



REDEEMER BAPTIST SCHOOL ANNUAL SERVICE OF WORSHIP

6th December 2021

Principal's Address:

*Beauty & Truth:
a vision for Christian
school education*



REDEEMER BAPTIST SCHOOL

incorporating

The Hills Regional Skills Centre



Annual Service of Worship

and

The Principal's Address

*Beauty & Truth: a vision for
Christian school education*

Monday, December 6th, 2021

God does not have a new gospel for a changed world, since at heart the world remains the same. God is still the Creator, we are still His creatures; our stubborn refusal to live as His creatures in His world still puts every human being in the most serious danger, and Jesus is still our only hope.

Dr Mark Thompson, Principal, Moore College, 2021

In our own age, authenticity is defined by how true you are to yourself; not how true you are to your calling, or your community, or your covenant relationships, but to yourself.

Stephen McAlpine, *Being the Bad (Good) Guys*, 2021

The language of morality as now used is really nothing more than the language of personal preference based on nothing more rational or objective than sentiments or feelings. Emotivism presents preferences as if they were truth claims.

Professor Carl Trueman, *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*, 2020

Augustine's maxim (426): 'Let every good and true Christian know that truth is the truth of His Lord and Master, wheresoever it be found.'

Such words foreshadow the whole revolution in the ideals of education introduced by Christianity.

Andrew West, *Alcuin and the Rise of the Christian Schools*, 1893

Service of Worship

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Communities shape consciousness. Our moral consciousness is very much shaped by our community. And for this reason, the church needs to be a strong community.

Professor Carl Trueman, *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*, 2021

We must persevere, lest we abrogate God's work in our lives and cancel his plans for our future.

Rev Dr Michael Youssef in *From Jumble Plains to Eternity*, 2021

It is the responsibility of the teacher to present relevant facts so that the student understands their relationships in the light of biblical theism and is inspired to apply them to his daily life during his college career and in his life vocation.

Earle Cairns, *Objectives for a Christian Teacher*, 1951

The New Testament is full of the moral beauty of the Sermon on the Mount, and all the teaching and narrative celebrated in Christian history. But this is not just a story, it's a true story. And yet, it's still more important for people to know God than to know about God, to experience the friendship of Jesus than to know about the theoretical possibility of the friendship of Jesus.

Greg Sheridan, *The urgent case for Jesus in our world*, 2021

The Hills Regional Skills Centre Awards

Certificate I in Business

Jerusalem Akele	Noah Eldick
Matthew Guirguis	Abhinav Jala
Dinura Jayakuru	Erik Kudaya-More
Min-Hyoung Lee	Nikolas Nissan
Jabez Park	Bhavik Sharma
Aaron Tjhin	Arda Yagci
Hee Chan Yoon	

Certificate II in Business

Pule Filise	Grishma Kattela
Rushi Pipalia	Ella Tazewell
Robert Waller	

Certificate II in Construction

Alp Gezer	Thomas Portelli
Farzin Sheriff	Kartik Verma

Certificate I in Hospitality

Matthew Zhang	Li Zheng
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Certificate II in Hospitality (Kitchen Operations)

Matt Jeremy Ng	Ruth Burns
Suzanne Jones	

Certificate I in Information, Digital Media and Technology

Matthew Guirguis	Abhinav Jala
Dinura Jayakuru	Erik Kudaya-More
Jabez Park	Bhavik Sharma
Hee Chan Yoon	

Sports Awards

Junior Sports Awards

Girls Junior Sports Award	Trinity Kim
Boys Junior Sports Award	Unish Shrestha

Senior Sports Awards

Girls Senior Sports Award	Evelyn Poyitt
Boys Senior Sports Award	Jordan Ebert

Academic Awards

Year 1	Joshua Trinidad Vincent Yu	Year 4	Peiyan Zhang Tiya Maharaj
Year 2	Emily Chen	Year 5	Isabella De Las Alas
Year 3	Sam Ma	Year 6	Trinity Kim

The Joseph Bailey Memorial Award

Isabella Pawlowski

The Matthews Middle School Special Achievement Award

Charlize Borg

Cowper Smash Repairs Perpetual Trophy for Engagement, Perseverance and Improvement

Nikolas Nissan

Academic Awards (continued)

Australian Defence Force Long Tan Leadership and Teamwork Awards

Year 10 Jacob Dinkciler

Year 12 Gabriella Anugraha

Australian Defence Force Future Innovators Awards

Year 10 Matthew Guirguis

Year 12 Kush Dewan

Caltex Best All-Rounder Award

Evelyn Poyitt

ACHPER Award for 1st in PDHPE

Emily Burns

The City of Parramatta Council Active Citizenship Award

Gregory Burns

The Dr Max Shaw STEM Award

Edward Garth

The Noel F Cannon Founding Principal's History Award

Robbie Waller

Reuben F Scarf Award for Commitment

Esther Park

Elizabeth M Cannon High Achievement in Music Award

Antonio Kwok

Year 7 Christopher Herbert

Year 10 Matthew Guirguis

Year 8 Dilara Dinkciler
Eugene Kim

Year 11 Victoria Garth

Year 9 Anubhav Ammangi

Year 12 Antonio Kwok
Gokulraj Kuppusamy

Pursuit of political leadership without character, economic enterprise without ethics and trust, scientific progress without human values, freedom without virtue, and negative freedom without positive freedom can only end in disaster.

Os Guinness, *The Magna Carta of Humanity*, 2021

Perhaps when the tremors of future uncertainty begin to shake the being of a child, that is when it is most important for them to have access through religious education at school to the Genesis account of creation. This of course speaks of God transforming chaotic elements to make a beautiful, inhabitable world. And there is more, because the story of God moves forward to bridge over threatening uncertainties with eternal love in Jesus Christ for a totally good future.

