



binbilla

global interaction association of former staff & friends

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...to bring us together,
for mutual support
and encouragement,
and to provide
a context for
maintaining our
engagement in
global mission...

Welcome to this spring edition of *Binbilla*!

THE INAUGURAL BINBILLA NATIONAL CONFERENCE was held at QCCC Brookfield in Brisbane in mid-September. It was great occasion. Enjoy Geoff Holland's report and photographs!

This issue features articles written by two of the most senior and venerated members of our Binbilla family, John Williams and Harry West. With the passing of the years, neither man has lost his passion for mission – nor the ability to communicate with clarity. Barry and Lois Downes' "Family Pilgrimage" is a helpful reminder of the strong and mixed feelings parents have when farewelling close family members for mission service. The "Pastoralia" column provides snippets of news received from former staff and friends of GIA at the recent *Binbilla* conference.

Kindly let us know of any former staff not receiving *Binbilla*. The same applies to *friends* of GIA – people who take a close interest in GIA staff and programs around the world.



ROSALIND GOODEN AND CHRIS PITTENDRIGH
COORDINATORS



We welcome news items for the Pastoralia column. Please send to Rosalind Gooden, 3/1 Ferguson Avenue, Myrtle Bank SA 5064 or rgooden@werple.net.au. General inquiries can be directed to Chris Pittendrigh, 15 Woodlea Street, Doncaster East Vic. 3109 or chris.pittendrigh@newhope.net.au.

Binbilla is available in email format by contacting information@globalinteraction.org.au.

HIM WE PROCLAIM!

JOHN WILLIAMS



*John D Williams AM
"JD" to his friends - is a former distinguished ABMS General Secretary from 1958 to 1983. John resides with his sister, Lesley, at the Templestowe Orchards retirement village in Melbourne*

Geoff Holland and his wife, Frances, served in Papua New Guinea from 1963 to 1972. Geoff has worked part-time in the GIA office in Melbourne as the projects coordinator until 30 November, when he retired.

ON MY FIRST VISIT TO BANGLADESH (then East Pakistan) I went to Ataikola to see the memorial to Ellen Arnold. It is a plain marble pillar set on a white plinth. Inscribed on it, in both Bengali and English, is the text, 'Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life"' followed by, 'Miss Arnold walked this way, taught this truth and lived this life.'

Miss Arnold was our first Australian Baptist missionary. She served in Bangladesh for forty-nine years. To this day, she is venerated by the Bengali church on Ellen Arnold Day, the ninth of July.

We must never forget her words to the folk who were attending her at the time of her death. 'Preach!' she said, 'Tell them to preach'. It was a call of deep concern for the people of Bengal, a call of deep, strong Christian compassion.

Jesus was primarily a preacher and teacher. Mark begins his story of Jesus' ministry, 'After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee proclaiming the good news of God' (Mark 1:14). Mark adds a little later, 'The people were amazed at his teaching because he taught them as one who had authority' (1:22). In Nazareth Jesus quoted Isaiah, 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour' (Luke 4:13 - 19).

What was Jesus preaching about?

He preached about the good news of God. As the story unfolds, we realise that he was showing us God in himself;

'he that hath seen me hath seen the Father'. So when people ask what God is like, the gist of our answers will be, God is like Jesus. Charles Wesley's uncompromising hymn puts it well,

Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!
Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with men to dwell,
Jesus our Immanuel.

God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself. We live by the impossible, some wise men say. Nevertheless, that is our good news.

However, Jesus matched what he said with what he did. He fed the hungry; he healed the sick; he roundly condemned the establishment of his day for their lack of compassion for the needy and their inaction in the face of injustice. Love God, he said, and your neighbour. One of Jesus best known and most loved stories is his answer to the question, 'Who is my neighbour?' Following Jesus means living a life of active concern and help for those in need. As the body without spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead. Jesus' question of Peter is a basic one for us all. 'Do you love me?' And the answer applies to us all, 'Feed my sheep'. (continue page seven)

FUN, MEMORIES & INSPIRATION

BINBILLA NATIONAL CONFERENCE



'WHAT A FANTASTIC WEEK! When are you going to do it again?'

'This was a typical response from the 45 former staff and friends of Global Interaction at the inaugural Binbilla National Conference in Brisbane,' said Chris Pittendrigh, who organised it with his wife Heather. 'People came to the conference during the second week of September from every state and territory except Tasmania and the Northern Territory.'

