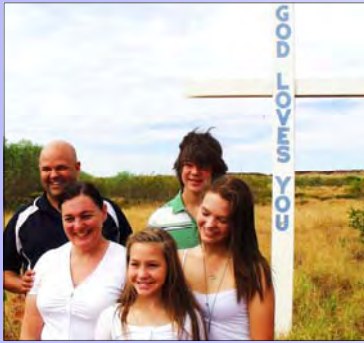




THE ADDRESS OF THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MAY 2010



SO FROM NOW ON WE REGARD NO ONE FROM A WORLDLY POINT OF VIEW...IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATION; THE OLD HAS GONE, THE NEW HAS COME!

2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-17

Aligned with God's Vision

Constance Isabella Maynard Leask went home to be with her Lord this year on the 10th March aged 101. Constance Leask had been a supporter of the Bush Church Aid Society all her adult life, exhibiting an increasing generosity proportionate to her years.

As a child, Constance attended St Andrew's Wahroonga. She clearly recalled attending with her mother and hearing the Reverend SJ Kirkby give a lantern slide talk in the church hall about the importance of supporting the Bush Church Aid Society in its endeavour to reach Australians for Christ. They both became supporters that evening.

From the very beginning of Kirkby's leadership, his focus was not solely in being biblically centred, gospel outreaching or as we might say today intentionally missional. While all these are important principles of BCA, he saw also the value of seeing men and women, boys and girls, as God sees them. Kirkby understood that if Christ died "for all" his view of others must reflect God's perspective; as people who may live for Christ and serve Him. It is this unique biblical truth, which formed the basis of everyday life for Kirkby as Organising Missioner. It is also that which captured Constance's imagination to be an ambassador for Christ through her support of the Bush Church Aid Society for close to 90 years, praying, giving and visiting the BCA hostels and bush hospitals.

Seeing everyone as people who might live for Christ has been the central mark of the Society, the work of the Field Staff, and the task of the deputationist.

Paul, in writing to the Corinthians (2 Cor 5:11-21), reflects that human perspective clouded his view of the cross and death of Jesus. He saw the cross as an action calculated to bring shame, pain and death. He saw Jesus' death as the end of a political and religious problem.

His view was transformed to see it as life giving; the means by which an ongoing relationship with the Lord, Creator and Saviour of the world is possible.

Paul, having revised his understanding of the cross, now refocuses his view of others. He says therefore, from now on, we see no one in human terms, (even though we once thought of Jesus just that way), but as people for whom Christ died and rose.

BCA is in line with this view. We see people not only from the human perspective of physical and emotional needs but from a divine perspective, seeing their huge spiritual need.

Paul declares that Jesus "died for all, that all who live should no longer just live for themselves but for Him who died and rose again for them" (v.15).

Paul sees all individuals as being within God's view, as being worthy of participation in the death of Christ and the benefits it brings. In having this understanding he focuses upon his own (and other Christians) need to be responsible, to put into practice what has been given by God, that is, 'a ministry of reconciliation'. "Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation" (v.18).



Constance Leask

The BCA motto "Australia for Christ" is based on this perspective. It is a direct transfer from our parent body, the Colonial and Continental Church Society (C&CCS), whose slogan was "Empire for Christ". On the surface it could be construed as having an 'empirical' type ring about it. But when one reads the C&CCS's minutes of proceedings in the early 20th century it is clear that it was trying to reach the people of the back blocks of our land with a salvation message, and that it was being thwarted by the local Australian Bishop's use of C&CCS monies for 'ritualist activities', the building up of church structure and the diocesan 'empire'. An 'empire' that did not come under the founders clearly stated goal of focusing on the spiritual condition of people who found themselves without the gospel.

It was the Primate, Archbishop Wright, a somewhat misunderstood Sydney Archbishop, who put the situation in clear terms. In 1913 he said to the C&CCS Council in London, that, 'Evangelicals had started with a distinct advantage in Australia, but had lost their position and...this might be regained by the Society (i.e. C&CCS) placing Evangelicals in certain dioceses since clergy and laity elect their bishop.'

The Archbishop then indicated why the C&CCS monies had recently been misplaced to support ritualists (by the Bishops) 'because they had been made to places and not men'. The core focus of reaching people for Christ was blurred and needed a local examination.

The next seven years saw the Bush Church Aid Society formed as we know it today. Kirkby was engaged in 1920 as their primary agent, a man with many strengths and abilities. His actions, letters and writing all pointed to his passion for every person, every soul, every Australian because they were individually important to God, "namely that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He committed to us the word of reconciliation (v.19)."