Russell Bailey, *Sydney Observer*, February 2021

One of the most important Christian practices that might sustain Christian teaching and learning is intentional community, learning continually with others and from others how to live out our vocation to be the body of Christ.

David Smith, *On Christian Teaching*, 2018

When thanking God before every meal has gone, have we lost the habit of gratitude?

When looking forward to an eternal future no longer happens every Sunday, have we lost the habit of hope?

When donating our money and our time, sacrificially, is no longer expected of us, have we lost the habit of giving?

Dr Jenny George, Australian National Prayer Breakfast, 2021

Beauty & Truth: a vision for Christian school education

Everything that is done in the world is done by hope

Martin Luther, *Table Talk*, 1546

Earlier this year, in March, vast areas of NSW were under floodwaters. Perhaps you will remember the video image of a whole house floating down the Manning River near Taree. Or you might recall the photo of water filling the downstairs living area of a home at Windsor, rising up the stairs to the first floor. And just last month there was the petrol station in Forbes that had to remove all its pumps and turn off the electricity because they were under water. Then there were the storms—lightning, hail, thunder and gale-force winds—wreaking havoc in Victoria in October this year, leaving about 520,000 homes without electricity and a number of homes uninhabitable. West Australians were also affected by bushfires at the beginning of the year when over 70 homes were destroyed and many more damaged.

There's an old poem first published in 1919 that describes the experience of Aussie settlers for almost 250 years. As they talk outside church on Sunday mornings, this is what they say. First, they're talking about a dreadful drought, and Hanrahan concludes:

'We'll all be rooned, before the year is out.'

Then the rain came 'in God's good time' but there was so much rain that the 'dams filled overtop', and Hanrahan concludes:

'We'll all be rooned, if this rain doesn't stop.'

Then the rain stopped 'in God's good time' and while the harvest looked hopeful, the Aussie battlers now look forward to a season of 'bushfires for sure', and Hanrahan again concludes:

'We'll all be rooned, before the year is out.'

It seems that this is what we've signed up for living in Australia! But what do you do with a house or business that has been severely damaged by floods or storms or fire or some other natural disaster? Do you just rebuild what was there before? Do you rebuild at all? Or do you think about modifications that might serve your needs better? At first, temporarily, you might live in a tent or caravan for a while. But it's unlikely that

you'll decide that you no longer need a home to live in. Some kind of building that you will call home is still going to be important.

But in addition to all of these climatic disasters affecting the homes and businesses of many Australians this year, we've also had a continuing global pandemic that has in some way affected all children who attend school, and their families, and their teachers; especially in the LGAs of concern, including Parramatta, including all of us here.

That really was hard work for us all! As teachers, we were continually encouraged by your many expressions of thanks, like this one:

We would like to say a big thank you for all the hard work and effort you have put in this semester. We really appreciate it! I don't know how we could have managed it all without all those videos, Google meetings and resources that we know would have taken countless hours to prepare and make. Thank you for all of that effort. God bless you and your families.

These temporary, online measures carried us all educationally—with progress and remarkably high achievement—through the lockdowns and isolation. Now what is the vision that prompts us in our opportunity to rebuild education, post-pandemic, here at Redeemer?

A context of reimagining education

If anything has brought us together over the last year and a half, it is our feeling of vulnerability about the present and uncertainty about the future. We now know, more than ever, that urgent action is needed to change humanity's course and save the planet from further disruptions. The fabric of civil society and democracy is fraying in many places around the world. Education is not yet fulfilling its promise to help us shape peaceful, just, and sustainable futures. As the pandemic has shown, education is fragile: at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, 1.6 billion learners were affected by school closures across the globe. We must urgently reinvent education to help us address common challenges.

UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)
Report: *Reimagining our futures together—a new contract for education*, 2021

In the context of worldwide discussion about the delivery and purpose of school curriculums, Redeemer acknowledges the curriculum reform agenda of the NSW Education Standards Authority in its recent publication of a K-2 English syllabus that includes—with an extensive evidence base referenced in the syllabus—explicit instruction, a shift in focus from sight-reading words to phonetically sounding out words, and an enhanced focus on handwriting in the early years of schooling. These

have been some of the pillars in Redeemer’s approach to literacy instruction through WRAP (a Writing Approach to Reading) for two decades, and WRAP has been one of the keys to the consistently high growth and above average performance of Redeemer students in NAPLAN literacy domains each year.

This year, ACARA (the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority) has also been revising its national curriculum to be published in 2022. One feature of ACARA’s draft curriculum that has drawn considerable debate in the media is the removal from the curriculum of any reference to Australia’s Christian heritage. Speaking with Virginia Trioli on ABC radio about aspects of ACARA’s curriculum revision that bother him, the Australian Minister for Education and Youth (The Hon Alan Tudge) said: ‘I have a problem in relation to a very negative view about Australia’s modern history. Australia today is one of the most wealthy, freest, most egalitarian, and most tolerant societies that has ever existed anywhere in the history of the world, and there is a reason we are that today. The draft ACARA curriculum barely mentions the influence of Christianity on the origins of our modern country whereas Geoffrey Blainey—one of our great historians—said it was actually the most important influence.’ NSW Minister The Hon Anthony Roberts described ACARA’s draft curriculum as ‘neo-marxist rubbish’. Nyunggai Warren Mundine AO slammed the ACARA document as dangerous ‘indoctrination’ that would inject ‘critical race theory’ into classrooms. Historian Stephen Chavura commented in *The Spectator* that ACARA’s draft curriculum ‘seems entirely ignorant of a revolution that has been taking place in Australian historiography over the past twenty to thirty years: the rediscovery of Australia’s Christian heritage and its contribution to shaping Australian civil society’.