'The venue was the Baptist conference centre at Brookfield, 20km west of the city in a beautiful wooded setting of small farms and sprawling home gardens – within an equine flu exclusion zone!'

'As the days proceeded we listened to each others stories, yarned for hours at mealtimes and scheduled chat times and received informed updates on the GIA world. At the end of each day various people – in creative ways – guided us in "Prayer for the World"' Chris added.

Betty Helm, who taught in New Guinea as Betty Edmonds, said each day remains "high" with light, begun with worship undergirded by beautiful singing and prayer plus Stan Nickerson's quite marvellous scripture messages.

Stan, the former principal of the Queensland Baptist Theological College, spoke in his conversational style laced with wry humor. The gist of his three practical messages was that our top priority is to live consistently obedient, godly lives as we walk in step with the Spirit, totally forgiven by God.

'We felt we were honored by our GIA leader, Keith Jobberns, and other staff who spoke to us in some depth about the present situation of the people groups to whom GIA is committed,' said Betty. 'So we need not feel we've reached our "use by date". Rather we shared in the present and are aware of the challenges, hopes and dreams of the future.' John Helm felt that being able to get to know so many folk who have been just "names" to him throughout the years, and

are now living, breathing, vibrant people, was very special. He now feels he is not an onlooker but truly belongs.

The friendly staff of Brookfield provided good meals and accommodation, and God gave us pleasantly warm weather. One afternoon, after a challenging bus drive through a tangled maze of narrow streets to St Lucia, then a calming ferry ride, we enjoyed a stroll through South Bank Parklands across the Brisbane River from the city centre.

Les Haydon, who served in Africa for many years with his wife Ruth, said, 'The conference was a great time of fellowship, not just with people from the field where one served, nor from one State, but from all over. It was great to meet Harry West, whose prayer points about Southern Asia we use, and Val Beverley, who sends us a letter every Christmas.'

'The grand overall feeling, however, was of the wonderful privilege we collectively have had to be a significant part of the immense cross-cultural missionary endeavour of the second half of the twentieth century,' added Les.

'We thought the conference was excellent,' said Barbara Arndell. 'The times Seton and I spent overseas were very interesting and exciting, (especially when one looks back and thinks, 'Did we really live there and do that?'). So to get together with others who had also been there was a wonderful time for sharing memories.'

'We look forward to the next Binbilla conference. Anyone who doesn't go to the next doesn't know what they are missing,' Barbara added.

Chris Pittendrigh said the next one would probably be in 2009. This one cost just \$240 each, including all meals and transport.

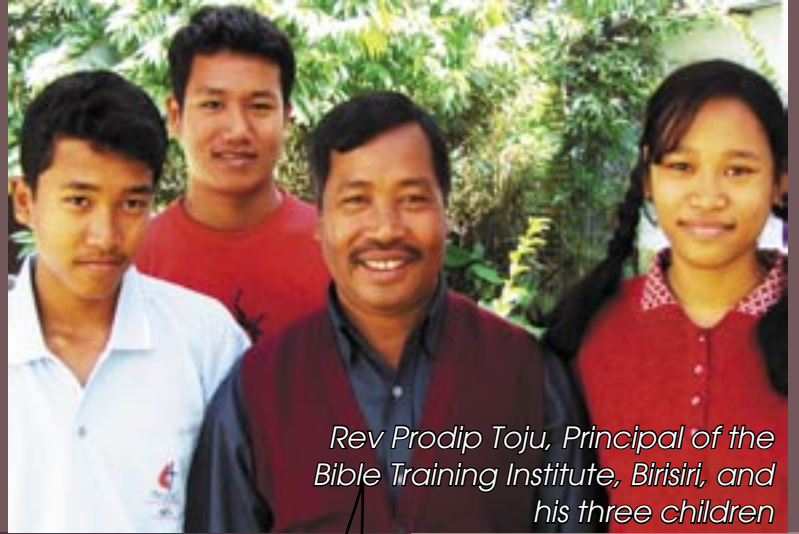
'We'd be happy to go "on trek" to be part of another such gathering,' said Betty Helm.

