

Welcome to the first issue of *InterSections* for 2016! This issue is brimming with news about congregations and individuals around Australia who are reaching out to their communities.

Eddie Legg from the Malaga Church of Christ in Perth tells how simple (yes, simple) it is to undertake evangelism – consider the congregation's outreach to the African community. Crossing to the east coast of Australia, Brad Johnson leads outreach events to indigenous communities in NSW – read about Mission Moree and Brewarrina Bound. In Melbourne, Roger & Cath Donnelley established the SALT Foundation as a charity with spiritual goals. And the smallish Coffs Harbour congregation continues to run their Kids Night program, serving children from refugee and other families.

Some outreach activities involve overseas trips and visitors. Andrew Johnson describes the impact of the Holland Park Church of Christ in Brisbane hosting short-term mission teams from Lipscomb University. On a related note, and to help us be better prepared for cross-cultural interactions while ministering to others, Nancy Hartman shares a *Book Review* of *Cross Cultural Servanthood: Serving the World in Christlike Humility*, written by Duane Elmer.

We also take a nostalgic look at outreach and ministry in the past. Ted Paull honours the work of the Roper and Hartman families from the US during the 1970s-1990s. Whilst their service was focused largely in Sydney, their positive influence went far beyond.

This issue wraps up with news about Steve Wilson joining the eldership at The Point Church (Brisbane), a men's and boys' hike to Mount Kosciuszko organised by the Belmore Road congregation (Melbourne) and an update of the popular Camp Challenge in NSW.

Enjoy!

The InterSections Editorial Team



With the new year now in full swing, we think it's helpful to bring you snippets of how various individuals and

churches are reaching out into their communities. May the stories in this issue encourage and inspire you to reach out into the community even more as you continue serving our good and gracious God.

WA: Malaga Church of Christ, Perth

Evangelism is *simple*. Now, hear me out on this! I didn't say it was easy; it isn't. But it is simple. After all, it must be. God trusted me and you to do it, so how complicated can it be?

I'm often asked by Christians across Australia and New Zealand and when visiting in the USA, 'What programs is Malaga using to grow?' It takes less than thirty seconds for me to explain to them our single 'program' for evangelism. Do you want to hear it?

- 1. We pray to God for opportunities to share his love with others, for courage to take on these opportunities, and for his power to give increase to our work.
- 2. We *live* our lives *loving other people* the way Jesus has taught us to. That's it! It's that simple.





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Top photo: Andrew Johnson & family with Lipscomb students.

Side photo: Ashley Crill on the hike to Mount Kosciuszko.

Think about that a bit, and then read through the Gospels and/or Acts. Isn't that what we see: Jesus and his followers loving the people around them with a love that changes everything? Now let me give you two examples from Malaga, Perth, in more detail.

Back in 2004, an elderly sister, Pat, from the City Beach church met a young man from Liberia named Abraham. Pat invited Abraham over for lunch a few times and read the Bible with him. Abraham was concerned about his family back home, living in refugee camps. Pat helped where she could to sort through the red tape required to help get some of them to Australia. In 2007, six of Abraham's family members were able to come



to Perth as refugees. I wish I had time to tell you the story in more detail, but from those early simple acts of kindness and sharing about Jesus, there are now more than twenty-five souls who are part of the Malaga church. These people are already following the example of Pat and others in the group by sharing the Gospel with others in the community, so I am confident this number will continue to grow over time.

Another time, a couple in our congregation had a 'failed' encounter with a Zimbabwean man, John, at the airport. They helped him in a time of need and encouraged him to meet with us. He didn't, but over a year later, another man from Zimbabwe, Wilbert, contacted us to say he was moving to Perth and wanted to meet with us. Wilbert told us that he had a friend named John who had told him about us. Wilbert has since become one of our elders. Through that initial contact with John, which seemed to have ended in failure, God increased our number with another fifteen members whom we may not have otherwise come into contact.

So, I encourage you to see the value in the *little things* you can do to love and serve others. Be sure when you do these things to share with the people you are helping that your love and service is born out of all that Jesus has done for you. And pray! Pray each day and ask others to pray with you and for those you are interacting with.