A cultural war that blinds Australia’s next generation to much of what’s good in the present—resulting from past contributions of those who held a Christian worldview—cannot contribute positively in any revisioning of education toward a better world. The famous Russian author Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, in his acceptance speech for the Templeton prize in 1983, provided this simple explanation for the great social and humanitarian disaster of communist Russia: ‘Men have forgotten God; that’s why all this has happened.’ In his speech he elaborated:

I have spent well-nigh 50 years working on the history of our revolution; I have read hundreds of books, collected hundreds of personal testimonies. But if I were asked today to formulate as concisely as possible the main cause of the ruinous revolution that swallowed up some 60 million of our people, I could not put it more accurately than to repeat: ‘Men have forgotten God; that’s why all this has happened.’

Solzhenitsyn then broadened his analysis to the devastation of wars and other humanitarian disasters throughout the world in the twentieth century, concluding that ‘the failings of human consciousness, deprived of its divine dimension, have been a determining factor in all the major crimes of this century—*Men have forgotten God*’. We should add, the crimes that have been committed in some ministries of churches or by some church leaders also have the same determining factor: *Men have forgotten God*.

As we at Redeemer contribute to the building of a post-pandemic world through education, as we equip students to approach urgent common needs in our own day, it will be vital that we do not forget God in history or any other key learning area as we share our life in Christ with Redeemer students.

Just prior to the lockdown in June this year, we had a surprise visit from a woman who had been a student at Redeemer 30 years ago. After her visit, she sent this revealing email:

Dearest Sharron & co [the email starts with who really runs the School!],

Thank you for my quick drop-in visit last week. I was overwhelmed with your kind welcome and I left with such a full heart.

Upon reflection of my visit, I really wanted to communicate this message to you, dearest staff of RBS: I hope you never underestimate the impact you make on this earth. We will never know this side of eternity just how much of a reverberation our words and deeds make. I am confident that if I was privy to the back of God’s tapestry there you would be in thousands of little strands that have been sewn together by the Master Weaver. And also, just in case any of you have ever foolishly felt your life has not amounted to enough—rest easy, your contribution on this earth is more than you will ever know. Your smiles, laughter, kindness and demonstration of faith have changed the worlds of many. Thank you. All my love ...

Forty years ago, Redeemer was founded in the nascent Christian Schools movement because we believe that God, who is our creator, has revealed what is best for us (and the purpose for our existence) in His word, the Bible. We believed then as we do now that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life. And we believe that there is hope for every student, that each one has great potential to contribute to the common good of humanity because we are all made in the image of God, and because we’ve all been offered forgiveness for our sins and fullness of life through Jesus’ cross and resurrection. We believe that any neglect of these God realities will be to the detriment of the next generation; not only for our students but also for their families and

communities. So faith continues to be the cornerstone of our commitment to excellence in education at Redeemer.

Truth as a basis for wellbeing

What if we've built a world that is unliveable?

Dr Matthew Sleeth, *Hope Always*, 2021

The view of human identity that is now taken for granted is radically different from the view most people throughout history (not only Christians) have long held. In the Christian view of the human person, we are more than the stuff we're made of. We have a telos—a moral shape, a created purpose, a design.

John Stonestreet, *Breakpoint Daily*, 19/4/2021

The 2021 Education Horizons Australian Educators school survey report found that student and staff wellbeing remains the number one priority for schools (73%), ahead of academic outcomes (60%). This is especially significant during these two years of COVID disruption in which anxiety and depression has elevated to 'double pre-pandemic estimates and are increasing over time' (Professor Hunt, University of Sydney, 2021). A research article on vulnerable learners concluded that, 'as we gradually move forward out of the pandemic, there is a clear need to nurture our future generations to build capacity for the disasters that will likely come again' (Dr Catherine Drane, Curtin University, 2021).

In addition, following an extended period where all students were necessarily focussed on screens during lockdown, the following research findings are relevant to the ongoing wellbeing of our students:

- The McCrindle 2021 Future of Education Insights reported that 82% of students say that they are seeing the negative impacts of spending too much time on their screens, including mental wellbeing (63%), loneliness and isolation (58%).
- University of South Australia research found that, for preschool children, 'overuse of screen time, in lieu of quality play, is substantially impacting children's development'.
- The results of Carleton University (Canada) research suggested that banning mobile phones and limiting use of laptops in class improved student academic results, equivalent to adding five days to the school year.
- The American Academy of Ophthalmology reported that there has been a growing incidence in myopia (near-sightedness)—made worse by remote

learning and lockdowns—due to much less time spent outdoors as children spend increasing time staring at screens.

- According to the Wall Street Journal, an internal Facebook presentation said that 13% of British teens and 6% of American teens who reported suicidal thoughts traced their issue to Instagram.
- UNSW Gonski Institute research reported that: more than 90% of parents think digital devices negatively distract their own lives; 83% of parents think their children are negatively distracted by digital gadgets; and 60% of children who struggle in school regularly sleep with their digital technology.

This research should encourage us all in taking common sense action for the benefit of our children.

In our world where our students are increasingly impacted with novel, global challenges to their wellbeing as persons, inspirational pastoral support of the souls and spirits of students—combined with health professional intervention when necessary—undergirded by prayer and the belief that the light of Jesus’ presence dispels darkness, will continue to be a distinctive feature of education with a Christian worldview at Redeemer.