MY PILGRIMAGE IN MISSION

HARRY WEST



Harry West and his first wife, Edith, served in Bangladesh from 1952 to 1964. Following Edith's death, Harry married Margery Brooks. They live at the Brookfield Retirement Village in Brisbane



Rev Prodig Toju, Principal of the Bible Training Institute, Birsiri, and his three children

THIRTEEN YEARS IN BANGLADESH (1952 – 1964) set me up with an enriching vision which still grows over forty years later. My call to overseas service became clear at the preaching of the Rev John G Ridley. At a convention in Brisbane in 1946 he gave his testimony regarding his tongue being severely injured in the First World War. He promised God the constant use of his tongue in evangelism if God restored him. For me what followed that meeting was five years' training in Brisbane guided by Principal T C Warriner, the Rev Ralph Sayce, the Rev Wilf Mackay and others representing the Queensland Baptist College, the Baptist Union and the Australian Baptist Foreign Mission.

Edith and I had married a year before and, as she had already felt a call to serve overseas, she also studied some subjects in our College. We began our first year overseas in 1952 in Baghpara, Assam, coupled with Bangla Language School and work at the Mt Hermon School in Darjeeling.

The then ABFM policy was to serve five-year terms and for first timers to make no big plans, reactions, comments, suggestions or assumptions about the work until we entered second term. This meant a strong dependence on experienced expatriate staff like Wilf and Gwen Crofts, Neville and Nancy Andersen, Jess Redman, Doug and Gwen Ison, Walter and Norma Schubert, Peter and Win Ewing, Floss English, Flo Horwood, Jean Harry, Edna Hale and Emily Lord, coupled with a bit from some like Stewart Harper and Ian Emmett. It was a quiet joy to be preparing to serve in the land and language of William Carey.

The first year in Assam gave us a widening of vision, and our second year in Comilla opened my eyes to the challenge of the mission preachers' scheme with its inward and stagnating influence. However it was good in due course to find warm-hearted, born-again Bengali folk in our churches. I recall

our missionaries, from both sides of the border, meeting with national leaders in Mymensingh in 1953. I was glad the Rev Benoy Bhusa Sangma (Bilu Babu) asked Edith and me to go to Birsiri to work with the Garo people.

We found it refreshing and challenging to spend the next three years in the then thriving work centred on Birsiri, where I looked after the Garo Baptist Boys' High School and the attached Hostel. These were the days when indigenisation was the "in" word and when our staff sought every opportunity to consult with nationals and to train them for leadership. So we sent Hiten Areng for higher training in education and he returned to become Head Master of the Boys' High School and, later, Subhas Sangma and Philip Khokshi for other leadership tasks.

I was beginning to get the feel of working out in the villages from Birsiri among the hundred churches near and along the northern border of East Pakistan. My language ability improved enough for me to spend another seven years in Pastor and Teacher Training. I began to see the need of a growing Garo Church with ten thousand members to have their lives deepened in the Gospel and to gain the ability to carry this message to others. There were many cross-cultural pitfalls and sometimes a steep learning curve, but the needs of a poor village people moved me greatly, especially in drought, famine, floods and political unrest. I learned a good deal more of what it means to work in a team of men and women with a passion for outreach.

General education among the Garos needed improvement, as did their spiritual depth. This double challenge has always been with me. The warmth of the people and their simplicity made for us many lasting friendships. The time to leave was not easy to face. We returned home for Edith's health and the education of our two daughters, Ruth (18) and Janet (9). Edith



P C Nall Memorial Chapel, Birisri



Students, Garo Girls' High school, Birisri

and I were nearly 41 and it was the end of 1964.

In Australia it was a privilege to be called successively to three pastorates: Moore Park in Brisbane, Dinmore in Ipswich and Cleveland in the Redlands District. Here I learned that the world is our parish, and I still believe with all my heart that the call of God comes just as insistently for work at home as it does for that abroad. The living of a true Christian life, the preaching and teaching of the Gospel, the outreach to the needy, the challenge of cross-cultural ministry, were all confirmed in these twelve years, as was the need for utter surrender in leadership. I continued to love to preach and teach the Word of God. During this time I maintained my contact with Bengali life and language, and I also did some lecturing at the Baptist College.

It was still another stage in this pilgrimage of mission when I had the joy of being Chaplain at Clayfield College in Brisbane for twelve years (1977-88). This was a full-time teaching and pastoral position and it gave me new groundwork in approach to education, plus the understanding of the needs of youth and family life.

