

REDEEMER BAPTIST SCHOOL + Cultivar Architecture  
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# REDEEMER BAPTIST SCHOOL

## ANNUAL SERVICE OF WORSHIP

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5<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Main Auditorium, Hillsong Convention Centre

**Principal's Address Summary:**  
*Truth Toward Wisdom*  
*Guidance & destination*  
*for Christian schools*



# **REDEEMER BAPTIST SCHOOL**

incorporating

**The Hills Regional Skills Centre**



**Annual Service of Worship**

and

**The Principal's Address**

# **Truth Toward Wisdom**

**Guidance & destination for Christian schools**

Hillsong Convention Centre

Monday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Great teaching requires classroom instruction based on well-designed, knowledge-rich, and carefully sequenced lessons that build student knowledge and skills over time. Without a whole-school approach to curriculum planning, even the hardest-working teachers will struggle to give their students the best education.

— Grattan Report, Ending the lesson lottery:  
how to improve curriculum planning in schools, 2022

The soft bigotry of low expectations is also evident whenever it is argued that students from disadvantaged communities are not sufficiently academically able to take on a curriculum that expands their horizons, so we need to box them into their own context and make learning ‘relevant’ to them by only exposing them to things they are already familiar with, or only things that they are interested in learning about.

— David De Carvalho, ACARA CEO, The Australian, 2022

Increasingly, biblical teaching is at odds with the reigning ideologies of our world. The biblical way is ‘a better story’ which leads to human happiness and fulfilment. The world’s way leads to anxiety, loneliness, and unfulfillment.

— Dr Peter Jensen, Moore Matters, 2022

Christ’s example helps me see the value of doing small things with great love. The message of Christmas reminds us that love begins small but always grows.

— Queen Elizabeth II, Christmas Broadcast, 2016

Education, in the world of the sages, is existential and not primarily academic. Wisdom cultivates virtue not merely by engaging the mind but by engaging the whole person in the pursuit of character.

— David Bland, *Proverbs and the Formation of Character*, 2015

The line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either—but right through every human heart.

— Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *Gulag Archipelago*, 1973

The shared values which enabled us to live together and at peace with one another have been replaced with myopic personal ‘truths’—my truth, your truth—which must be respected and never challenged.

— Mark Thompson, *Moore Matters*, 2022

The Christmas story retains its appeal since it doesn’t provide theoretical explanations for the puzzles of life. Instead it’s about the birth of a child and the hope that birth—2,000 years ago—brought to the world. Only a few people acknowledged Jesus when he was born. Now billions follow him. I believe his message of peace-on-earth and goodwill-to-all is never out of date. It can be heeded by everyone. It’s needed as much as ever.

— Queen Elizabeth II, *Christmas Broadcast*, 2018

Work, for the Christian, is not simple drudgery or a necessary evil. It's a way to love both God and neighbour. Dignified, well-done work is an important part of any vocation. If you find and pursue work well, you will look back on your life and see how it made a difference.

— Ryan T Anderson, *Living a Life that Matters*, 2021

Sooner or later every single one of us is likely to be faced with a challenging situation generated by the modern notion of selfhood. And this means that for all of us the questions of how we should live, and what we should do when facing pressure to conform, are gaining in urgency.

— Carl Trueman, *Strange New World*, 2022

Our students should be given solid ground to walk on in the aspects of our humanity that never change: respect for the dignity of all human life; sacrificing what belongs to us to help others in need; sacred faithfulness in family relationships; and speaking and living in accordance with truth.

— Russell Bailey, *Sydney Observer*, August 2022

The carol, 'In the Bleak Midwinter', ends by asking a question of all of us who know the Christmas story, of how God gave himself to us in humble service: 'What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; if I were a wise man, I would do my part.' The carol gives the answer, 'Yet what I can I give him—give my heart.'

— Queen Elizabeth II, Christmas Broadcast, 2012

# Truth Toward Wisdom

## Guidance & destination for Christian schools

*The values which we most ignore—the recognition of which we most seldom find in writings on education—are those of Wisdom and Holiness, the values of the sage and the saint. An education which is only of the mind can lead to scholarship, to efficacy, to worldly achievement and to power; but not to wisdom.*  
(T S Eliot, 1982)

Perhaps some of you will remember the days when, as we got into the car to go to a new destination—could be a holiday, or to buy a new piece of furniture, or to visit a relative in their new home—the first thing that you did when you got into the driver’s seat was to open the street directory (I’ve already lost nearly half the room who don’t know what a ‘street directory’ is!), and you would navigate your own path to your destination. Today, of course, you just type in the address to Google and then follow the voice without question, with complete faith that she will get you there.

