Reflection Corner

Staff studies

Professional Development is very important to the work of Wontulp-Bi-Buya College. Three staff members have been involved in study this year: The Rev. Michael Connolly (honorary Principal) is completing the Bachelor of Theology. Dr Barry Paterson (Diploma of Theology Teacher) has completed the Master of Education (Open and Distance Learning). The Rev. David Thompson (Assistant Principal & Academic Coordinator) is completing the Master of Professional Education (Flexible, Online and Distance Learning).

On the move again

Is too much success too good for you? This is part of my feelings and training (Flexible, Online and Distance Learning).

The Rev. David Thompson

Paterson (Diploma of Theology Teacher) has completed the Master of Education (Open and Distance Learning).

The College has come a long way since its small beginnings in Townsville when Nungaling College, Darwin, placed Dr Robert Bos there is 1983 to develop leadership studies in Queensland. He set up a partnership of churches and a network of tutors and contacts right around Queensland. This structure became the backbone of a decentralised low-cost educational operation. In 1990, the operation moved to Rockhampton where I began as a part-time Field Officer. The College grew steadily in the next decade and relocated to Cairns in 1999. Now in 2003, the College has 140 students, a staff of seven (2 fulltime) and an honorary Principal.

The low-cost ‘College without a campus’ operation has allowed all resources to be put into developing study programs in Queensland and given a boost to the level of trained leadership in the Indigenous churches. At the same time, it has given the College a low profile and not allowed resources to keep pace with growth. Our success has been too good for us!

Moving back to conference centres will not solve the basic problem, which is lack of funding for staff and infrastructure. Student costs are met through the Abstudy scheme, but staff costs are not; and this funding has to be found from churches and other agencies. Increased operating costs have reduced funds available for essential staff, while funding for 2 positions through World Vision has suddenly ceased. We are grateful to TEAR Australia for the support of Residential Study Block evening.

Certificate III in Theology students, Simon Gela (Yorke Is.) and Wilson Billy (Warraber Is.), chat with Diploma of Theology student William Mosby (Yorke Is.).

A big THANK YOU to Mrs Tabuai (centre) who spends three days counting, folding, enveloping and sealing the thousands of Newsletters sent in June. Seen here with daughters Linda Tabuai (left) and Beth our Administrative Assistant and some of the newsletters.

Coordinators – to India

Hello everyone, my name is Caroline Doyle. My mother is from the Kuku Yunggal people and my father is from the Kuku Yalanji people. I am the Coordinator of the Community Organising Course at Wontulp-Bi-Buya College, Cairns.

Caroline: My husband Harold and I will have the opportunity to participate in a seven week Third World Experience and Study Opportunity (TWESO) in India in January/February 2004, partly subsidised by TEAR Australia. As an Australian and especially as an Aboriginal person, I am keen and willing to learn new ideas, skills and practices and to share my experiences and knowledge with others. I want to look at similarities and differences and compare the Indian situation to our own in Australia, especially to the situation of our own Indigenous people. As a Coordinator for the Certificate III in Community Organising Course, I will be interested to see how the community organising and development process is applied to communities in India. I am also interested in how social capital is developed in individuals and groups in order to become their own agents of change.

This valuable learning experience will enable me to experience first hand how people operate using a Christian framework when dealing with sensitive issues.

Hi, My name is Harold Doyle. I am an aboriginal Australian. My tribe is the Jiman Tribe from around Taroom. My totem is the sand goanna. I was born in Woorabinda Aboriginal Reserve, two hundred miles west of Rockhampton.

Harold: Out of this study tour I hope to learn a lot about Indian culture and how the people live outside the big cities, in their communities. I hope to learn about living conditions, employment, food, accommodation, and spirituality. I will be interested in what role the church plays in the people’s lives. An important part of the visit will be the health issues the people have to deal with.

We want to thank TEAR Australia and Wontulp-Bi-Buya College in Cairns for giving us this opportunity to visit India.

Certificate III in Theology students present item at end of residential study block evening.