It really is that simple. ■

Eddie Legg is an evangelist with the Malaga Church of Christ in Perth. eddielegg@gmail.com







NSW: Mission Moree & Brewarrina Bound

I believe one of the keys to evangelism among the unchurched is to start by asking them the question, 'What is important to you?' The connections, trust and rapport that result consistently help to set a scene in which the Holy Spirit can work. This is especially important when working with Australians from an indigenous background.

Mission Moree 2015 gathered 32 people from Queensland, New South Wales & Victoria to help Paul & Erin, located missionaries in the town of Moree, northern NSW, to conduct a four-day holiday Bible school program for children in the community. Our theme for the week was 'Looking for Treasure'. Bible stories and a range of activities illustrated three main truths: 'People are more important than things', 'Treasure is sometimes found in unlikely places', and 'You are God's treasure!' The final day was a carnival fun day with helium balloons, face painting, a 'selfie-sofa', a nail salon and lots of games the children could play along with us and win small prizes to take home. The day culminated in a sausage sizzle and more one-on-one connection time.

As each day unfolded, the team met for evening sessions to debrief, pray, and spend time in God's Word together, exploring God's call to ministry and it's undeniable effect. Our devotions were based on the following themes: the *tension* of ministry, the *challenge* of ministry, the *cost* of ministry, the *power* of ministry and the *risk* of ministry. The relevance of these themes to everyone involved was very real.

We finished the week saying our tearful goodbyes and putting the children back on the bus to go back to their homes. As is always the case, team members experienced a fair amount of distress over the physical condition of many of the children and the homes they return to each day. The team stays in contact with each other, and we continue personally and collectively to lift the children and their families in prayer, our heartfelt petition being that they follow Jesus wherever he leads.

Brewarrina Bound is a very different event. A smaller group spends time in the north-western NSW town of Brewarrina and basically lives side by side with a group of indigenous folks that we have developed relationships with over the last five years. As we live beside this community



over a seven-day period, opportunities present themselves to work in community service projects. These include participating in the NAIDOC (National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee) community festival, maintenance projects on community facilities and hospital visits.

Primarily, however, Brewarrina Bound is about making relational connections. We lead Bible studies at men's and women's groups, pray with individuals and at gatherings, help kids with

homework, encourage, love, and lift up wherever possible. Harvesting kangaroo and emu are just a few of the many traditional activities we have been invited to take part in.

Both of Mission Moree and Brewarrina Bound have produced steady results over time. They draw their strength from the different abilities and preferences of the teams who make them happen. If you're drawn to a program with specific aims, ministering alongside a large team, an organised curriculum, and you enjoy working to a tight schedule, then Mission Moree is for you. If you like spontaneity and the freedom to take initiative in a supported, prayerful environment, then Brewarrina Bound is for you. Both are full of adventure and present a very real opportunity for personal, spiritual growth. Please do not hesitate to ask how you might be involved.

Brad Johnson coordinates Mission Moree and Brewarrina Bound and is part of the Cleveland Church of Christ in Brisbane, QLD. bradjohnson@tpg.com.au

VIC: The SALT Foundation, Melbourne

'You are the salt of the earth...you are the light of the world...let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.' (Matthew 5:13-16)

My wife, Catherine, and I began The SALT Foundation as a vehicle for connecting with people so that we can make disciples in our local area. Our vision is simple: serve the physically and spiritually poor and needy in our local area so that people will give glory to God. We hope to then baptise people, start a local church to help sustain this love for our neighbour, help the church multiply and see revival. It is ambitious; but God said he could do more than we hope or imagine and to ask for anything!



We went around our municipality looking for activities where we could help others. We stumbled across a social worker in Heidelberg West, one of the less wealthy suburbs in Melbourne. He gave us a caravan and pointed out some housing commission flats which were full of people who needed help. So it was that we found ourselves in Heidelberg West.

We started hauling the caravan to the flats every week and began door knocking to invite people to join us for tea and biscuits, some free food and for children to come along to a simple reading program and games. We met all sorts of broken families. Their circumstances were far from ideal. There are refugees, drug addicts and those in recovery, the mentally ill and depressed, plus many who were unemployed.