But following Google doesn’t always work out. Like the cars who drive into our Masons Drive entrance every day expecting to be able to access Lake Parramatta (that’s why we put in boom gates, to stop unauthorised traffic in student areas). Looking at their screens, these wayward Google followers tell us, ‘This is where Google sent me’; to which we reply, each time (with somewhat frustrated patience), ‘Google is wrong, you have to go another way’.

This year one of our HSC students won a couple of international Mathematics prizes (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> in the world) at the Regeneron ISEF (International Science & Engineering Fair) when he proved in an extensive study that Google directions are not as efficient or as safe as planning your own route of travel using (in Australia) predominantly left-hand turns (as opposed to right-hand turns, across the traffic).

Now consider this scenario, a true story from Dr Robert Sternberg (an American Professor of Human Development at Cornell University).

*A few years ago, one of my colleagues was on his way to an important meeting but got stuck in a maddening traffic jam. As he approached an exit along our slow, bumpy and obstacle-laden route, he observed that the highway that extended out from the exit—which was perpendicular to the direction in which he was going—was wonderfully paved and the traffic was moving rapidly with no obstacles along its course. He considered taking that route. There was only one problem: the route led nowhere he wanted or needed to go, nor that he*

*should have gone. Nevertheless, it was just so tempting. After all, the route led somewhere!*

After telling this story, the Professor went on to say:

*Education has taken the easier, quicker route. It leads students rapidly and relatively smoothly—in the wrong direction. What do we wish to maximise through our schooling? Is it only knowledge and intelligence? Or is it knowledge, intelligence and wisdom? If it is wisdom too, then we can put our students on a much different course.*

That was the Professor's assessment in 2007. How do we ensure in the 2020s that we are not taking a turn into an easier, quicker, wrong direction for your children's education? I believe the answer is in humbly seeking truth as opposed to following fashion in educational pedagogies; that is, following directions on a reliable map rather than mindlessly turning in the direction that culture whispers (or shouts) into our ears.

## **Truth as a guide in behavioural expectations**

At the end of Term 2, I received this email from an unknown member of the public.

*Dear Mr Cannon*

*I wanted to write to express my sincere gratitude and thanks to your wonderful students and fantastic staff at Blaxland Riverside Park, Homebush, on Monday, the 19th of September. That afternoon I lost my young son at the Park and your wonderful staff and students helped me to locate him. They were outstanding and generous with their time, energy and enthusiasm in the way they supported both myself and my son, who is only 4 years old. Your staff and students helped me in a way I will never be able to forget. Please pass on my sincere thanks and gratitude. I hope that you all have a well earned break this holiday and wish you and your school community all the very best.*

*Kind regards, Jessica*

That email was a great encouragement to the staff—and I trust it is also an encouragement to you all as parents and students. Often when our students are in the public together on excursions or on camp, our teachers are blessed with unexpected comments of appreciation for the way that Redeemer students conduct themselves with respect and joyful engagement in their learning and relationships. And when I'm interviewing prospective School parents, often the reason for their desire to enrol at Redeemer is the difference in the behaviour of current Redeemer students that they have observed in their family or social circles. They want this difference for their own children.

But this difference doesn't happen automatically. On 28<sup>th</sup> September this year the NSW Premier, the Hon Dominic Perrottet, gave a *Headland Speech on Education* (the James Martin Institute's inaugural Oration) at Western Sydney University. The Premier—with an aim to improve the experience of students at school—said that 'when students are held to reasonable standards of behaviour and respect they perform better and are happier.' He then cited the work of Principal Katharine Birbalsingh at the Michaela Community School in England where 'rigorous culture, high expectations, high behavioural standards and back to basics teaching have propelled disadvantaged students to extraordinary achievements.' In a Centre for Independent Studies paper published last month, Birbalsingh wrote:

*Unfortunately nowadays, in Australia, in Britain, in the whole of the Western world, in order to get things right with teaching children, you have to go against the grain. All we need to do is have traditional values, traditional discipline, and traditional teaching. It's a fascinating situation that something so very simple, that 50 years ago we all took for granted, now is a fight.*

From time to time parents contact me—or I contact them—about issues of behaviour or respect that need to be put right among our students. And our policy is to act quickly and decisively so that students are not left in any doubt about whether their behaviour is appropriate or not, whether their behaviour is acceptable at Redeemer or not. Sometimes a student is resistant to the traditional values that Redeemer upholds but nearly always our parents are incredibly supportive, and I must thank all of you for that support.