When my daughter, Janet, died in 1994, and my wife, Edith, the following year, I was thrown on to a heap of uncertainty about God's leading in mission for the rest of my years. I was then 71. I felt a strong urge to return to Bangladesh to see the work, preach and teach again in the language I loved, and to explore the need of prayer.

This is where the vision came to me of prayer for Bangladesh, as I became daily convinced that it is not personnel, policies, plans and provision of finance which are the greatest needs. It is prayer for power for all who are outreaching, and especially those in my beloved Bangladesh. I thus revisited Bangladesh four times and learned to sense the vital needs of the work

of Christ there and to understand the vast differences. In the GBC I found a widespread need for deepening of the Christian life and I took every opportunity to preach, teach and share the Word and to be available for encouragement. I also received priceless encouragement by meeting many Garo and Bengali friends and their children.

While there I had a totally new experience. I was introduced to the dynamic Symbiosis work being guided by Morris Lee and Walt White, two real visionaries, and their tireless colleague, Graeme Johnson. So I felt urged to circulate a prayer letter for the believers as well as for the traditional church folk there. This had been foreshadowed by fellowship with a wonderful brother in the work, Laurie Skinner. I count friendship with Laurie as most precious and formative. So Prayer info Bangladesh began. It now goes weekly by email to 120 people and by post and hand mail to another 40.

My pilgrimage has led me into another experience with Morris Lee. He is checking a new Muslim Bengali translation of the New Testament. I try to help him with the Greek. We have completed checking Matthew, Mark and John and are part way through Luke. It is most helpful to make comparisons with the original translation by William Carey two centuries earlier!

It is a deeply felt joy for me to be included in the Bangladesh team as prayer supporter and warrior. To be useful in a growing spiritual work like this is a privilege I can never estimate or fulfil. I also find great joy in preaching the Word or leading Bible studies or helping with pastoral visitation and counselling in our Brookfield Village Retirement area.

PERSONALIA

KEEPING EACH OTHER INFORMED & IN CONTACT

RUTH CHARLES (Papua) is still reflecting with a great deal of pleasure on her return visit to Papua (Indonesia) last October – together with her daughters Bronwyn and Margaret – for the fiftieth anniversary of the work in the North Baliem valley. ‘As I thought of Noel and the three years (1958 – 1961) I felt affirmed in the small part we had played’.

NEVILLE KIRKWOOD (Assam, India) recently settled into a retirement resort at North Lakes near Brisbane. He is kept busy as a member of the board of the Academy for Chaplaincy and Community Ministries, lecturing and writing in areas such as multiculturalism and religion, and pastoral care. In retirement nine of his books have been published – and there are more to come!

GWENDY RIDDEN (Assam, PNG, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi) is working full-time at the Maranatha Christian College in WA, which is associated with the Rockingham Baptist Church. Gwendy is a Teacher’s Assistant. Her main work is with children with special needs – for which Gwendy is undertaking formal training. She is also involved in various activities at Melville Baptist and finds time to return to Africa each year for volunteer ministry.

VAL BEVERLY (Bangladesh) has a long association with the beautiful and thriving town of Coffs Harbour in northern NSW. It is now her permanent home and she is engaged in ministries with the Coffs Harbour Baptist Church. Since returning from service in Bangladesh in 1990, Val has been able to re-visit the Garo Baptist community at Birisiri and other places for a ministry of Bible teaching and encouragement, particularly among women.

JUNE BOOTH (West Timor, Indonesia) is living on her own in a townhouse ‘a few minutes from the Broadwater’ on the Queensland Gold Coast. June attends the Southport Baptist Church where she has several responsibilities as the Missions Coordinator.

GWEN AND LES CLARKE (QLD) claim to be in their ‘twilight years’; but a hectic schedule of activities at Moore Park Baptist Church, Indooroopilly suggest otherwise! Gwen is the Mission Secretary and Les is the GIA used-stamp agent. The Clarkes have three married daughters, ten grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Gwen and Les have had a recent trip to the ‘Top End (including Darwin to Broome by coach), and a couple of plane trips’.

JOHN AND BETTY HELM (Betty PNG, Bangladesh and Thailand) have made their home (in retirement) at Point Clare on the NSW Central Coast. They write, ‘We have been involved in leading retreats (especially Baptist Youth Pastors) for the past five years’. John’s special contribution is in the area of ‘spiritual companionship’. Lately the Helms

have been ‘filling in as chaplains to Baptist World Aid Australia’.