A big THANK YOU to Mrs Tabuai (centre) who spends three days counting, folding, enveloping and sealing the thousands of Newsletters sent in June. Seen here with daughters Linda Tabuai (left) and Beth our Administrative Assistant and some of the newsletters.

State member for Cairns, Desley Boyle, had a real “ecumenical meeting” when visiting WBB students recently. Seen here with Leon Roughsey (Mornington Uniting Church), Rev. Brian Claudie (Anglican Church, Lockhart River), Maureen Wallace (Lutheran Church, Yoruko) and Peter Smith (Mount Isa Catholic Church).

Wontulp-Bi-Buya College, Inc. A Combined Church Indigenous Training and Research Centre and Qld partner of Nungalinya College, Darwin, providing education programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander church and community leaders. Wontulp-Bi-Buya means faith and light. Supported by the Anglican, Catholic, Lutheran and Uniting Churches.

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Print Post Approved PP424022/00956

No. 17

December 2003
Principal’s Report

As the year draws to a close, I look back and I am heartened by the number of graduates with the Diploma of Theology who have offered to come back to the College as teachers. While many students have gone on to be church leaders, in either lay or ordained, and leaders in the wider community, but supporters of the College should be made aware of this aspect of College after-life. There is something about being taught by your own people, as you can switch in and out of the English language with idioms that give greater understanding to what the Bible is saying. Of course all this, and other aspects of the College are made possible by your donations. We are especially grateful for your efforts and we would like you to know that we are receiving your support.

If you would like to convey heartfelt thanks to all those who assist in giving donations personally and from the funding bodies who give donations, you can switch in and out of the English language with idioms that give greater understanding to what the Bible is saying. Of course all this, and other aspects of the College are made possible by your donations.

In our community back home (Mackay) we minister as a team. We feel that we are able to give each other moral support and courage and strength through our prayers.

Sharing stories with our brothers and sisters at WBB and learning and studying scriptures help us to recognise the diversity and needs of each community. This is different to those of us living in areas where non-Indigenous people are in the majority. We are encouraged and enthused by our brothers and sisters. Carilyn is especially encouraged by meeting other “Pastors’ wives” and looking at their needs in ministry for us. (Henry being called into the Ordained ministry at present, as our financial situation is serious. (See the Asst-Principal’s report "Reflection Corner").

We, the admin staff, the teaching and mentoring staff, and the students of Wontulp-Bi-Buya College wish you a happy and holy Christmas and New Year, and the Lord bless you in the coming years.

Rev. Mick Connolly

Diploma of Theology student, Peter Smith (middle row - second from right) completed his studies and received his Certificate III in Theology.

Certificate III in Theology and Certificate III in Community Organising students enjoyed a combined Youth Ministry Module residential study block. Richard Cassady (Back row left) gave input from his experiences working with students in Ipswich. Local Cairns student Dale McGuiness (centre front) spoke about his experiences of life assisted by the Cairns Indigenous Men’s Group. Bevan AhKee (Back row -second from right) said the group has been asked to assist youth by introducing their self-esteem programme S.H.A.P.E (Strong Healthy And Positive Environments) in up to six high schools in and around Cairns.

Couples at study share their experiences

Ron & Alice Adidi
"We are interested in learning more about the Bible. We like to share with one another here as we study in Wontulp-Bi-Buya College. We want to help our people in our community and we work together there. Studying at Wontulp gives us strength to do the work of the Lord." Wayne & Valmai Connolly
"It is a blessing to come as a couple because we can be a role-model for others. We feel we are growing towards God’s goal together. To receive our Diplomas is part of it but we have the advantage of being together to support each other - to be there for each other."

Ernie & Barbara Trevaskis
"Our calling is to bring awareness and expressions of Aboriginal spirituality into the wider church. We held workshops for groups of people, putting together materials for use by groups in schools…we help set up wisdom groups of elders, and we bring together groups of people to talk and work out what they want to do together in their community.