God has blessed this vision through the continued growth of ministry through BCA. Field Staff, home based staff, Councils and Committees have continued faithful commitment to that same vision from old, which Kirkby, Constance, Wright, and St Paul held. Namely that each person matters to the Lord, that each person has the right to know Jesus and put trust in Him as Saviour and Lord.

So one may well ask why has BCA been so successful in

growing its ministry outreach across Australia over the past decade?

A decade where the number of field placements has grown from 22 to 46. A decade marked by tsunamis, bush fire storms, unprecedented high levels of flooding, exceptional circumstances and drought. A decade of climate change and a global financial meltdown of an order not seen since the Society was completing its 1920's decade under Kirkby's leadership.

The key lies in the focus. Not only claiming to be *solely* biblically centred, gospel outreaching, or intentionally missional, but in seeing men and women, boys and girls, as God sees them, as people wholeheartedly deserving of God's love.

BCA in 2009

Uncertainty has lingered across the Nation this past year due to the Global Financial Crisis. Unlike other agencies, charities and 'not for profits', the Society has come through remarkably well with a less than 1% variation in donations on the previous year. Thanks to the generous donations from supporters who have maintained their commitment to the Society's mission.

Field Staff numbers have been maintained, new placements added, and, with the exception of Kangaroo Island, vacancies have been short-term. The Society currently supports 46 field and home base locations with 129 people in situ. It was realised that this large number of people requiring care and nurture was stressing our ageing personnel policies and operational procedures.

The Field Staff conference in October 2008 and subsequent Personnel Committee deliberations commenced the work of revamping and improving the pastoral care support for staff. A simplification of pastoral care responsibilities for Regional Officers and the addition of a governance contact system for Councillors has been well received by the Field Staff.

During the past couple of years a growth in thinking creatively

about mission opportunities has been exhibited by the Field Staff. This has been matched by a confidence to bring the ideas before the Society's Ministry Priorities Panel and Executive Committee for consideration. A most recent example being a current proposal from the Coober Pedy Field Staff to address ministry opportunities caused by the rapid mining expansion in remote South Australia, the rise of a large community of Fly In Fly Out (FIFO) personnel and the consequent possibility of social and family dysfunction.

The personal dedication and sacrifice of Field Staff along with the collective commitment of those who work in the National and Regional offices needs special mention. The home based staff worked tirelessly in this past year to reduce overheads where possible and to carefully administer the Society's resources in the light of the potential impact of the GFC. They also worked hard to assure supporters and Field Staff that the Society's missional endeavour would continue unabated even as the Nation became increasingly nervous.

We mark during the past year the passing of a number of key people from the BCA family. These include Revd Eric Atkin, Betty Barber, the Venerable Denis William Warburton, Canon Theodore Hayman, Dorothy Duver, Revd Arthur Williams, Ross Harbison, and Sir Marcus Loane.

The Society commenced 2009 operations with a degree of uncertainty. Not knowing how the year would pan out, we were soon reminded of the faithfulness of God, the dedication of our staff and the commitment of our supporters. It is to them that we give our thanks, and to God our praise for a most fruitful and encouraging year. It gives me great pleasure as the National Director to present this address and report.

Brian Roberts
12th May 2010



BCA Staff Conference 2008

The Year in Review...

Autumn 2009

- ♦ Revd. Gary & Mrs. Nikki Alexander move to Kununurra to be part of the ministry team with a view to be incumbent in April 2010.
- ♦ Christ for Campers is held for the first time on the East Coast in Mallacoota.
- ♦ BCA Missioner in Croajingalong together with the people of Mallacoota hold a special service to thank members of the emergency services following the Gippsland fires. (Police, Ambulance, Fire Department, SES and Surf Lifesaving).
- ♦ BCA Missioners in Roxby Downs and Coober Pedy invited as Chaplains to the Mines at Olympic Dam and Oxyana.
- ♦ Revd. Michael Stuart takes on full-time role of Regional Officer for Western Australia. In the past this has been an honorary role.
- ♦ James & Skye Coat join the BCA family in Ministry Training in the parish of Turvey Park/Tarcutta in the Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn.
- ♦ Drought hits rural Australia hard and BCA ramps up 'open gate', mental health first aid programme
- ♦ The death of Dorothy Duver (Port Lincoln Girls Hostel, BCA Hospital Ceduna), Ven. Bill Warburton (BCA trainee while studying at Ridley then serving with the Society at Tarraleah, Minnipa, Port Hedland) and Canon Theo Hayman (Streaky Bay, Ceduna/Penong, Adelaide SA Representative) who not only served here with the Society but as Federal Secretary strategically guiding the work of the Society.
- ♦ The Revd. Mark & Mrs. Sandy Evans leave the Society and Kangaroo Island to enjoy retirement. Revd. Graham & Mrs. June Knott also leave the Society & Croajingalong to return to the UK and continue in ministry. The UCA decides to take its turn in providing ministry in Croajingalong.
- ♦ The Middlewicks leave Bluff Point to further develop their ministry formation in the Diocese of Perth.