Acknowledging that some in our culture resist confrontation because they don't want to wear the responsibility for poor behaviour or change their behaviour, Birbalsingh wrote:

*Thomas Sowell, an African-American social theorist, said, 'If you want to help someone, you tell them the truth. If you want to help yourself, you tell them what they want to hear.' We need to always know the truth, however uncomfortable it makes us feel. But the fact is, the old adage is true. Only the truth will set us free.*

From its foundation, Redeemer has exercised a strong and consistent discipline policy in the context of love. Of course, we agree with the Premier when he said that a respectful environment in schools will drive better academic outcomes. But, more than that—like the commandment says—if children honour their parents (and other adults who exercise proper authority for their benefit) then their destination may include the blessing associated with that commandment, that is, enjoying a long life in the land which God is giving them. I pray that our students will enjoy the blessing that comes



with respect not only while they're enrolled as students at Redeemer but also as they leave the school as young adults. In his Headland Speech, the Premier also said that 'social media, through detachment, creates a culture where people are becoming less respectful and not engaging in a way that is appropriate.' I pray that our students as they become adults will continue to practise the respectful behaviour they learnt at school and resist the voice of culture that opens up a shortcut of public social media disrespect. Taking a perpendicular path away from potentially lifelong friendships with other benevolent adults isn't a good place to go.

## **Truth as a guide to emotional wellbeing**

The most recent *Longitudinal Survey of Australian Youth* by NCVER in September this year discovered that 'health and life satisfaction of young Australians have declined'.

*When comparing 21-year-olds in 2015 with 21-year-olds in 2021, those who felt happy about their future decreased to 79% (down from 88%), while those who were happy with their career prospects dropped to 76% (down from 84%). Those satisfied with the state of the economy decreased by 15% to 46% (down from 61%).*

Mission Australia's 2021 Youth Survey found that 42% of young people were 'extremely or very concerned about mental health'. There is also clear evidence of an increase in loneliness of Australian teenagers attending school.

In an IPA address published in April this year, Psychiatrist Tanveer Ahmed—author of *Fragile Nation* about the cultural rise of mental health problems in Australia—traces the deterioration of mental health in today's youth to a shift in cultural norms.

*Our Judeo-Christian heritage can be viewed as the inherited wisdom from thousands of years of our ancestors dealing with similar problems as we do. This inherited wisdom provides an adaptable guidebook to living—a blueprint which is, if nothing else, a good approximation of how to live a life worth living without each generation needing to figure it out for themselves. Now, however, our focus on unfettered individual autonomy, supercharged with smartphones, has led to the cratering of the family and civil society, and the rejection by many of time-honoured truths.*

In a 2022 *Publica* research paper on 'The Relationship Drought', family law specialist Professor Patrick Parkinson revealed that—as a consequence of societal changes resulting in relationship instability—'40% of all children will experience one of their biological parents living elsewhere by the time they are 15–17 years old, an increase from around 25% some 20 years ago.'

Talk to your children. They're burdened with global anxieties like climate change, the war in Ukraine, and a lingering pandemic. Floods, fires, earthquakes seem to be more imminently threatening. Hackers steal personal identities. At every public occasion they're reminded that most of us don't belong here, that this generation is to bear the guilt of the sins of our forebears. And then there's the tyranny of confusion as adult lifestyle choices are thrust on children. In this context of angst, our culture persistently beckons children to take shortcuts to nowhere helpful—away from a doctrine that assures them that God is love, that He forgives our sins, that He has a good path for life now, and that He has an eternal purpose to overcome all evil so that we can enjoy living in His presence without tears forever.

Of course, as parents and teachers we must be sensitive to the mental health needs of all our children and be quick to seek help from health professionals when needed. But we also have hope to share every day—a true reason for resilience and satisfaction whatever our daily circumstances, throughout our lives—as we teach our children to have confidence in our heavenly Father in the words that Jesus taught us to pray:

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.*

## **Truth as a guide for curriculum**

This year, ACARA (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority) released its new national curriculum. NESA (NSW Education Standards Authority) also continued on its path of comprehensive curriculum reform with new syllabuses for all NSW schools starting with K–2 English and Mathematics in 2023 then including all subjects K–12 by 2025. Spare a thought for your children's teachers who will all be writing new programs for all of their subjects over the next two years!