I want to acknowledge our HSC students who have persisted with goodwill and thankfulness through the uncertainties and extensions to their school year. Our last HSC examination was on Friday last week; HSC results won’t be released until the end of January. These changes are significant challenges for HSC students seeking direction for their futures throughout NSW. We received this email from parents of one of our Year 12 students:

We want to express our gratitude for all the time and help you have given to our HSC student. We are overjoyed with the many options and early University offers received so far! I have also witnessed how this help and support has been given to every student in Year 12. We are absolutely taken aback by how the staff of Redeemer have worked so hard, going over and above in supporting, encouraging and caring for all the students in Year 12, especially in such a challenging year. I have not seen this support and care given to other students at other schools and to my knowledge this is unheard of. Thank you. We greatly appreciate this. Warmest Regards.

In our neighbourhood, Danny and Leila Abdallah have modelled a path of wellbeing even when life threw unimaginable tribulations their way. Still heartbroken and missing her children—who were killed by a drunk driver on Bettington Road nearly two years ago—Leila says that she wants to live out the Lord’s prayer, forgiving the

man who cut their family in half. In an interview on the anniversary of the local tragedy, Leila said:

Grieving is already hard. Imagine having to add to it anger and bitterness? This is where you end up in mental anguish. But when you surrender to God, God will send you the peace from above. God will give you the strength to deal with everyday life.

Now with the support of the Australian and NSW governments, Danny and Leila are promoting a new national i4Give Day (www.i4give.com) on February 1st each year to enable those who have been hurt to live peacefully and to heal. We are all being encouraged on that day to search our hearts, find someone to forgive, and then set them free and feel the freedom of forgiveness. The inspiration for Danny and Leila's practice and promotion of forgiveness as a way of life is in God's word, which says: 'Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ forgave you' (Ephesians 4:32).

Also with regard to wellbeing, it seems to me that some contemporary concerns about children's wellbeing are society-endorsed, self-inflicted phantoms as individuals attempt to live as though they are in a reality different from simple facts (the truth) of God's good creation. Abortion is not a lifestyle choice conferring freedom; rather, abortion profanes the sacred and confers real guilt as a human life made in the image of God is deliberately killed. Intimate relationships outside of holy matrimony between a man and a woman are not recreation; rather, sexual immorality kills family, thereby profaning God's good plan of faithful lovingkindness for eternity. Euthanasia is not dying with dignity; rather, assisted suicide leaves all complicit parties guilty as they profane the sacred opportunity to experience undying divine love through suffering. Choosing to live against our biological form at birth is not authenticity; rather, the vain attempt to kill the real self profanes God's gift of purposeful identity in His good creation. 'Forgetting God' has catastrophic cultural significance as death is preferred over life. It is in this cultural context where eyes are blind and minds are closed that Redeemer continues to proclaim the good news of creation and new creation through Jesus Christ who came to proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind, and freedom for those who are oppressed. Affirming unreality cannot heal. But there is hope for everyone in Jesus because He came to give us all life, real life, in all its fullness.

Beauty in a broken world

We feel estranged from beauty, finding ourselves a long way downstream from a time when beauty was inseparable from her ancient sisters goodness and truth.

Professor Ben Quash, *The rise and fall of beauty in Western culture*, 2021

The function of this school is to produce character, not a lot of clever men with destructive minds, with no conception of their obligations to their fellow men, and no conception of their duty to God, but people of character, of high morality, trained with a background of religion.

Sir Robert Menzies, 1961

We could, at this point, stand around and natter gloomily to each other like Hanrahan in that old bush poem: ‘We’ll all be rooned, before the year is out’. We’ve all been wearing masks with travel restrictions, worried about how COVID might impact school closures, our health and our economy. The fear of climate change has overtaken fear of a nuclear holocaust. Popular culture continually escalates its wilful celebration of unfaithful relationships in catchy tunes and normalising media that trivialises gross, soul-destroying sin. Parliaments in Australia continue to legislate for immorality, to reverse the criminal code, upturning our culture’s Biblically-informed definitions of good and evil.

In a recent televised book review of a modern award-winning Australian novel, the reviewer—talking to the author—confessed that she got to a point where she threw the book across the room in disgust because there wasn’t any ‘faith, hope and love’ in it. The author replied that he didn’t see anything to like in any of the characters, he just wrote it as it is. Like much modern art, this novel is a ‘deathwork’ that makes old values look unsustainable and even ridiculous, where the clean is subverted by the vile because ‘the quest for beauty and transcendence in nature is now implausible and even somewhat childish’ (Professor Carl Trueman, *Reimagining Our Culture*, 2020). Specifically targeted at this moment in history are the Christian values of sexual morality and the sanctity of human life. According to The Australian journalist Greg Sheridan, ‘the last time humanity tried living out a pagan culture it was pretty ugly’ (March, 2021). The 2021 Australian Christian Book of the Year states that ‘the cultural elimination of Christianity may well give way to a dry, arid post-Christian existence full of fear and empty of human kindness’ (Stephen McAlpine, 2021).

In the context of these depressing concerns and cultural progressions, our building of a Christian worldview in education continues to be uplifted and inspired by the transcendent beauty of God and His good creation, the image of God in man, and the glory of new creation through new birth in Jesus Christ. So we are not hopeless in this struggle for our students—counter to their prevailing culture—to catch the

relationship between the good, the true and the beautiful. Our desire is to match their best in academics, creativity, sport and leisure with their best in character. And their best in character has an absolute reference in the Bible's Ten Commandments and Jesus' sermon on the mount. The blessed life, the truly happy life, looks to God and throws off every sin that would ensnare us to take away our joy in living as we were created to be.

I received these emails from onlookers outside the Redeemer Baptist School community, commenting on the character of our students this year.