DAVID AND ALISON GROVES (Papua) are now in ‘retirement’ following the recent completion of a pastoral ministry assignment at Ingleside (2005 – 2007). ‘This has allowed more time’, writes David, ‘to enjoy building for our three children, Belinda, Tim and Elizabeth – and others’. Alison particularly enjoys caring for their nine grandchildren.

BERYL KIRKWOOD (Assam, India) still keeps busy with teaching at U3A, mission activities at her local church and Baptist Women’s Missionary Union. She also finds time to catch up with her two daughters and their families in Brisbane.

BARBARA AND SETON ARNDELL (PNG) are happy to be classified as “grey nomads”. Last year they caravanned around Australia; this year their travel embraced the Asian Baptist Federation Congress in Chiang Mai, Thailand, the Baptist Today conference in Canberra and the Binbilla National Conference in Brisbane. In quieter moments Barbara is sorting slides from PNG days and printing some. She is also compiling scrapbooks for each of her three daughters as a reminder of their childhood in PNG. Seton’s pursuits include writing the history of the Gosford church in readiness for the forthcoming 75th anniversary.

When **ARTHUR AND LOIS NEWNHAM’S** grandson, Paul, and his wife, Keren, take up an overseas posting with GIA next year, Paul will be the fourth successive generation of Newnhams to be involved in overseas cross-cultural mission! Arthur’s parents were missionaries in PNG, Arthur and Lois served with GIA in Bangladesh and their son, Bruce, and his wife, Karen, have served with GIA in Bangladesh, Malawi, China and Kazakhstan.

For the past three years **SALLY BURTON** (PNG) has been living and working in Canberra where she is the Integration Pastor at Belconnen Baptist Church. Her role has recently been extended for a further two years. Sally says ‘Canberra provides great places for walking and I try to be diligent in getting exercise. The garden is also a special interest’.

LINDSAY AND MERYL SMITH (PNG) report that, ‘Retiring after 23 years of continual home ministry, especially after a wonderful farewell at the last church we pastored (Sydenham Vic) left us with a feeling of “lostness”’. They are now back at Kew, the church of their youth, and involved in the pastoral care of seniors. Lindsay is also involved in Police chaplaincy, which included a recent stint as Acting Senior Chaplain.

JOHN WILLIAMS STORY CONTINUES (from page two)

NOLA CRAWFORD (PNG) is living on the Gold Coast (Qld) and busily engaged in Bible Study Fellowship, many hobbies and travel. Nola retains a strong interest in education in PNG and 'a belief in what God can and will do there'.

DIANNE OLSEN (PNG) is working for Queensland Baptist Care in the Accounts Department. She lives with her mother in Kallangur and attends the North Pine Baptist Church where she is the coordinator of the Mission Committee and a teacher in the Kidzone program.

JOAN KALE (Pretty/PNG) will be shortly on her way to Cambodia for five months to work with CARE in a bilingual project. Joan lives in Townsville and, amongst other things, teaches at the James Cook University.

GEORGE AND MARGARET STUBBS (Assam and Zambia) are in early retirement, but still involved in prison chaplaincy. They are also engaged in an interim pastoral role at Churchill Baptist Church, Ipswich. George is an 'avid supporter' of the ARL Bulldogs and a regular walker!

KATH KINGSTON (Central Australia) for the past three years was the supervisor of Willara House, a student hostel attached to the City Baptist Tabernacle in Brisbane. Kath is now living 'in a house on a small block in a convenient location in a mid suburb in Brisbane'. She has recently been in the Northern Territory doing health checks for the Australian government at Santa Teresa.

Notwithstanding retirement five years ago, **LES AND RUTH HAYDON** (Zambia) are very involved in ministry at Holdfast Baptist Church, Somerton (SA). Les is an elder, Sunday Service Coordinator, a small group leader and preacher (monthly) at two aged people's homes. He also has time for fishing and golf, digital photography and singing. Ruth is a member of the Congregational Care Team and, as ever, uses her gift of hospitality for encouragement and witness. Ruth's leisure activities include fishing and tennis.