Despite this we found a sense of camaraderie and gratitude. When asked who we were, we would simply explain that we're a Christian organisation seeking to help others. Since then we have:

- 1. Moved into a community house that was gifted to the community;
- 2. Started a weekly food relief project with Food Bank which has between 80 -100 families in receipt of help;
- 3. Hosted a community dinner each Friday night in a local school hall where we host around 35 -40 people (and where members of Belmore Road Church of Christ have joined us once a month to serve);
- 4. Partnered with Rotary and Exodus to provide around 60 hot meals to a particular commission flat every Wednesday;
- 5. Done a lot of informal lay counselling and relationship building with people; and
- 6. Undertaken a work-for-the-dole program where we are employing six people who had initially come along as participants to the program.

The exciting thing is that SALT is identified as being a Christian outreach and we are clearly identified as Christians. Everything we do has given us a chance to speak about Jesus and his love. We're able to invite people to join a spiritual community, his church. We started the Cornerstone Church of Christ and have averaged around 18 people on Sundays. We haven't baptised as many as we'd hoped. In fact, we've only had four baptisms since we began in 2012, but we realise that it's all in God's time. Meanwhile, we're pleased to be able to be teach people about the 'life and doctrine' which Paul mentioned in 1 Timothy 4:16 and continue to believe that God will bless us.

We set out on this journey as a family with three teenage boys. It hasn't all been easy sailing. But it's been worth it to see our faith stretched and tested. Currently we're praying (and we invite you to pray along) to find a solid family who can join us on Sundays to minister and teach the people who are coming to our gatherings.

Roger & Catherine Donnelley founded The SALT Foundation and run it. roger@thesaltfoundation.org.au

NSW: Coffs Coast Church of Christ, Coffs Harbour

At one time, our congregation only had adult Bible classes when we met on Wednesday nights at the local CWA hall in Coffs Harbour. We lacked teachers to teach children in different age groups. The result was evident: the children who came were losing interest in coming because the adult level of teaching was not appropriate for them.

We learnt that the children coming to our Sunday Bible classes wanted to come on Wednesday nights too – for a shared meal and a class of their own. So we proposed a solution. For two Wednesday nights of the month we would have an adult class only. On the other two nights we would provide teaching and activities for the children which were more suitable to their ages.

These classes were deliberately designed so that they were different in format to Sundays. They also focused on the children's needs. Each teacher's role would also be less demanding because they were only responsible for a small segment of the night's program. To glue it together, we focused on one theme for the whole year. This comprised a DVD Bible lesson along with a song related to the lesson. African children form the majority of the group and they really enjoy singing. So learning new songs in English was both fun and educational. (Attached to our first theme of FAITH was one song that featured all year – one never to be forgotten by both children and adults to this day!)





Our 'Kids Night' – as they came to be known – started with dinner together. This typically consisted of soup and bread or hot dogs, followed by ice-cream. Families were happy that their children were fed on that night, allowing a night off for parents. Transport for the children has always been a heavy task and all our cars are used. This is an ongoing challenge.

Several activities on the night catered to both older and younger children. Each activity aimed to reinforce the FAITH theme. The activities included puppet stories, games, show-and-tell, magic shows and story reading sessions. Crafts were not usually included as they were time and teacher intensive; in any event, crafts were often featured in their Sunday classes. The opportunity for adults to mentor kids was also encouraged in the whole process.

This Kids Night ministry has been ongoing successfully for three years. We anticipate, with God's guidance, a fourth round in 2016. ■

Judy Bebe is a member of the Coffs Coast Church of Christ, Coffs Harbour, NSW. cbebe@iinet.net.au

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Feature The Ropers and Hartmans in Australia

In any congregation or group of churches there are often dozens of people who contribute significantly – either personally by their continued participation or visits, or perhaps from afar through their prayers, encouragement and financial support. This article seeks to highlight two families among the many who have significantly helped the Lord's work in Australia, particularly through the Macquarie School of Biblical Studies in Sydney.

These two families who have had a considerable influence are the Roper and Hartman families. Their personal contact with the Australian church began in 1966. In that year, David and Coy Roper – 'country boys' from Oklahoma, USA – came for a two-week campaign in Perth and stopped in Sydney to evaluate the needs and possibilities for beginning a new work there. They and others such as Ray Fullerton and Ron Durham were keen to establish a congregation which would support a training program to help provide teachers for the Australian church. Such a program would also help overcome the problem of students going to the USA to study and not returning (a problem which had existed since the 1880s!).