At Redeemer, as we program for new NESA syllabuses, we are careful not to abandon pedagogies that value traditional learning even when there is pressure to adopt a new fashion in teaching methodology. For instance, over 20 years ago Redeemer researched the evidence base for a phonemic awareness approach to teaching literacy. We believed that the fashionably easy 'look and say' approach (or, in the words of a recent newspaper article, 'look and guess') was damaging literacy development in the vast majority of students. Analysis of international benchmark assessments by ACER in April this year demonstrated that, over the past 20 years, 'scores in literacy have declined for all Australian school sectors.' But Redeemer's NAPLAN results—

including impressive measures of improvement—demonstrate that our dynamic, explicit, systematic approach to teaching phonics in literacy using our WRAP (a Writing Approach to Reading) program gives a great advantage for our students in their literacy development. We taught using this approach even when it wasn't included in ACARA's curriculum or NESA syllabuses. We took the more difficult road of training all of our teachers to have this common approach of phonemic awareness when teaching literacy. And the benefit for our students lasts beyond school. This year, seven Redeemer alumni were awarded Dean's commendations in their undergraduate courses at university. Now both ACARA and NESA are mandating phonics and phonemic awareness for explicit and systematic teaching of literacy which, for the sake of all students in all schools, is pleasing to see.

The famous fourth century North African bishop Augustine of Hippo—and the equally famous sixteenth century Swiss Reformer John Calvin—both said that 'all truth is from God'. So when it comes to the content of new curriculum to be included in Redeemer programs, our question is not 'is this what our culture is expecting us to teach' (or, colloquially, 'does it pass the pub test'), rather, our question when including new content must be 'is it true'.

Two examples. First, History. In a *Third Space* online lecture on 'Wrestling with History in an Ahistoric Age' in October this year, Dr Sarah Irving-Stonebreaker (Senior Lecturer in European History at Western Sydney University) said that 'Western societies have almost lost the ability to meaningfully relate with the past because the way we make sense of our world (past, present, and future) is through taking *me* as the starting point.' This super subjective view of history must erase any objective fact that doesn't support *my* view of the way things ought to be. So when Oxford University Professor Nigel Biggar launched an 'Ethics and Empire' project in 2017 to scrutinize the morally mixed (good and bad) contribution of the British Empire through colonialism, he found himself regularly on the front pages of national newspapers. Academics and activists sought to shut down his truth-seeking project as it contradicted their revisionist postcolonial ideology which demands that we erase any record of 'good' in historical figures who transgressed 21<sup>st</sup> century utopian politically correct standards. Reflecting on his experience in an Australian online men's fellowship this year (with the theme 'Truth, at what cost?'), Biggar said that—because he felt a Christian duty to God to speak the truth and because he was assured of the love of God—he had 'a source of strength to do things even if everyone around thinks you're crazy.' Dr Joanna Williams, founder and director of *CIEO* (an independent UK thinktank), wrote this in a CIS paper this year about 'Teaching National Shame' through school History curriculum.

*History classes increasingly focus on past wrongdoings rather than celebrating national successes. The upshot is a cohort of young people left alienated from a shared sense of national identity. An increasingly prioritised focus on atrocities above all else robs a national story of its capacity to inspire and unite.*

For the sake of our students and the future of Australian society, it is important to persist with teaching verifiable truth in the chronology of our history—including the important contribution of Christians as heroes in our colonial history—however loud, intolerant or powerful the opposing cultural voices may seem. Thus we continue to value history in our core curriculum to Year 12 because ‘the future without the past is not only an uncharted country, it is a country that cannot be charted, lacking any reference points’ (Stephen McAlpine, *Third Space* online lecture, 2022).

Second example: Relationships. Since the so-called sexual revolution of the 1960s there have been new attempts to redefine what is acceptable—even what is lawful—in relationships because the revealed Judeo-Christian basis of morality embedded in divine commandments was discarded by our culture. Initially, this meant teaching secondary school students about contraception and abortion to avoid the unwanted products (babies!) of out-of-wedlock relationships. Then Kindergarten story books encouraged them to think about alternative families that didn’t include the traditional mum and dad. A few years ago there was the so-called ‘Safe Schools’ program which led children, using explicit content, to experiment with changing their gender. Now there are programs that encourage children in all years at school (Kindergarten to Year 12) to seek approval from a fellow student before engaging in intimate sexual acts. Whether it is at another school or on YouTube or at the movies, if our children follow the directions that our culture is constantly giving them, they will end up in a place where they are hurt; potentially damaged for the rest of their lives.

Christine Emba (an opinion columnist in the *Washington Post*) argued in an essay this year that increased access to casual intimate relationships ‘in our modern sexually liberated society has left people—particularly women but also men—feeling unhappy and unsatisfied.’ On the *ABC Religion & Ethics* website, Patrick Parkinson AM (Professor of Law at the University of Queensland)—writing about the problem of unwanted sexual experiences in universities—said:

*We need to return to the wisdom of the ages on sex and relationships—a wisdom which is similar in many respects across religious traditions. That may mean facing up to the empty promises and harms of the sexual revolution.*

And what is the wisdom of the ages that we need to return to? What content is needed in our curriculum to keep our children travelling on a pathway with a good destination

with respect to relationships? Surely it is the truth that love seeks the good of the other (not the unbridled satisfaction of self), that restraint prior to marriage is an act of love, that God has this wonderful plan to enjoy the procreation of children within the secure boundaries of a holy marriage, that the commandments forbidding fornication and adultery are for our good and the good of our families.

