Welcome to the April May edition of The Visionary. I like to begin each Newsletter with a different blessing. Now I am sure that there will be at least one will declare “This is under the Law!” It is not relevant to me today. Really? I remind you that the principles of blessing remain eternal and these blessings are yours, and more, for the new Covenant which replaced the old one is even better, how good can it be?

"Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God: "Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country. "Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. "Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. "Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. "The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways. "The LORD will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you. "The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways. Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you. And the LORD will grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground, in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you. The LORD will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them. (Deuteronomy 28:1-14)

Ken Chant

A REAL CHURCH

I came across a pamphlet recently, which dealt with house churches, and it made this claim: “Where two or more people meet together in the name of Christ, there is a church” (referring to Matthew 18:20).

But is that really so?

No doubt there is a vital place for small fellowships of Christians who convene in houses, offices, and the like, and equally surely some of those fellowships may meet the requirements of a church. No doubt, too, Christ is present with them, just as he promised. But in the end, a mere assembly of Christians does not make a church. Before any company of believers, even when Christ is among them, can rightly call itself a “church” (in the biblical meaning of the word), several other things must be present, such as –

Union

To create a recognisable church, the first essential is for a group of Christians to unite themselves formally as a worshipping body. That implies a stated time and place of assembly, a certain degree of structure and order, and an agreed set of principles and practices. An informal fellowship of Christians, whether few or many, does not meet that requirement (cp. He 10:23-25; and 1 Co 14:26-33,40).
Preaching

A fellowship of Christians does not become a church unless that fellowship exists primarily as a forum in which the preaching of the Word of God has pre-eminence. A church that gives itself only to prayer and praise, that considers fellowship or even worship to be its primary task, that minimises the preaching office, or that values debate and dialogue above proclamation, has fallen away from its God-given identity.

Christians who come together in formal union, to create a church, should do so with the primary aim of promoting in every way possible the preaching of the Word of God. Authority in the church stems from the Word of God, especially when it is preached. If preaching decays, then authority will fail with it.

Sacraments

The sacraments of baptism and holy communion are an integral part of the life of every local church. No true church can exist without at least those two sacraments. Have you ever realised that there are few things Christ commanded his church to do as a church? He gave numerous instructions to his disciples individually; but to the whole church, acting as the church, he gave few instructions. Probably the most important are: preach the word, heal the sick, baptise those who believe, and observe the eucharist (Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15; Lu 9:1-6; 10:1,9; 1 Co 11:23-26; Ja 5:14-15). Virtually all that he said to the church is comprehended in those four; and of them the greatest is the first: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation.”

Did You Know?

We have a promotion, but we keep forgetting to tell you about it. We want you to help us to grow the colleges so if as a student, introduce someone to Vision Colleges and they enrol with us we will give you your next subject complimentary. That is to say that your next subject is free.

All you have to do is tell someone about Vision, show them your work and tell them about us. When they enrol they must tell us your name, (how else could we know) advise us that you have told them about the colleges and as a result they have enrolled. We will get in touch with you to confirm and advise you that your next subject is complimentary for enrolling someone into the course.

It is possible that you could do an entire course without paying a cent above your initial fee!

Vision Alumni

We have had a great response to our initial mail-out for the Alumni and there are students from around the world who are interested in joining the Alumni. However we do need a minimum number of members to make a start and for this reason we have not taken any funds from anyone for the Alumni Membership.

There is a cost at this time of $25.00 as the introductory fee but it will increase at the end of May, we have increased the time for early bird enrolment.

You do not have to be a graduate of Vision Colleges, the Alumni is open to all students no matter where you are or what you are doing, if you are a new student or an older retired graduate you are welcome to join and we would like to find a way to utilise your experiences and ministry to grow the Colleges and make a positive difference to each other.

We want to make this connection helpful and real to all and, of course, in the process help us to make Vision Colleges even better.

One of the purposes of the Vision Alumni is to link students to each other and create a means whereby ministries can be strengthened by ministries. It becomes a ministry network, that is to say a resource for every student and the College itself.

What should you do now? Go to the website https://www.visioncolleges.com select Study Options and you will see Vision Colleges Alumni at the bottom of the menu, select that option, complete the form and you can enrol, there is a small fee and you can select how you will make your payment.