In 1968, David & Jo Roper and Coy & Charlotte Roper and their families came to Australia, along with the parents of David and Coy, Dave H. & Lillian Roper. David and Coy were to spend the next ten years working with the congregation they helped establish, the Macquarie Church of Christ at North Ryde in Sydney. Dave H. & Lillian spent two years at Macquarie and then four years with the Belmore Road Church of Christ in Melbourne. Coy and David also returned for teaching trips in later years.

Seeking to be cooperative and inclusive, Coy and David not only worked diligently with the Macquarie church but also involved themselves in many projects that assisted other congregations. These included preaching visits, working in campaigns and holiday Bible schools and conducting seminars and camps – in Sydney and around the nation.









A major focus of the work in 1968 was the establishment of a training school, the Australian Bible College. While this was conducted for just part of that year, it was succeeded by the Macquarie School of Preaching (MSOP) which began in March 1970 and was eventually renamed Macquarie School of Biblical Studies (MSOBS) in 1979. Both Coy and David travelled to promote the work and raise funds, taught extensively in the school, and gave hospitality and much personal encouragement to students. Coy administered the school. The influence of the school was a significant help to the progress of the Lord's church in Australia.

Since 1970, 57 students have graduated from the two and three-year full-time programs run by the school. At least 37 others have completed one year of training. Hundreds of others have been involved in classes and lectureships. The Ropers were convinced that this was the most vital and significant way in which they could help the church in Australia. On leaving Australia, David summarised the need in this way: 'Although I hope that what brethren from overseas have done will always be appreciated, the job of reaching Australia must ultimately be done by those who live their lives here.'

The involvement of Dale Hartman (another country boy from Oklahoma) with the school began in 1974 with a visit to Sydney during the MSOP Lectureship in July, while he was a college student. He and his wife Sheila returned in April 1979 for another visit. In January 1983 they moved to begin work fulltime with the Macquarie church.

Dale began teaching classes at MSOBS in a major way, and continued to do this when he moved to Campbelltown in 1985 to help establish the Southwest church there. Dale's younger brother, Kent, and his wife, Nancy, were also involved with this new congregation, as were the Keesees and the Powells. This continued until Dale & Sheila left Australia in December 1990. Since then Dale, and usually Sheila, have visited Australia most years to teach at the MSOBS Lectureship and visit other churches as well. Kent and Nancy often also visit for evangelistic efforts.

Credit goes to all who worked alongside these families and who continue to work in the Lord's footsteps to carry on the many works in which they were involved. Appreciation also needs to be given to the Eastside church in Midwest City, Oklahoma, USA. From the very beginning they have been enthusiastic supporters of the school and the Ropers and Hartmans. They provided financial support for David Roper and Dale Hartman and the ongoing training work as well as continuing to allow Dale to visit each year. Both David and Dale were working there prior to coming to Australia and both now continue their work with that church. That congregation's 47 years of dedicated involvement with the Lord's work in Australia continues to provide great service and encouragement to many!

Ted Paull is Principal of the Macquarie School of Biblical Studies. He and his wife, Pam, and their family are members of the Macquarie Church of Christ in Sydney. tedpaull@hotmail.com

News Camp Challenge NSW

Camp Challenge 2015 was a blast! The theme was 'We are the Light of the World' and we had four speakers who taught through the four days of camp. First was Mark Jennings who taught on 'The world is in darkness'. The next day, Frank Cunningham spoke on 'Jesus came to bring the light'. On the third day Peter Mandalidis taught on 'The



Gospel shines for the light' and, finally, Joshua Marks on new year's eve spoke on 'We are the light of the world.' All these lessons were well presented, were video-recorded by John Cooper and were shown during quiet time for those who had been teaching the children when the lessons were delivered.

There were many activities each evening, including Talent Night (which included the not-so-talented), Auction Night and Trivia Night. These were all very entertaining. Different sports also ran each afternoon. These were organised by Andrew Hastings and were very enjoyable.

Overall, this was one of the best Camp Challenges I've been to. There was great fellowship, great singing and, best of all, great people from all over Australia. People were there from Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne, Adelaide, NSW and Tasmania among others. It was a whole lot of fun and I recommend everyone to go to the next Camp Challenge!