If we desire what is best in life now and for eternity, then our desire is in reality to be in the kingdom of God. And the New Testament is confrontationally clear (1 Corinthians 6:9–10) so that we know that we must walk away from sinful relationships that harm ourselves and others, and step into the direction of living in the good that God purposes for us. Mistakes will be made. If you ask, God grants forgiveness for anyone who repents. Relational flippancy appears to be such an easy shortcut to enjoyment but ancient wisdom (and sensational current media headlines) tells us that the destination is painful for all. So our desire is for Redeemer students to know the joy of living according to God’s good, holy plan of love in all of their relationships, summarised in these powerful Bible verses.

*Love is patient and kind, not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way, is not irritable, and keeps no record of being wronged. Love does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.*

## **Student achievements in 2022**

Seeking truth as a guide in our Christian worldview in education, Redeemer student achievements have been amazing in 2022!

### **HTA History Mastermind**

- *Elyse Jones, Peter Pei, Akshitha Praveen Kumar, Kevin Rajesh:*  
Year 7 Champions
- *Rhyon Cabauatan, Susan Candra, Christopher Herbert, Cara Zhong:*  
Year 8 Champions
- *Daiwik Arora, Auyee Chen, Annane Haile, Edbert Joseph, Prerana Karteek, Samuel Kartono, Pranav Senthil Kumar, Rhema Suresh:* 3<sup>rd</sup> place medallists

### **Australian History Competition**

- *Peter Pei* (Year 7): NSW Champion, National Champion

### **MANSW Investigating with Mathematics Competition**

- *Anubhav Ammangi* (Year 10): 1<sup>st</sup> (NSW)

## **AAMT National Mathematics Talent Quest**

- *Anubhav Ammangi* (Year 10): 1<sup>st</sup> (Australia)

## **Australian Mathematics Competition**

- *Anubhav Ammangi* (Year 10): AMC Prize

## **Australian Training Tournament (Mathematics)**

- *Anubhav Ammangi* (Year 10): 1<sup>st</sup> in NSW, 3<sup>rd</sup> in Australia

## **ICAS School Competitions**

- *Anubhav Ammangi* (Year 10): Mathematics medal
- *Anubhav Ammangi* (Year 10): Digital Technologies medal

## **CSIRO Bebras Australia Computational Thinking Challenge**

- *Anubhav Ammangi* (Year 10): Honour Roll

## **Oxford University Computing Challenge**

- *Anubhav Ammangi* (Year 10): Perfect Score

## **STANSW Young Scientist Awards**

- *Alara Cosman* (Year 12): Bronze Award, Depth Study Investigations
- *Anubhav Ammangi* (Year 10): 1<sup>st</sup> Working Mathematically (9–10)
- *Karmichael Candra* (Year 6): 1<sup>st</sup> Scientific Investigations (5–6); AARNET Communications Award
- *Thaddeus Candra* (Year 3): 1<sup>st</sup> Scientific Investigations (3–4)

## **Regeneron ISEF (International Science & Engineering Fair) 2022**

- *Edward Garth* (HSC, 2021): 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the world American Mathematical Society Special Award; 4<sup>th</sup> place in the world Grand Award (Mathematics); \$1,000US prize

## **Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards**

- *Aaryan Mehta* (Year 4): 1<sup>st</sup> in Australia LA primary
- *Sam Ma* (Year 4): 2<sup>nd</sup> in Australia upper primary
- *Talieyah Borg* (Year 6): Shortlisted LA primary
- *Jainny Tejan-Kella* (Year 6): Commended upper primary
- *Kingsley Chen* (Year 6): Commended LA primary
- *Abul Ahmadi* (Year 8): Commended LA secondary

- *Redeemer Baptist School*: Primary Schools Commended Award

### **NESA WriteOn Competition**

- *Luke Ma* (Year 2): Silver award

### **Premier's Reading Challenge**

- *Adrian Burns, Evangeline Burns, Shawn Rajaratnam, Emmanouel Voudouris, Sarah Widjaja*: PRC medals
- 30 platinum awards; 44 gold awards
- 330 students completed the challenge

### **HSC 2021**

- *Sarah Park* (Year 12, 2021): Korean & Literature, 1<sup>st</sup> in course
- 44% of matriculating students were HSC Distinguished Achievers
- 100% of students were offered enrolment at university