Spring 2009

- ♦ Neville Naden establishes a community garden in Broken Hill which will provide great assistance to the Indigenous people and to the ministry in this region.
- ♦ Christ for Campers programme runs in North West Australia for another year.
- ♦ Sir Marcus Loane is remembered and honoured following his death. Sir Marcus was a strong advocate for the work of BCA and served as the Society's President for a number of years.
- ♦ The parish of Sunraysia South (BCA Missioners Dale Barclay) run their first "Bible in the Bush" programme.
- ♦ Joshua Maule takes up the position of Media & Communications Officer with a focus of redeveloping the website and connecting with younger supporters along with other duties.
- ♦ BCA launches on Facebook.
- ♦ Betty Barber who served at Wudinna Hospital passed away in June.

Winter 2009

- ♦ BCA celebrates its 90th birthday as an identifiably Australian. Many celebrations happen throughout the year.
- ♦ Revd. Canon John Butler appointed Vice President of the Society and Revd. Tom Morgan is made a Vice President Emeritus. Tom has had a long service with the Society as a BCA ordination candidate, missioner, Regional Committee member and Councillor.
- ♦ Revd. Richard & Mrs. Tracey Goscombe together with their children Rachel, Joshua & Sarah move to Wickham, NWA to restart the ministry after 10 years of little activity.
- ♦ Glendon & Catherine McKay join the team in Kununurra as Co-Workers.
- ♦ Meredith Campbell, whose vision under God, is to grow a community of Jesus' followers out of an unchurched or dechurched group of local people in the Huon Valley in Tasmania joins BCA.
- ♦ Revd. Peter Linn on short term deployment with the Air Force in the Middle East and Helen Spring joins BCA in the SA/NT Regional Office.
- ♦ Alice Springs sees a change in staff as Kim Rees (nee Eggleton) leaves and Gill Wright (former BCA Nurse) takes on the ministry.
- ♦ Revd. Dennis Quinn returns to BCA in the role of Hon. Regional Officer for Tasmania.
- ♦ Narelle Macpherson concludes service at Kormilda College, Darwin.
- ♦ Following the horrific fires in Victoria earlier this year, BCA Councillor Ernest Horth and his wife Ida minister amongst the bushfire victims at Kinglake Ranges, Victoria. They will come alongside the victims to help through the "recovery" process.
- ♦ The Society mourns the death of Vera Holle who served at Ceduna, Penong, Wudinna, Tarcoola and Cook hospitals between 1945-1968.
- ♦ The support of Religious Education in State Schools across Australia is greatly appreciated in many Dioceses.

Summer 2009

- ♦ BCA's new website launched.
- ♦ The drought continues to affect our country and many BCA locations directly.
- ♦ Revd. Tom Slockee to become Canon Missioner for the Diocese of the Northern Territory. He and his wife Muriel to move in January 2010 from Mogo.
- ♦ BCA return to the Mallee district of Victoria with the appointment of Revd. Helen Chick in the parish of Central Mallee based at Ouyen.
- ♦ The bush comes to Sydney with the arrival of a massive dust storm –the city now appreciates what is often a common place occurrence for our Field Staff. An envelope containing red dust is returned to Arthur Tanner in Leigh Creek as a symbol of our stand with the people of the Bush.
- ♦ Mr. John Cronshaw retires as a Councillor, member of Executive, Chairman of the NSW/ACT Regional Committee. His expertise and his skills as 'Buspa' will be greatly missed.
- ♦ Farewell is said to many of our staff as God uses them in other roles; Bill & Jocelyn Ross leave Pt. Hedland to minister in the Mission to Seaman in Geraldton, Bob & Jan McKay leave Roxby Downs to undertake other intentional locums, Peter & Barbara Nunn retire from ministry on King Island and Ron & Crystal Spindler move to a Diocesan ministry role at Ariah Park.
- ♦ The Society continues to provide Locums for Kangaroo Island and welcome Revd. Mary & Dr. Owen Lewis to Roxby Downs.
- ♦ It is with sadness that the passing of Revd. Eric Atkin is noted. Eric worked in the National Office as Accountant.
- ♦ Telicia Nicholls from Tibooburra was 2009 recipient of the April Bottom Scholarship.



2009 saw the launch of the new BCA website