Jolits Satish, Coffs Coast Church of Christ, NSW. desmondthemoonbear096@outlook.com

Eldership Appointment – Brisbane, QLD

On 18 October 2015, Steve Wilson was appointed as a shepherd/elder of The Point Church in suburban Brisbane. He joins Peter Searson and David Clark as shepherds, and Peter Amos and Arthur Bowell as deacons. After Steve was nominated for the role, the church went through a period of prayer and consultation before he was formally appointed before the church.



Steve, his wife, Donette, and their three children have been a part of The Point Church since it began in 1998. Steve played a key role in the church's planting and served as a deacon since 2005. He has also worked part-time for the church for many years, including working as a trained counsellor.

The importance of biblical leadership for a healthy body has always been a focus of The Point Church. I'm persuaded that the godhead of Father, Son and Holy Spirit shows us the basis for all healthy relationships, especially in the home and church. This means serving, growing, and blessing one another by each exercising their distinct and complementary roles (eg. husband and wife, shepherd and flock) to God's glory, says Steve. I think the biggest challenges for an elder revolve around giving and forgiving - giving of myself in service to others just as Christ humbled and gave himself; and forgiving others for their shortcomings just as God in Christ forgives me of my shortcomings.'

Nathan Holyoak, The Point Church, Brisbane, QLD. nathan@helmsdeep.org

Belmore Road – Mount Kosciuszko hike

The Belmore Road Church of Christ in Melbourne organised a Men's Challenge on the weekend of 20-22 November 2015. The weekend began with two busloads of men and boys leaving the Belmore Road car park and driving up to Jindabyne, NSW (via Yackandandah to pick up Matthew and Kerry Bain). On Saturday, a total of 36 men and boys ranging in age from 6 to 76 years hiked up Australia's highest peak, Mount Kosciuszko (2,228 metres), from Charlotte Pass. This was a climb of about 400+ metres over a 9 km track. All up, the group hiked about 24 km that day.

On the next day, the group drove back to Melbourne via Yackandandah and worshipped with the Border Church which meets in homes in the Albury/Wodonga area. We met in the home of Matthew & Beth Bain and had a rich period of worship and fellowship together. To top it off, the congregation put up a fantastic lunch for all. So the Men's Challenge became a wonderful opportunity for Christians from four congregations (Border Church, Heidelberg West, South East and Belmore Road) to marvel at God's nature, enjoy fellowship, get some exercise and have fun.



At the summit of Mount Kosciuszko



Sunday worship with the Border Church in Yackandandah, VIC.

Key people who deserve special mention include: David Payne and David Tabe for planning the weekend and (with Kerry Bain) driving the buses; Cameron Payne, Kieran Payne and Timothy Tabalujan for being minders on the hike; Diana, Beth and Lily Bain and Rebecca Wall for preparing Sunday lunch; Christine Payne who handled catering for the trip; and Geoff Thomas for being the first to reach the summit. What a fabulous weekend!

Benny Tabalujan, Belmore Road Church of Christ, Melbourne, VIC. benny@klesis.com.au



Food for Thought Lipscomb teams in Brisbane



It was the final night that provided clarity. Our three children – Laura (16), Harry (13) and Will (10) – sat in the bedroom with the two students from Lipscomb University, USA, on their final night in Brisbane. As we heard them talking, sharing, laughing and crying, we began to have greater clarity about the importance of this mission trip and its focus on relationships.

This is the fifth year our family has hosted students from Lipscomb and each year our children have asked the same question as they departed: 'Can we have students again next year?' This year was no different, except for our understanding of the motivation underlying the question.

Over the five weeks that the students spent in our home they formed relationships that were powerful, personal and impacting. On this final night with the respective students (first Leah and five nights later Toria, as they departed at different times) we could not get our children to go to bed! They wanted to continue the conversations and the understanding of different cultures, families, church communities and aspirations that arose from these conversations.

If leadership really is influence, as proposed by John Maxwell and other popular authors, then relationships are the essence of influence. In a short window of opportunity, relationships are developed between the Lipscomb team and host families and church communities that act as a conduit for each of us to be influenced. This influence is a mutual and reciprocal encouragement in our walk with Christ and instills a desire and enthusiasm to share this with others. We lead each other to know Christ better and the foundation for this is relationship.

