make disciples of all nations" than to reach international students in our universities.

Tim Keller & Michael Keller - June 19, 2017

* This article is part of a series by the authors about Gospel work on campus. It is excellent: search for it on The Gospel Coalition site www.thegospelcoalition.org

Family Prayer

- **Baking** > Henry & Candy Yeomans (due end July); Heidi & Hunter Gerberich.
- **'Tent' Wear & Repair** (2 Cor. 5) > Samantha Guilbert; Luke McClenaghan; David Meares; Owen Chapman.
- **Betrothed** > Ben Lukins & Laura Millican Dec 9. • **SunAM Prayer Ministry** > See Robert Baker.

Upcoming & Notes

• **New Life 2017 Christian Women's Conference Aug 25 & 26** > @ Carinya Christian School Tamworth. Organised by the Anglican Diocese of Armidale for the women of the New England/North West, 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 II Thessalonians and on prayer. Flyers in church foyer. Early bird rate closes 30th July. Rego and more info at newlifeconference.org.au/



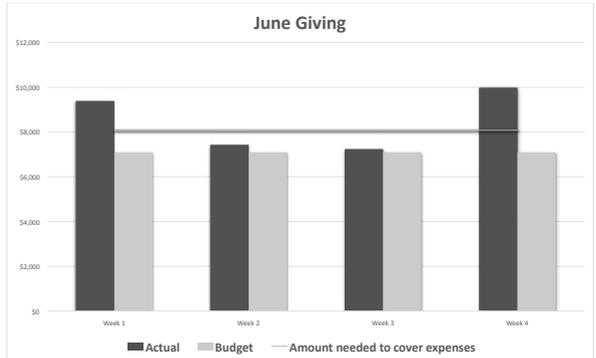
- **Confirmation with Bishop Rick Lewers October 22** > Contact Matt in the Office 6787 4015.
- **Colin Buchanan Concerts** > PLC Astra Arts Centre. *Kids Concert 2pm Friday 11 Aug* \$8pp tickets. *Adults/Family Concert 7pm Saturday 12 Aug* \$20pp. Tickets www.trybooking.com
- **Young Life Dinner Saturday Sept 2** > Warm up from winter with heart-warming Young Life stories at the annual YL dinner - St Peters Cathedral Parish Hall 6.00pm for 6.30pm start. Cost \$20 (includes two-course dinner and 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

Family Finances

Our giving for June came to a total of \$34, 037 which was well over our (Deficit*) Budget target amount.

In Year-to-Date terms (i.e. from the beginning of July to the end of June) we have exceeded our deficit budget by \$38, 850. * A deficit budget with a 7% increase is in place.

An update about how we have gone compared to actual expenses for the financial year will be made available once all income and expenses have been accounted for.



DEFICIT BUDGET (as adopted ABM) End June

Needed YTD to meet Deficit Budget \$368,522

Received YTD \$407,732

Deficit Budget exceeded by \$38,850

*As you excel in everything
in faith, in speech,
in knowledge, in all
earnestness, and in our love
for you - see that you excel
in this act of grace also.*

2 Cor. 8:7

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