- *I wanted to pass on some good news regarding three of your Senior students. I had the privilege of coaching the HZSA Boys Touch Football Team. Jordan, Edward and Gregory represented your School with distinction both through the way they played, and through their general manner. They were polite and well-mannered and displayed exemplary sportsmanship. They are to be commended for displaying such characteristics within a foreign environment and among unknown teammates. Please pass on my thank you to the boys and my commendation of their conduct ...*
- *Dear Mr Cannon, when my wife passed away after a long illness, two of your students who refer to me as 'pop' asked permission to attend the funeral. Their class said beautiful prayers for God to help me in my hour of need. I am sure the prayers were heard by God as, although deeply sad and emotional, those prayers gave me enormous strength. At the funeral, everyone commented on your students' impeccable behaviour and how they honoured the school uniform. May I congratulate you and your school staff for their compassion and unwavering duty to God, and the marvellous way they are teaching all students with life's skills and the power of prayer. Very sincerely, and faithfully ...*

As is demonstrated by McCrindle research in their 2021 Future of Education report, most students—including, no doubt, Redeemer students—have a strong desire to find fulfilment in their work, to reach their full potential, to make their life count. Our prayer is that, whatever vocation or career they pursue, they would discover: the joy of doing everything to the glory of God; that there is a good purpose in their existence; that there is an eternal glorious goal to be shared with all who trust in Jesus as Lord.

Celebrating 40 years of building a Christian worldview in education

Redeemer has been growing its vision of a Christian school since it was founded 40 years ago by Redeemer Baptist Church. Many of those who contributed at the beginning—teachers and students—are still here today. They have been joined by younger generations who continue to hold the vision for this Christian community of

learning, guided by God's word in the Bible, inspired and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

We are thankful in particular for two men given to us by God at the beginning who nurtured the vision of this school for 30 years together. Noel Cannon and Max Shaw were radical in their desire to give children the opportunity to enjoy a blessed life. That was one of the reasons why Redeemer formed an intentional Christian community. Before the school began, Redeemer church families opened their homes to help children with big needs—drugs, alcohol, delinquency, oppositional behaviour, abuse. But then we discovered that secular schools would not support church families who were encouraging children in their care to enjoy a transformed life with a biblical standard of purity and truth. Quite the opposite. The local state school Principal threatened to provide an alternative home for any child in any family that did not want to live in accordance with his or her parents' values.

So—with the support of the NSW Department of Education and Bob Frisken, Principal of Regents Park Christian School—the household ministry of the church grew to include the establishment of a Christian school. We wanted to establish an educational environment where children would not be bombarded with anti-Christian assumptions and propaganda, where the pedagogy of Christian teachers would include pastoral care to protect and nurture their students' growth in appreciation of God's good creation and their potential for good as humans created in the image of God.

And during the last 40 years God has blessed this ministry. There was the miracle of sacrifice as every family in the Redeemer Baptist Church community sold their homes to provide the money needed to purchase and develop this amazing North Parramatta campus. There has been the miracle of generations of young people hearing the call of God to volunteer their talents and expertise to help with all the different aspects of operating the school. And along the way there has been a very satisfying pattern of recognition of academic and character development, including: 61 top student STEM awards at state, national and international level including the \$40,000US university scholarship offered to a Redeemer student at the Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair this year; 56 top literacy awards at state and national level including the Primary Schools Award in the Dorothea Mackellar Poetry competition this year; 21 state medals in individual sports; 17 Redeemer alumni undergraduate and post graduate university medals and awards including a Post-Graduate Achievement Award this year; and 11 community service awards including this year's City of Parramatta Junior Citizen of the Year and Environmental Citizen of the Year. Finally, there has been the opportunity to join together as a school to make enduring

differences for disadvantaged communities, including: the Barai Tribe in Papua New Guinea (vaccination program and medical clinics coordinated with Professor Alice Lee of Hep-B Free; support program for the Barai Non-formal Education Association); Boggabilla (Oasis Community Centre); Bourke (Youth Training Centre); Muli Muli (Full Gospel Church); Kempsey (Healing Centre); Canteen Creek, Yuendumu, Harts Range, Elcho Island, Tennant Creek (sponsoring students, providing homestay and support for secondary education).

Alongside with teachers who are unstinting in their service in the school to the glory of God, the last 40 years truly has been a glorious ride! I pray that there will always be those who consider the calling of God to join fellow Christians who live in gladness and simplicity of heart in the Redeemer Baptist community—and I pray that the community continues to build, on the solid foundation of the word of God in the Bible, this vision of a Christian worldview in education at Redeemer.

Student achievements in 2021

In this difficult COVID year, Redeemer student achievements have been amazing!

City of Parramatta Australia Day Awards

- *Antonio Rajaratnam* (HSC, 2020): Junior Citizen of the Year & Environmental Citizen of the Year

BHP Billiton Foundation Science and Engineering Awards

- *Karmichael Candra* (Year 5): Primary Engineering Finalist
- *Danielle Gibson* (Year 9): Semi-finalist

STANSW Young Scientist Awards

- *Kush Dewan* (Year 12): 1st Scientific Investigations Chemistry (11-12); 2022 Regeneron ISEF Finalist
- *Edward Garth* (Year 12): 1st Working Mathematically (11-12); 2022 Regeneron ISEF Finalist
- *Matthew Guirguis* (Year 10): 1st Innovation & Engineering Design (9-10), 2nd Sebel Testing & Evaluation Award
- *Anubhav Ammangi* (Year 9): 1st Working Mathematically (9-10)
- *Anubhav Ammangi, Yoon Choi & Yemi Olaitan* (Year 9): 3rd Working Mathematically (9-10)
- *Susan Candra* (Year 7): 1st Earth & Environmental Sciences (7-8)