The direct link: https://internetbiblecollege.info/vision-colleges-alumni/
**TRIGGER THOUGHTS**

“Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act courageously, be strong” (1 Co 16:13)

Trigger thoughts are temporary thoughts that begin a flood of other thoughts which can be negative and detrimental to us. They can hold up our potential to develop, take away our confidence, and destroy our joy.

They are dangerous and need to be replaced, otherwise they act as self-fulfilling prophecies. If we continue thinking these thoughts, then our subconscious mind will seek to bring about the fulfillment of them.

What leads you to judge and evaluate people, events and yourself? Why do you notice things in others? It is because you also have these traits. When you point your finger at another person, remember there are three fingers pointing back at you!

What are the situations that hurt, embarrass, scare or discourage you. Ask the Lord to show you the reason behind these negatives in your life. It is the truth that sets us free from the bondages of the past. Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (Jn 8:31-32). Indeed, just knowing why these things disturb us is enough to set us free through God’s power.

**CHANGING YOUR NEGATIVE MESSAGES**

Negative words diminish confidence, positive words increase confidence! Replace the negative trigger thoughts that come into your mind with positive words that come from God. You will find this exercise gets easier as you learn more and more positive scriptures.

Avoid comparing yourself to others – this is unfair! Look ahead to avoid trigger thoughts that lead to brooding over the past. When do they attack you? In what circumstances are they likely to arise? Is it during the night when you find it hard to sleep? Learn scriptures to meditate on, thus blocking out the thoughts that are troubling you.

Recognizing the lies and distortions of our trigger thoughts takes away all their power. Once you have overcome the tendency to think trigger thoughts and they no longer arise in your mind, then the unwanted emotions associated with them will also be a thing of the past.

Knowing the truth sets you free!

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**Book of the Month - The World’s Greatest Story**

The Worlds Greatest Story is a study on the history of the church for the first 1000 years

**It brings strength:** how terrible, how insuperable, how strong, were the enemies the first Christians faced as they set themselves to fulfil the Great Commission. Yet they overcame even the most awful barriers until Christianity finally became the only lawful religion in the Roman Empire. Seeing how the church overcame impossible obstacles in previous centuries greatly encourages us to believe that it will overcome those of our time.

**It creates sympathy:** knowing the facts of the past, we can better understand the problems confronting some churches in the present, which may make us a little less critical of others, and more aware of our own shortcomings.

**It imposes responsibility:** gazing at the heroism, seeing the tears and toil, trembling before the bloodshed and anguish of those who preceded us, and knowing the debt we owe them, should make us more careful to pass on a good inheritance to those who will follow on our steps.

**It brings instruction:** the successes and failures of the past provide examples for our guidance today. We can learn from our forefathers. We are the beneficiaries of their triumphs; we bear the burden of their defeats. Their story shows us how to serve God better, and how to crush Satan utterly. But if you don't know, how can you learn?
Any reader of these pages may be well pleased if the end result proves to be a deeper sympathy for other Christians, and for the historical processes that have brought each of us to our present place. The Early Church (30 - 500 A.D.). At the end of the first century, the prospects of Christianity becoming the first worldwide religion, of dramatically changing human life and culture, and of transforming the lives of more individuals than any other religion in history, seemed remote. The church had to overcome apparently insuperable obstacles.

**Student Honour Roll**

During the months of February and March we issued 16 awards or transcripts. These awards range from an *Award in Biblical Studies* (2) for successfully completing five subjects; *Certificate in Biblical Studies* (1); For the Accredited awards in Christian Ministry and Theology we have issued *Statements of Attainment* (2), *Certificate III* (5) *Certificate IV* (3) *Certificate IV emphasis in Chaplaincy* (1) *Certificate IV emphasis in Counselling* (1) *Diploma Emphasis in Counselling*.

We heartily congratulate each and every one, and encourage every student to continue in study, continue to be equipped, and continue to know the blessing of the word and its building, redeeming, cleansing power in our lives. Well done one and all; we appreciate you and your commitment to the study of the Word. We pray the Lord will use you and release you into the ministry within the Kingdom of God.