### **City of Parramatta Australia Day Awards**

- *Anaya Rajaratnam* (HSC, 2021): Junior Citizen of the Year finalist

### **NSW Department of Education Teach Rural Scholarship**

- *Anaya Rajaratnam* (HSC, 2021)

### **Australian Stockholm Junior Water Prize**

- *Jordan Ebert* (HSC, 2021): Shortlisted

### **Western Sydney University Dean's Merit Lists**

- Alumnus *Callum Bailey* (Year 12, 2017): Health Sciences
- Alumni *Lachlan Bolton* (Year 12, 2017) & *Mary-Anne Poyitt* (Year 12, 2018): Science
- Alumni *Georgina Garth* (Year 12, 2017) & *Liam Shaw* (Year 12, 2017): Arts

### **Southern Cross University Dean's Honours List**

- Alumnus *Grace Forrester* (Year 12, 2014): Education

### **CQ University Australia Dean's Commendation**

- Alumnus *James Poyitt* (Year 12, 2017): Engineering & Technology

### **International Christian School Urraco, Honduras**

- Alumnus *Patricia Varela Diaz* (HSC, 2013): appointed Principal

## **Royal Life Saving Society of Australia—NSW Branch**

- Alan McClure Cup: *Redeemer Baptist School*, 3<sup>rd</sup> place

### **Swimming**

- SWISSA event: *Unish Shrestha* (Year 7), *Genevieve Hu* (Year 9), *Yoon Choi* (Year 10), *Jerusalem Akele* (Year 11), *Gregory Burns* (Year 12), *Victoria Garth* (Year 12) were age champions and Redeemer was the champion school
- ASISSA event: *Louie Chen* (Year 6) age champion; *Louie Chen* (Year 6), *Faith Kim* (Year 4), *Emily Ng* (Year 4) qualified to compete at CIS
- AICES event: *Unish Shrestha* (Year 7) won 2 silver and 3 bronze, qualifying to compete at CIS

### **Cross Country**

- ASISSA event: *Sophie Tazewell* (Year 3, 2<sup>nd</sup> place), *Thomas Huang* (Year 4), *Louie Chen* (Year 6) qualified for CIS
- AICES event: *Unish Shrestha* (Year 7) qualified for CIS

### **Athletics**

- SWISSA event: *Dorian Ndongo Empesa* (Year 8), *Adrian Burns* (Year 9), *Taniqua Corbett* (Year 10), *Hee Chan Yoon* (Year 11), *Jerusalem Akele* (Year 11), *Solomon Aynalem* (Year 12), *Victoria Garth* (Year 12) were age champions and Redeemer was the champion school
- ASISSA event: *Maayon Sudarshan* (Year 5) junior boys champion; *Joseph Sesay* (Year 6) 12–13 years boys champion; *Diego Ndongo-Empesa* (Year 6), *Isaac Garcia* (Year 6), *Eason Ren* (Year 6), *Joseph Sesay* (Year 6), *Maayon Sudarshan* (Year 5), *Sophie Tazewell* (Year 3) qualified for CIS
- AICES event: *Unish Shrestha* (Year 7), *Andy Wumaierjiang* (Year 9), *Taniqua Corbett* (Year 10), *Solomon Aynalem* (Year 12) qualified for CIS
- CIS event: *Solomon Aynalem* (Year 12), 3 bronze medals

### **Team Sports**

- SWISSA senior girls netball champions: *Stephanie Anonuevo* (Year 12), captain
- SWISSA senior girls tennis champions: *Deeya Angurala*, *Advika Jala*, *Devanshi Kollabathula* (Year 9)

### **Archery Championships**

- National Target Championships: *Darren Candra* (Year 10), under 18 gold medal
- National Indoor Championship: *Darren Candra* (Year 10), under 18 gold medal



- World Archery Oceania Challenge: *Darren Candra* (Year 10), under 18 gold medal

## **NSW Fencing**

- Primary Boys Epee event: *Braden Chen* (Year 4), gold medal

## **Australian Deaf Cricket Team**

- International Inclusion Series: *Andrew Park* (HSC, 2002), Australian captain

## **English, Mathematics, Science and Computers conducted by ICAS; Mathematics conducted by the Australian Mathematics Trust; Computational Thinking conducted by CSIRO; Australian History conducted by the History Teachers' Association; Australian Geography conducted by the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland**

- 21 High Distinctions: *Anubhav Ammangi* (ICAS Science, Mathematics, Digital Technology; Bebras Computational Thinking, Australian Mathematics Competition, Mathematics Olympiad, Geography; Year 10); *Dhruv Doddi & Yemi Olaitan* (Geography; Year 10); *Dilara Dinkciler* (Geography; Year 9); *Jacob Xie* (Science; Year 9); *Susan Candra* (Australian History; Year 8); *Dorian Ndonga Empesa* (French Listening & French Speaking; Year 8); *Samuel Kartono* (Digital Technology, Australian History; Year 7); *Annane Haile & Peter Pei* (Australian History; Year 7); *Gehna Ammangi* (Bebras Computational Thinking; Year 6); *Max Jheng* (English, Year 5); *Dante Jiang* (Digital Technology; Year 5); *Derrick Lin* (Mathematics; Year 4).
- 82 distinctions & 151 credits

The Redeemer Baptist School community continues to reach out to other communities in need as we teach our students the importance of perceiving the needs of others and, if possible, helping to meet those needs personally.