- *Karmichael Candra* (Year 5): 1st Inventions & Innovations (5-6); Primary NSW nominee to BHP Foundation Science & Engineering Awards
- *Thaddeus Candra* (Year 2): 1st Scientific Investigations (K-2); 3rd AIP Physics; 1st Inventions & Innovations (K-2)

Regeneron ISEF (International Science & Engineering Fair) 2021

- *Antonio Rajaratnam* (Year 12, 2021): \$40,000US University of Arizona Renewal Tuition Scholarship (Animal Sciences)
- *Danielle Gibson* (Year 9): Broadcom Masters International delegate

Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards

- *Redeemer Baptist School*: Primary Schools Award (1st)
- *Nikolas Nissan* (Year 10): 2nd in Australia LA secondary
- *Abul Ahmadi* (Year 7): Shortlisted LA secondary
- *Tony Kim* (Year 6): Shortlisted & Highly Commended LA primary
- *Matthew Guirguis* (Year 10): Highly Commended LA secondary
- *Pradyun Surya* (Year 8): Commended LA secondary
- *Auyee Chen* (Year 6): Commended upper primary
- *Venkat Kattela* (Year 7): Commended LA secondary
- *Nathan Burns* (Year 6): Commended LA primary
- *Ivan Pronin* (Year 4): Commended LA primary
- *Ethan Wilson* (Year 4): Commended LA primary
- *Mina Zhu* (Year 3): Shortlisted LA primary

Sparklit Australian Christian Teen Writer Awards

- *Anaya Rajaratnam* (Year 12): 2nd prize

Premier's Reading Challenge

- *Jeri Akele, Anubhav Ammangi, Danielle Gibson, Emily Kim, Riana Maharaj, Pragati Muralikrishnan Nara, Victoria Sultana & Aran Yoganandha* received PRC medals.
- There were 25 platinum awards & 37 gold awards.

MANSW Investigating with Mathematics Competition

- *Anubhav Ammangi, Yoon Choi, Yemi Olaitan* (Year 9): small group 1st (NSW)
- *Danielle Gibson* (Year 9): Highly Commended

UNSW School of Mathematics Competition

- *Anubhav Ammangi* (Year 9): Distinction prize

Australian Mathematics Competition

- *Anubhav Ammangi* (Year 9): AMC Prize

CSIRO Bebras Australia Computational Thinking Challenge

- *Christopher Herbert* (Year 7): Honour Roll

ANSTO Shorebirds Competition

- *Allen Bineesh* (Year 4): 1st
- *Olivia Azzi* (Year 4): 3rd
- *Ethan Wilson & Jaden Wheeler* (Year 4): Highly Commended

Young Australian Art Awards

- *Felix Liu* (Year 7): Gold Medal, middle section
- *Rita Ye* (Year 4): Fosterville Gold Mine Art Award, painting junior

Harmony Day Poster Competition

- *Tyron Jung* (Year 9): Highly Commended

Koala Art Awards

- *Felix Liu* (Year 7); *Sam Ma* (Year 3); *Luke Ma* (Year 1): Finalists

NSW School of Languages

- *William Kim* (Year 12): High Academic Achievement in Japanese Beginners

Western Sydney University Dean's Merit Lists

- Alumnus *Callum Bailey* (Year 12, 2017): School of Health Sciences
- Alumnus *Mary-Anne Poyitt* (Year 12, 2018): School of Science
- Alumnus *Alexandra Garth* (Year 12, 2016): School of Nursing & Midwifery
- Alumnus *Georgina Garth* (Year 12, 2017): School of Humanities and Communication Arts

Southern Cross University Dean's Honours List

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

Excelsia College School of Education

- Alumnus *Thomas Bailey* (Year 12, 2014): Post-Graduate Achievement Award

Western Sydney University JD Lovich Scholarship

- Alumnus *Mary-Anne Poyitt* (Year 12, 2018)

Swimming

- In the SWISSA swimming carnival: Sean Park (Year 8), Yoon Choi (Year 9), Evelyn Poyitt (Year 12) & Jayden Kwak (Year 12) were age champions and Redeemer was the champion school.
- In the ASISSA swimming carnival: Unish Shrestha (Year 6) was age champion.

Cross Country

- SWISSA event: Pal Patel (Year 7), Rhyon Cabauatan (Year 7), Yashika Kolli (Year 7), Adrian Burns (Year 8), Victoria Sultana (Year 9), Yerim Lim (Year 9), Cameron Frost (Year 10), Sonia Khan (Year 10), Gregory Burns (Year 11), Victoria Garth (Year 11), Emily Burns (Year 12) & Jordan Ebert (Year 12) were age champions and Redeemer was the champion school.
- ASISSA event: Unish Shrestha (Year 6) qualified for CIS.

Team Sports

- SWISSA senior girls basketball champions: Esther Park (Year 12), captain
- SWISSA boys indoor cricket champions: Peter Zhu (Year 11), captain
- AICES colours for NSW CIS touch football: Jordan Ebert (Year 12)

Australian Archery Championships

- Darren Candra (Year 9): two gold medals

Tertiary Success

- In 2020, 95% of our HSC cohort were offered enrolment in university or diploma pathways.
- In 2021, 94% of our HSC cohort were offered enrolment in university or diploma pathways prior to completing their HSC examinations.

