



## The Australasian Pentecostal Studies Centre

### July – September 2018

#### Pentecostal Charismatic Christianities Conference

In 2017, the APSC established a partnership with the Religion and Society Research Cluster within the School of Social Sciences and Psychology at Western Sydney University to jointly convene the Pentecostal Charismatic Christianities in Oceania Annual Symposium. Uniquely, the symposium provides a forum through which the study of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianities is approached from both historical and anthropological disciplines, thus eliciting a cross-disciplinary dialogue emerging from both secular and Christian worldviews. The second annual symposium was held on 17 August 2018 on the topic of Pentecostal Charismatic Christianities in Oceania, bringing together ten speakers from various academic sub-disciplines. The topics all contributed to the broader exploration of Pentecostal Charismatic Christianities as a powerful cultural force within Australasian and Oceanic communities and their role in reconfiguring spatial, social, political and cultural relationships. The causative influences of PCCs in Oceania were contemplated alongside the overarching cultural, economic and political milieus in which PCCs are embedded.

We were privileged to have Dr Debra McDougall of Melbourne University provide the Keynote Address, which she titled, “Crashing Waves: The transnational force of Pentecostal and Charismatic

Christianity in Oceania and beyond.” Dr McDougall analysed the ways in which the Solomon Islands - an area of Oceania where, she argues, trans-oceanic currents have historically conglomerated and moved forward and outward with increasing force - have been shaped by incoming and outgoing religious currents. With a particular interest in localised religious ecologies and their interaction within a larger network of localities, Dr McDougall investigated both the destructive and unifying forces of these so-called religious ‘waves.’ She argued that while Charismatic movements have “smashed apart” the certainties of communities established upon a single Christian denomination, charismatic revival has also helped formulate connections between villages, provinces and nations, leading to the development of deeper religious pluralism throughout Oceania. McDougall proposed that new forms of worship have forged new directions in the Solomon Islands, and have provided momentum from a general shifting away from formalised Christian tradition – possibly representative of a broader movement away from formal religion completely.

If you would like to read more on our speakers and their topics, please visit the Australasian Pentecostal Studies Centre website, and click on the Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianities in Oceania Symposium tab...  
<https://www.ac.edu.au/research/apsc/symposium>



Dr Debra McDougall presenting *Crashing waves: The transnational force of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Oceania*.



Symposium convenor, Kathleen Openshaw hosting Professor Michael McClymond's session on "Latter-Rain Christianity: An Alternate Narrative of Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements."

Professor Michael McClymond is a professor of Modern Christianity at Saint Louis University



Dr Tanya Riches, Hillsong College, presenting her paper "The Third Day: Syncretism, Heresy or Mediating Australian Realities?"

## Assemblies of God Papua New Guinea celebrates 70 years

Paralleling the 70 year celebrations of Alphacrucis College this year, are the 70 year anniversary celebrations of the Assemblies of God in Papua New Guinea. While the AOG mission field was formally established in 1948, the story really began in 1945 when the AOG conference received an appeal from Pastor Hugh Davidson for missionary involvement in New Guinea. By 1947, the Assemblies of God Australia Executive decided to support Davidson's consecutive yearly appeals and commissioned him to visit the potential mission field. The assignment was to make Christ known to the people of New Guinea - an approach that was born out of Davidson's sincere faith in God and personal conviction of his being called to bring the gospel message to the tribes of the East Sepik region. Davidson gained favour of the administration officers in Port Moresby and the Sepik district, and returned to Australia to call for volunteers who would willingly join him. Don Westbrook, pastor of the Gympie Assembly and a founding member of the AG in Queensland, was one of the first to volunteer. On November 20, 1948, Davidson arrived at Maprik, located in the East Sepik Province of New Guinea, so formally founding the Assemblies of God Australia mission. Westbrook arrived the following morning on the 'Dragon' aircraft with 1,200 lbs of cargo on board to equip the early missionary efforts. This marked the beginning of a new era in PNG's historical narrative, characterising the expansion of the AOG church, a mission-led education and health care systems.