## **Redeemer's Outreach in 2022**

- After participating in a Chapel presentation from Dr Andrew Browning AM about his work with the Barbara May Foundation to help mothers and babies in Africa, Year 10 students led the school community to raise \$3,450 in a fundraising program to assist in the work of Dr Browning and the Barbara May Foundation.
- Redeemer students contributed 333 shoebox gifts to be delivered by Samaritan's Purse to children in vulnerable situations across the world.
- *Mitchell Youth Leadership Forum* was supported by Redeemer.

- Redeemer hosted the Burnside Annual Reunion for ex-Burnside children.
- Students completed professional placements at Redeemer from *Southern Cross University, Swinburne University, Excelsia College and Bedford College.*

## **New and Refurbished Infrastructure in 2022**

- CultivAR architects Casey Vallance and Rebekah Vallance were commissioned to establish a Master Plan for the North Parramatta campus which was presented to parents at a Principal's dinner and to students during Chapel.
- Outside security lighting was installed on the school road.
- Air-conditioning and lights were installed in Ivanhoe classrooms.
- Completion of the school road providing access for parents to drop off and pick up their children, including electronic security gates and pedestrian paths.
- Restoration of the 100-year-old heritage perimeter fence along Pennant Hills Road.
- New IT school administration systems were established and classroom IT resources were renewed.

## **Parliamentary recognition of excellence at Redeemer in 2022**

The NSW Minister for Corrections the Hon Dr Geoff Lee MP (Parramatta) commended Redeemer in the Legislative Assembly on 18 October 2022, as follows.

*I bring to the attention of the House the excellent achievements of Redeemer Baptist School students in my electorate. At the 2022 Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair in the United States, Edward Garth, who attained the HSC in 2021, won a Mathematics grand award from the American Mathematical Society for 4<sup>th</sup> place and 3<sup>rd</sup> place when he presented his research on validating a predictive mathematical modelling paradigm for travelling from point A to point B. Edward proved that Google Maps directions do not necessarily pick the fastest or safest route. Edward's entire school education has been at Redeemer Baptist School.*

*Also in Mathematics, Year 10 student Anubhav Ammangi won 1<sup>st</sup> prize in both the Investigating with Mathematics competition in NSW and the National Mathematics Talent Quest. Anubhav discovered a new, more efficient formula for the Riemann zeta function over non-positive integers. A university professor described his investigation as showing a maturity beyond his years. He also won 1<sup>st</sup> place prizes in the 2022 Australian Mathematics Competition, the International Competitions and Assessments for Schools competition for Mathematics and Digital Technology, the Oxford University Computing*

*Challenge, and the CSIRO Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge, as well as 1<sup>st</sup> place in NSW in the elite Australian Training Tournament for Mathematics. Anubhav's entire school education has also been at Redeemer Baptist School.*

*Redeemer students have also continued to excel in writing. At the 2022 Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards, Year 4 student Aaryan Mehta was awarded national 1<sup>st</sup> prize at a ceremony in Gunnedah by the Hon Sarah Mitchell, Minister for Education and Early Learning. Sam Ma, also a Year 4 student, won a national 2<sup>nd</sup> prize. In the NESA WriteOn competition, Luke Ma from Year 2 achieved a silver award. Luke Ma and Sam Ma have been enrolled at Redeemer for all their schooling. In the 2022 Australian History Competition, Peter Pei from Year 7 was awarded a gold medal as the Australian champion. In individual sports, Redeemer won the Southern Western Independent Schools Sports Association [SWISSA] secondary zone swimming, athletics and cross-country carnivals. Solomon Aynalem from Year 12 won three bronze medals at the NSW Combined Independent Schools athletics carnival.*

*Redeemer's All Suburbs Independent School Sports Association primary zone age champions were Louie Chen, Maayon Sudarshon and Joseph Sesay. Redeemer's SWISSA secondary zone age champions were Unish Shrestha, Dorian Ndongo-Empesa, Adrian Burns, Genevieve Hu, Taniqua Corbett, Jeri Akele, Hee Chan Yoon, Yoon Choi, Victoria Garth, Gregory Burns and Solomon Aynalem. Most of those students have been enrolled at Redeemer for their entire primary or secondary schooling. Redeemer always aims for excellence in academics, as seen in last year's HSC when 44% of Redeemer students were NESA distinguished achievers in at least one subject. This year five Redeemer alumni were awarded the Dean's commendations in their university courses.*