English, Mathematics, Science and Computers conducted by ICAS & the University of NSW; Mathematics conducted by the Australian Mathematics Trust; Computational Thinking conducted by CSIRO; Australian Geography conducted by the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland

- 160 High Distinctions: *Min-Hyoung Lee* (Reach Science, Mathematics; Year 10); *Anubhav Ammangi* (Reach Science, English, Mathematics, IT, Bebras Computational Thinking, Australian Mathematics Competition, Geography; Year 9); *Eugene Kim* (Reach Science, English, Mathematics, IT, Geography; Year 8); *Christopher Herbert* (Reach Science, English, Mathematics, IT, Bebras Computational Thinking; Year 7); *Trinity Kim* (Reach Science, English, Mathematics & IT; Year 6); *Gehna Ammangi* (Reach Science, English, Mathematics & IT; Year 5); *Akriti Biswal, Dante Jiang, Haricharan Venkatasubramanian* (Reach Science, English & Mathematics; Year 4)
- 242 distinctions & 319 credits

Albeit limited by COVID restrictions, the Redeemer 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 2021

- Redeemer supported flood relief in Honduras through our alumnus, Patricia Diaz, who wrote: 'I am so happy to hear from all my family of Redeemer Baptist. It has been challenging getting back to the normal life we had before the floods but God has been faithful and He has never forsaken us. We truly appreciate your prayers that God heard as His almighty hands have been protecting us. Thank you for the money you sent, it will be a great blessing for many of my people. I must also thank you for blessing us through the online services. Every Saturday here (Sunday there) my family looks forward to listening to the beautiful singing and hearing God's word. It is so fascinating how God makes ways to connect us, despite of the long distance. I will continue to pray for our Redeemer Baptist family, may God continue to bless you abundantly.'
- Redeemer supported Simon Savaiko's work in the Bible Translation Association (Port Moresby) and the Barai Non-formal Education Association in Papua New Guinea. Our sister school is located in the Barai tribe at *Itokama*. Simon Savaiko wrote: 'You have blessed my life about the true love of God. You always demonstrate this true love in the life you live at home and in your workplace. Praise God that this love drives your members to meet the vision of your school.'

- Redeemer provided boxes of good quality used clothes for *The Oasis Centre*, to serve Indigenous communities at Boggabilla. Our Year 10 Gala Day program contributed personally to the construction of the Oasis Centre in 2016, 2017 and 2019.
- Redeemer students contributed 274 shoebox gifts to be delivered by Samaritan's Purse to children in vulnerable situations across the world.
- Redeemer continued to partner with the *Australian Literacy & Numeracy Foundation* to qualify Indigenous workers with a Cert IV in Early Language & Literacy.
- *Mitchell Youth Leadership Forum* was supported by Redeemer.
- Redeemer contributed leadership in organising the *Refresh Summer Camp*.
- Students completed professional placements or work experience at Redeemer from *Excelsia College, Charles Sturt University & Bankstown College TAFE*.

New and Refurbished Infrastructure in 2021

- Outside security lighting was installed at Sargood Hall and on the school road.
- Extensive heritage restoration of the *Blackwood* building was undertaken.
- Restoration of the 100-year-old heritage perimeter fence along Pennant Hills Road.
- New IT school administration systems were established and classroom IT hardware and software resources were renewed.
- On 16th November, the cumulative savings from the solar system on the Library and Science & Technology buildings had covered the cost of installation.
- Heritage restoration of the *Robertson* building began with external painting.

Parliamentary recognition of excellence at Redeemer in 2021

The NSW Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education The Hon Dr Geoff Lee MP (Parramatta) commended Redeemer in the Legislative Assembly on 23 November 2021, as follows.

In a year when students were excluded from their campuses for more than a term, it is with particular pleasure that I bring to the attention of the House the excellent achievements of Redeemer Baptist School students. Despite the lockdowns, the students have continued to excel in original scientific research. Year 5 student Karmichael Candra was selected as a national primary engineering winner in the BHP Foundation Science and Engineering Awards. Karmichael was also a prize winner in the STANSW

[Science Teachers Association NSW] Young Scientist Awards, along with eight fellow primary and secondary Redeemer students. Year 9 student Danielle Gibson represented Australia at the virtual Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair as the Broadcom MASTERS International delegate, and Year 12 (2020) student Antonio Rajaratnam was awarded a US\$40,000 University of Arizona renewal tuition scholarship. Demonstrating continuing social responsibility in Redeemer scientific research, Kush Dewan's winning Year 12 STANSW project utilised Surface oxygen vacancies on crystalline cerium(iv) oxide to promote catalytic ozonisation for the removal of bisphenol A, which is an endocrine disrupter, in wastewater. That is the level of HSC science extension research at Redeemer Baptist.

Redeemer students have excelled in Mathematics and Computational Thinking. Year 7 student Christopher Herbert won a place on the 2021 Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation's Bebras Australia Honour Roll for Computational Thinking. Year 9 student Anubhav Ammangi won the Australian Mathematics Competition prize, and a University of New South Wales School of Mathematics and Statistics distinction award. He joined with Year 9 colleagues Yoon Choi and Yemi Olaitan to win the Mathematical Association of New South Wales Investigating with Mathematics competition small group prize. Redeemer students have also continued to excel in literacy. Year 12 student Anaya Rajaratnam won second prize in the Australian Christian Teen Writer category at the national 2021 SparkLit Awards. According to the judges, Anaya's story entitled A Lesson in Murder was: 'An exciting, defiantly comical tale that confronts the true costs and rewards of imitating Jesus and letting the cycle of hurt end with you'.