Additionally, other notable developments on the mission field included a mentorship program for the education of local ministers, the establishment of the Maprik Bible School and the development of local PNG ecclesial structures. Such developments culminated in the inaugural (unofficial) AOG PNG Conference in 1962, a step which progressively led to the formal incorporation of the Assemblies of God PNG in 1973. This latter development, characterised by the handing over of all governance and the majority of mission property to the local Church in itself signified the success of the

overall missionary effort and a genuine ownership of the movement by the Papua New Guinean people. Just before the turn of the century, more than nine hundred churches had been founded in Papua New Guinea - a nation with over eight hundred different indigenous groups represented.

In the words of Kevin Hovey, with his wife Glenys who together served on the mission field for 31 years (1968-1999),

*The 70-year story of the growth and development of the Church is an amazing story of faith, dedication, sacrifice and devotion to the task of making disciples of Jesus. It is a story honouring thousands of people (especially Papua New Guineans) who have given everything to build the Church. Current statistics are difficult to find, however there are 1500 - 2000 churches with weekend attendances of at least 500 000.*

This story, narrated predominately from an Assemblies of God Australia missionary angle, was showcased at the Pentecostal Charismatic Christianities in Oceania Annual Symposium in a small exhibition. Displayed objects were sourced from David O'Keefe's recent donation and Glenys and Kevin Hovey's personal collection.



## Donations

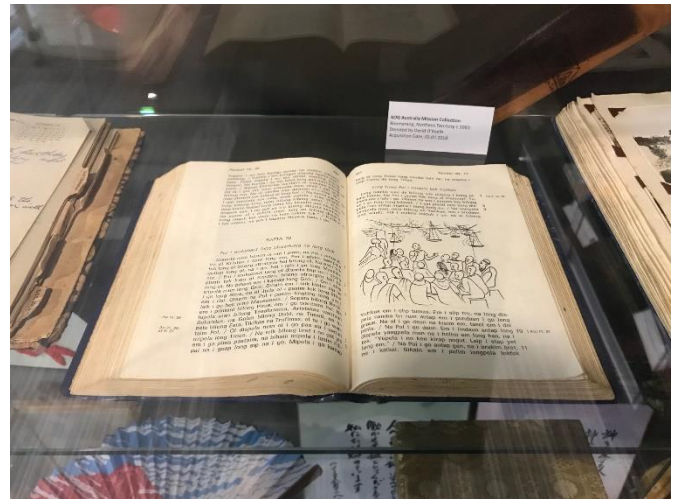
In August, Johanna Syrja – Sano donated a collection of Japanese items belonging to her mother, Mrs Irja Annikki Syrja (nee Nuutinen). Johanna's parents, Antero and Irja Syrja served as missionaries with the Finnish Free Foreign Mission in Japan from 1957 – 1984. Following the footsteps of her parents, after attending the Garden City School of Ministries in Brisbane, Johanna Syria-Sano returned to Japan to undertake long-term

missionary work in Japan, in partnership with the Australian Christian Churches.

Eleven objects from Irja's days as a missionary in Japan were donated to the APSC, including a hand-written framed scripture of 1Thessalonians 5:18 from Mr. Imanaka who became a Christian at the Tuberculosis Hospital in Shiragaki, Shiga; a drawing of Jesus and a Lamb, inscribed in Japanese with "To Teachers Mr & Mrs Syrja: The Lord said, You are the child I love" and a lacquered Urushi Pencil Case, presented to Irja by a faithful friend.

In July, David O'Keefe, made a timely donation of items from his days as a missionary in Papua New Guinea. As mentioned, a selection of these items were showcased as part of the Assemblies of God Papua New Guinea display during the PCC Symposium. His donation included (but was not limited to) several grass skirts from the upper Sepik river region; a 'Bilum' carry bag made by the local women at the Kusambuk Mission station in 1970; a men's bag for carrying the bible, mirror and hair comb; war spears handed over by a school boy at Kusambuk, originally owned by his father; songbooks; and a New Testament bible "Nupela Testamen."

A number of the objects from Irja and David are now on display in the APSC missionary cabinet.



Nupela Testamen (New Testament Bible in New Guinea Pidgin), donated by David O'Keefe on July 2, 2018, c. 1969.



Framed scripture - 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (Left); Drawing of Jesus and Lamb (Right); Urushi Pencil Case (top right), donated by Irja Syrja on August 10, 2018.

*We'd love to see our collection grow! If you have items you'd like to donate please email our archivist [ingrid.ryan@ac.edu.au](mailto:ingrid.ryan@ac.edu.au) or call (02) 8893 4715*