*At least as important as academics in Redeemer's Christian worldview in education is inspiring students to appreciate the needs of others and then do something practical to help. This year Redeemer alumnus Andrew Park, HSC 2002, was the captain of the Australian deaf cricket team in the International Inclusion Series in Brisbane. Darren Candra from Year 10, who has won three 2022 Australian and world under 18s archery championships, has also been congratulated by the City of Ryde this year on his voluntary contribution as an archery instructor for the Disability Inclusion Action Plan at Sydney Olympic Park.*

*Redeemer Year 10 students are leading their school community this year in a fundraising drive to assist the work of Australian obstetrician and gynaecologist Dr Andrew Browning AM through the Barbara May Foundation as it helps*

*women suffering severe complications of childbirth in poor, remote African villages. Redeemer continues to be innovative for its students, not only in academic pursuits but also in the formation of virtuous characters inspired by Jesus' life and teachings. I commend the efforts of all Redeemer students. I acknowledge all the teachers for their hard work. Redeemer continues to give hope and the opportunity for excellent achievement to all its students.*

In his valedictory Parliamentary speech in November, Dr Lee said: *I congratulate Redeemer Baptist's Jonathan Cannon and Russell Bailey, who are here tonight, they are committed to excellence in education under a Christian worldview.*

## **Truth and wisdom in the person of Jesus Christ**

*The search for knowledge can go wrong because of one single mistake at the beginning. (Gerhard Von Rad, 1970)*

We've talked tonight about guiding our students by a reliable roadmap of truth. Sometimes culture gets it wrong. Our culture has judged all preceding cultures in the history of humanity as getting it wrong in significant particulars. It's hardly a surprising thought that our culture may have got some of its judgements wrong. But culture is a powerful force. Our culture wants our children to follow its directions without question, even when it's wrong. It laughs at us if we choose differently for them. It punishes us if we expose its wrongs publicly. It will abandon our children when they arrive at a painful destination it chose for them—devoid of true faith, hope or love—because it has no compassion for them. But we (all of your children's teachers at Redeemer) believe that there is not only a good destination but also an exciting journey along the way if we let truth guide us into wise choices through education (at home and at school) into all of life.

We've had an exciting year here at Redeemer! So many terrific student achievements! So much forward movement for our main campus at North Parramatta and our outdoor education campus at Long Beach! But as I talk this evening about truth guiding us toward wisdom—truth as the basis for educating our students so that they learn to make wise decisions that lead to the destination of a good life—I would miss the most exciting part if I didn't relate all that I've said to our celebration of Christmas. For truth is not just a set of precepts; truth is not just a list of facts. We celebrate at Christmas the coming of Immanuel which being translated means *God with us*. And we know from all that we read in the story of God in the Bible that God is true; all that He does is true, all that He says is true. More than that! We read in the Bible that God is love and that, for those who love God, nothing can separate us from His love. More than that! When we see the life of Jesus Christ in the gospels, all that we are seeing is

true; sick people are healed, those oppressed by demons are set free to live a good life, He forgives sinners despised by the culture, His teaching continues to inspire good works to help others, He even conquered death with His truth.

Now listen to this: what's most exciting about truth guiding us toward wisdom? When Jesus spoke about truth to His disciples, He didn't say 'here's a list, get to know and apply these truths and you'll get to a good place in life.' No! This is what Jesus said: *I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.* So what's so exciting? Truth is personal! We all have the opportunity to get to know the One who is truth, we all have the opportunity for truth in the person of our resurrected Lord Jesus Christ to live inside us, we all have the opportunity to walk with truth as we walk with Jesus, we all have the opportunity for truth to set us free as Jesus forgives our sins and gives us the best new life. We won't get it all perfect. But we can trust the Spirit of Jesus to lead us into all truth.

I love Australia. I love our culture. And as we walk with Jesus Christ in our culture we have the opportunity, just by living the truth, to impact our culture so that we become an even better place to live. That is our vision for your children. To get knowledge, skills and understanding to the best of their ability. But more than that! To live and walk in the dynamic of truth—in a personal relationship with truth—not only for the sake of their own destination but also for the sake of others in our culture who could also be rescued and blessed by knowing the truth.

I pray God's continued blessing on us all in the Redeemer community—students, parents and teachers—as we continue this exciting journey of walking in the truth to a good destination together.