Lipscomb has been sending a mission team of 12 students to Brisbane for the last 16 years, with students hosted by families from a number of congregations. Mark Jent, director of missions at Lipscomb, is instrumental each year in selecting these students, preparing them for their five weeks of mission in Brisbane and providing opportunities for reflection, learning, and new direction when the students return home.

Holland Park Church of Christ in Brisbane has appreciated the opportunity to partner with these enthusiastic students to participate in evangelical programs that would be difficult to coordinate otherwise. Programs have included a weekend of games; social interaction and teaching with aboriginal youth at the Cherbourg Aboriginal Community; a week-long discipleship camp focusing on spiritual formation, physical challenges and reflection at Camp Talmid; three days of programs for school-aged children over the school holidays at a Christian Day Camp; sharing of devotionals during Sunday school and sharing fellowship over a meal at the church family picnics.

As a member of the leadership team at Holland Park church, it was valuable to participate in the final feedback session with the Lipscomb students as they shared the highs and lows of their experiences in Australia. Our church family has also reflected on why we are so excited to host a Lipscomb mission team each year.

Part of the answer is found in the joy that is generated when the team arrives. We invite the team into our church family, we pray over them for spiritual guidance and recognition of opportunities to share Christ with others, we encourage them to be involved in all activities, and we have fun with them.



The Johnson family with Leah and Toria (front right).





Food for Thought cont.

The growing momentum also creates new opportunities to connect with the broader community. In 2014/15, Zach Brantley, a graduate student from Lipscomb, returned for an 11-month internship with Holland Park after participating in two earlier mission trips.

The remainder of the answer is found in the memories that warm our hearts. These are memories of members of Lipscomb teams over the years that we have come to know, love and be eternally thankful to Christ for – individuals whom we can call our brothers and sisters.

It is this answer which will make it impossible for us to get our kids to bed on time again next July. ■

Andrew and Danielle Johnson and their three children are members of the Holland Park Church of Christ in Brisbane. ajohnson@csa.edu.au



Book Review

Cross Cultural Servanthood: Serving the World in Christlike Humility by Duane H. Elmer
(InterVarsity Press, 2006)

Cross-Cultural Servanthood is a must read for anyone working with people from a culture different than their own. It is not just a book of how-to's, although it is that. Duane Elmer takes the reader through a powerful journey of introspection to help them examine their motives for choosing servanthood. He teaches the reader to explore whether their concepts of humility, forgiveness and community could be in conflict with the culture of the people in their relationship circle. He skilfully guides in personal and practical ways to ask: 'What does trust, openness, respect, acceptance look like through the other person's perspective?'

Elmer also encourages the reader to discern carefully and thoughtfully the difference between culture and the gospel of Jesus. The book helps us consider, 'How do I share the good news without attaching my own culture or personal opinions to my message? How do I learn about people, from people and with people that I meet?'

Cross-Cultural Servanthood is illustrated with honest personal examples from the author and others who have navigated the cultural divide. The powerful and touching stories bring the principles vividly alive. The book also addresses the times in our lives when we live in a sort of 'mystery or fog'. What is God doing? Is he working? Why is this happening? Is my ministry a failure? As we read this chapter we are led to consider those times and learn practically how to address the fog with the eyes of faith. Again, memorable stories and examples are shared to help us journey through the difficult questions we ask in these times.

Elmer concludes with a close look at the extraordinary life of Joseph in the Old Testament. Joseph had no cross-cultural training but landed in a country and culture he didn't anticipate. Yet, he successfully crossed the cultural divide using godly principles. He lived and served among a people with whom he had little common background or understanding of life. How did Joseph accomplish this uninvited task? Elmer helps us answer this question. Through dissecting Joseph's cross-cultural experience, readers discover how applying genuine openness, trust, acceptance, learning, understanding and service can lead to God being glorified and faith being kept intact in any cross-cultural setting.

Author Paul Borthwick has said of Elmer's book, 'This book should be required reading for every Christian seeking to serve cross-culturally, whether in a long-term or short-term capacity'. And I would add that we are often in cross-cultural relationships no matter where we live. This book is for all.

Nancy Hartman is a Third Culture Kid Advocate/Advisor at Oklahoma Christian University, USA. Nancy, her husband, Kent, and family are former missionaries to Sydney, Australia. nancy.hartman@ocu.edu