Barbara - I have an openness and easy way with people [because of my background]. Ernie helps me, as he has a solidness, a quietness and a way of searching and thinking deeply about things. Sharing God’s love together, and not alone, brings happiness in anyone’s marriage, and I thank the grace of God that happened in mine.

Ernie – I met Barbara when I returned from Vietnam on leave. I can see it was God’s sense of humour that my wife ended up being my teacher too! …she recognised my yearning and reaching out for God. Barbara was able to respond in ways that gave me broader and deeper meaning in my learning.

We have a life of giving and sharing, being tolerant and giving strength to each other and hopefully to our children. When we pray, we ask that we may be able to reflect God in us and show Jesus to others in all that we do." Ernie & Barbara Trevaskis

Back Row – Elthea Nai, Rev. Langston Nai (Anglican Church Cairns), Palmer Wapau (Uniting Church Napanam), Henry Kennel (Anglican Church Mackay), Rev. Michael Connolly (Anglican Church Yarrabah) Front Row – Ernie Trevaskis, Barbara Trevaskis (Catholic Church Monto), Lena Wapau, Carilyn Kennel, Valmai Connolly

Wayne & Valmai Connolly
"I have been studying at Wontulp-Bi-Buya College for four years completing his certificate III in Theology and now doing Diploma in Theology. Carilyn has just begun her Certificate III and will continue her studies.

In our community back home (Mackay) we minister as a team. We feel that we are able to give each other moral support and courage and strength through our prayers.

Sharing stories with our brothers and sisters at WBB and learning and studying scriptures help us to recognise the diversity and needs of each community. This is different to those of us living in areas where non-Indigenous people are in the majority. We are encouraged and enthused by our brothers and sisters. Carilyn is especially encouraged by meeting other “Pastors’ wives” and looking at their needs in ministry as support for their spouse.

We are both at WBB because it was God’s plan of action for us. (Henry being called into the Ordained Ministry and Carilyn’s ministry of support for Henry and her ministry in the Mothers’ Union.)

The focus of our ministry is "family life" and it involves sharing Christ’s love by encouraging, strengthening, and supporting marriage and family life.”
New Book Release! "The Peacemaker"

The "Peacemaker Story" is a traditional Dreamtime story owned and theologically interpreted by Pastor George Rosendale OAM of Hopevale FNQ. This production was originally intended to be a resource for our students in leading Religious Education classes for children in their communities. It is now capturing the hearts of both adults and children who have heard it, regardless of their background.

The book is written in words spoken by Pastor George (Teacher of Theology at WBB) and illustrated in traditional style by Aboriginal artist Zane Saunders (Cert. III in Community Organising). It is of sturdy construction so that it can be used in remote communities as well as city schools. Included in the price are worksheet black-line masters for copying.

COMMENTS FROM SCHOOLS THAT TRIALLED THE BOOK...
Illustrations are great!
Even the adults loved listening to the story.
Over 500 students from Grades 1 – 12 listened intently.
The message of peacemaker, kindness, forgiving, loving came through very strongly and made them more aware of the daily little incidents that can grow into serious confrontations...the package is very good.

AND FROM THE CHILDREN....
I like the story because it's about peace.
I like the nice colourful pictures.
I like the story because it shows us how to make peace in the world.
It shows us how to make friends.

ONLY $14.95!
Order from:
Wontulp-Bi-Buya College
PO Box 960N
North Cairns
Qld 4870

Please add $2.00 for postage

The publication of this easily read picture book and worksheets is the first of a series of "Rainbow Theology for Young Australians", promoting Christianity and reconciliation for children through the eyes of Indigenous Australians. It will engender a new vision for Christians from an Indigenous perspective and one that is uniquely Australian. The book has been sponsored by the Anglican Church's Engaging Australia Funding Programme.

Help Wontulp-Bi-Buya College Grow

Residential Blocks for February - May will be held at

Wontulp-Bi-Buya College office is moving to but the PO Box will remain the same for the time being.

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