JIM AND HELEN THOMSON (PNG) 'thoroughly enjoyed' their attendance at the recent Binbilla National Conference. Jim finds a great deal of fulfilment as the GIA advocate in South Australia for the Ethnic Thai people group, and he gains pleasure from woodturning and gardening. Helen – like Jim – is involved in ministry at Cheltenham Baptist Church. Gardening is also one of Helen's interests – not to mention the seven grandchildren!

TREVOR AND JOAN ROSS (PNG) maintain a lively engagement at the Kwana Baptist Church. Joan is the Mission Coordinator and Trevor audits the church finances. Joan's other interests include music, knitting, gardening – and being Grandma. Trevor enjoys gardening and supporting Joan in her church role. He also has time for kayaking, business coaching and being Grandad.

There are problems. Works of love are often interpreted as bribery, or attempts to win people to Christianity by the good things we do for them. Or, in some areas, kindness is seen as the giver storing up merit for oneself. They say that since we come from wealthy countries, it is only right that we share with the poor. What merit is there in our generosity? When Jesus fed the five thousand, the crowds came to him and he commented, 'I am telling you the truth, you are looking for me because you ate the bread and had all you wanted, not because you understood what I was saying. Do not work for the food that goes bad, work for the food that lasts for eternal life which the Son of Man will give you' (John 6: 26 – 27a).

But we live in a hungry world. There must be no dodging of our responsibility.

When the church of Jesus
shuts its outer door
lest the roar of traffic
drown the voice of prayer;
may our prayers, Lord, make us
ten times more aware
that the world we banish
is our Christian care. *F Pratt Green*

Just before he retired as General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, Denton Lotz quoted two stories in the Baptist World. Here they are. Think about them.

D T Niles, the great Methodist theologian of Sri Lanka was preaching in India. Indian intellectuals confronted him and asked, 'Are you greater than Gandhi?' D T Niles answered emphatically, 'Of course not!' 'Do you love more than Gandhi?' Again the answer was, 'No! Gandhi was a greater man than I'. Then the Indian scholars asked, 'Well, what do you as a Christian have to tell Gandhi?' D T Niles answered simply, 'I have the same message and question for him as for everyone else: 'What have you done about what God has done for you in Jesus Christ?'

In 1928 at the Jerusalem Mission Conference, there was already confusion and much talk about secularism. Archbishop William Temple was asked to write the message of the conference. Bishop Neill tells the story that all night Temple slept in a little tent and with a flashlight wrote the message that began simply, 'Our message is Jesus Christ.' That is indeed our message.

Preach! Tell them to preach.

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GLOBAL INTERACTION

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A FAMILY PILGRIMAGE BARRY & LOIS DOWNES



Barry and Lois Downes served with GIA in Aboriginal work in Queensland and the Northern Territory from 1984 to 2004

RECENTLY IT WAS OUR PRIVILEGE, together with our immediate family, to be present – in Rockhampton, Queensland – for the Ordination of our eldest son, Chris, and the Commissioning of Chris and his wife, Bron, for missionary service. It was an awesome occasion to be in the presence of so many people who have been a part of our own lives, including indigenous Australians, of whom some have been significant in Chris' life – as an "uncle", "aunty", baby sitter and nanny. It was humbling. These people, when we were living in a cross-cultural context, modeled for our family the love of God. Their input into Chris' life is massive. Cross-cultural mission ministry is a priceless privilege.

As we watched the proceedings, we realised all of us were on a journey; and the steps being taken that day were part of that journey. We are pilgrims – or nomads – excited at what is happening before us; but also hurting inwardly regarding its outworking. Our kids are given to us to love and nurture, but not to own or control.

The actual words used in the Commissioning Service crystallised what has happened, is happening and, by the grace of God, is yet to happen. Chris and Bron's responses brought it home again. Our minds wander back some forty years to a different setting, but the same commitment. Our

response was, God is good and we are a privileged family. Chris would say, "Go God!"

Our overwhelming sense was we are not alone; we are part of the wider church family. Our kids and grandkids are on an adventure of a lifetime with God, in team with fellow Baptists. All this is good, because it is an answer to God's call on their lives. It makes letting go easier, but not easy. That is OK. We remembered what Chris said to us when we were asked to leave ministry in Katherine and go to Mount Isa: "Dad, if it is right for you and Mum, it will be right for us boys, because God doesn't have to take from one to give to another. He is bigger than that."

To a "bigger than that" God we commend our son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren – and we will trust him with them.