Redeemer was also the national primary award winner in the Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards. In the secondary learning assisted category, Year 10 student Nikolas Nissan won second prize. In Visual Arts, Redeemer Year 4 students Allen Bineesh and Olivia Azzi won first and third place in the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation's Shorebirds Competition, Year 9 student Tyron Jung won a Harmony Day Poster Competition award, and Year 7 student Felix Liu won a Young Australia Art gold medal award. This year Redeemer Year 12 (2020) student Antonio Rajaratnam was selected as the 2021 Junior Citizen of the Year at the City of Parramatta Council Australia Day awards. Antonio was recognised not only for his scientific discoveries, for which he was proclaimed the STANSW Young Scientist of the Year, but also for his extensive community participation at school and in his local Catholic parish.

The Redeemer community must be commended for its great work. At the beginning of 2021, following the devastating floods in Honduras, the community garnered support for one of their past students who lives and works as an educational leader in an

impoverished Honduras community. During the year another Redeemer alumnus, whose tertiary education in nursing was supported financially by the school community, has been an Indigenous leader in Papua New Guinea's response to the COVID crisis in Port Moresby. As Redeemer students returned to learning on campus in Term four, the entire Redeemer community, including students and their families, joined to contribute nearly 300 shoebox gifts for the Australian branch of Samaritan's Purse, which will be distributed to children living in vulnerable situations overseas through Operation Christmas Child. I say well done to them all. I commend all the students at Redeemer Baptist School for their efforts in the difficult circumstances of 2021 and acknowledge Russell Bailey, the Headmaster, as well as Jonathan Cannon and all the teachers and staff for their hard work. Redeemer continues to give hope and the opportunity to achieve excellence to all its students. I commend Redeemer for its passion, for delivering great education and for earning a fantastic reputation in our local community.

Thanks to God this Christmas

As I close this Address, I would like to thank you all for your cooperation throughout the entire period of the last two years. You have supported all of our attempts to stay safe. And you have trusted us when we called your students back to the campus. I have appreciated working with you for the twin goals of your children's safety and their progress in education.

Last year at our Middle School Parent Information Night on 9 March 2020, I said this:

We continue to pray that the Redeemer school community will not be affected by any novel coronavirus cases. That is a bold prayer, given the subtle spread through nearby suburbs in NSW!

As at the day of writing this Address, Redeemer has not had any COVID cases: none of the teachers; none of the students. And I want to publicly give thanks to God for His protection. Of course, we are thankful to governments for their prompt action and for doctors and other frontline workers who led the health response in NSW. But as we approach the Christmas season, our attention is being drawn to God's presence with humanity to heal us and to save us. And today we want to thank Him in particular for being with us in this two-year COVID journey. And, of course, our thanks is not just for the last two years. Our thanks to God is for 40 years of provision, 40 years of giving hope, 40 years of growing the vision of a Christian worldview in education.

Finally, this year we hope that on Christmas Eve we'll be able to open up the Castle Hill House campus for a massive Christmas Carols celebration—please come as we join together to give thanks for the birth of Jesus Christ, God's Son.

I have been talking of a big vision that guides us at Redeemer as we provide your children's education. That big vision sees beauty, truth and goodness together in our Heavenly Father, in Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit; in God. That vision says that God's desire for us all—students, parents, teachers—is to become like Jesus. To love like Jesus. To have power to meet needs like Jesus. To serve selflessly like Jesus. To be holy like Jesus. To be ready for every good work, like Jesus. To show perfect courtesy to all people, like Jesus. This is a beautiful vision for humanity! This is the beauty that we believe is possible for your children.

So in addition to joining us on Christmas Eve, if you would like to step into a path towards this vision yourself or with your family, I encourage you to find a church—if you do not already have a church family—that follows the word of God in the Bible, and begin to meet with them regularly to get to know Jesus better and to be filled with His Spirit.

I pray that God will bless you all as you begin your Christmas school holidays!

When you think about it: There's no one who comes to a counsellor to make them more impatient. There's no one looking to become less loving. Less joyful. no one looking for more conflict in their lives. Good mental health goes hand-in-hand with the virtues Jesus teaches us to cultivate. Christians believe that's the way we're made to be, that the pattern for human flourishing is becoming like the God who created us in his likeness.

Dr Jenny George, Australian National Prayer Breakfast, 2021

In today's throwaway culture frequently fuelled by personal ambition, it may feel overly passive and wholly undesirable to stay in the same place for many years. But the flourishing of students is dependent on the reliability of educators who make the choice to abide with them. Having such adults stick around is life-giving to students, as it unlocks learning and development from a starting point of safety and trust.

Swaner & Wolfe, *A Christian Vision for Students, Educators, and Schools*, 2021

Community takes commitment, humility and perseverance not only to build but to maintain. We are too easily entangled in the struggles of this world, plagued by sin. And we too easily resort to selfishness, with hearts seeking to be kings and queens in our own domains.

Ben George, *Moore Matters*, 2021

Violence has been a universal part of the human story. The demand to *love one's enemies* has not. Division has been a norm. Inherent human dignity has not. Armies, greed, and the politics of power have been constants in history. Hospitals, schools, and charity for all have not. Bullies are common. Saints are not.

John Dickson, *Bullies and Saints*, 2021



Valete —Year 12

Gabriella Anugraha
Kamal Baghdadi
Daniel Bhe
Emily Burns
Dila Denizli
Kush Dewan
Jordan Ebert
Elliot Fahd

Kayla Fahd
Edward Garth
Alp Gezer
Steve Jung
Jeremy Kew
William Kim
Ally Kolontaevskaya
Gokulraj Kuppusamy

Jayden Kwak
Antonio Kwok
Alisha Maharaj
Lydia Mikhael
Jeremy Ng
Esther Park
Sarah Park
Thomas Portelli

Evelyn Poyitt
Anaya Rajaratnam
Farzin Sheriff
Ella Tazewell
Ethan Tjhin
Kartik Verma
Dylan Yong
Sila Zohre