- **Paul Chellaian** - Award in Biblical Studies - Cranbourne West VIC
- **Jason Vandenber** - Award in Biblical Studies - West Lakes SA
- **Sarah Jindo** - Certificate in Biblical Studies - Wetherill Park NSW
- **Alyse Anderson** - Statement of Attainment Dip. Christian Min. & Theo. - Geraldton WA
- **Valma Ryan** - Statement of Attainment Cert. IV Christian Min & Theo - Coffs Harbour NSW
- **Mei Hall** - Cert. III Christian Ministry and Theology - Cranbourne West VIC
- **Rejoyce Elia** - Cert. III Christian Ministry and Theology - Cranbourne VIC
- **Ben Drew** - Cert. III Christian Ministry and Theology - Caboolture QLD
- **David Collins** - Cert. III Christian Ministry and Theology - Cranebrook NSW
- **Werner Peens** - Cert. III in Christian Ministry and Theology - Serpentine WA
- **Grant Guichard** - Cert. IV Christian Ministry and Theology - Cranbourne West VIC
- **Kenneth Gobah** - Cert. IV Christian Ministry and Theology - Clyde North VIC
- **Mary Fernando** - Cert. IV Christian Ministry and Theology - Cranbourne West VIC
- **Lindsay Crawford** - Cert. IV Christian Ministry and Theology (Chaplaincy) - Geraldton WA
- **David Collins** - Cert. IV Christian Ministry and Theology (Counselling) - Cranebrook NSW
- **David Collins** - Dip. Christian Ministry and Theology (Chaplaincy) - Cranebrook NSW

**Vision Colleges Present State is GOOD**

During the month of February we sent out 33 subjects, not bad for the beginning of the year that is more than a subject a day, in March we sent out 85 subjects, this includes materials to our resource centres. Each subject represents a student. Our material is now going out to students in English, Tamil and Arabic. The colleges have a good and healthy start; and it is a mix of continuing, re-enrolling and new students.

We are enrolling at least 1 new student each week, and up to four students a week across our range of study options. It is an interesting process. Students can take as much as six months from the time of the first inquiry to the time they actually enrol. Some enrol very quickly and many enter into a lengthy dialogue with us to find out who and what we are and thoroughly check us out. I welcome the process it is very healthy.

We have an increasing number of students coming to us from other colleges and there are four major factors in these decisions, 1. Our flexibility of study options, 2. Our flexible fee structure and ability to pay as you go; 3. Our flexible time frame, 4. Sadly many of the accredited colleges and universities no longer present the Bible as God’s word but in many cases as a myth, and in some cases the lecturers, good presenters they may be, do not believe the bible and in some cases are not Christians – against this students are coming to Vision Colleges.

I realise that the last point this may be a result of their Government funding, legislative requirements and anti-discrimination requirements, but Vision Colleges will never go down that path.
Seniors

We have an interesting body of seniors who are studying and others who are seeking to study. Our oldest student at this time is an 84 year old gentleman studying his Bachelors, “just to keep my mind active”.

I cannot imagine a better way to stave off the risk of age related memory issues than the study of the word of God, after all just to study God’s Word is regenerative in itself.

University studies and clinical trial have demonstrated that study in senior years has a truly beneficial effect in preventing or warding off age related memory problems and even Alzheimers disease, below is just one link to support this statement. https://www.helpguide.org/articles/alzheimers-dementia-aging/preventing-alzheimers-disease.htm/

Besides this, in my view seniors are the most under-utilised body of believers. These men and women have time on their hands, resources and many willing to serve the Lord in their later years and often have a powerful testimony yet are “put out to pasture, ignored and forgotten as has beens”.

It may well be true that many are not great students of the word for in their younger years they committed their time and effort to raising their family, they were the breadwinners in a more difficult time.

I believe we should, must... reach out to them and release the potential of our senior citizens. I believe it to the point that we have a discounted fee for them.

So if you are, or know of someone who is a senior citizen who may like to study with us put us in touch with them or get them to call us as we will do our part as best we can to reach out to these men and women of God and help to train them for the Kingdom.

Missions

In our last newsletter I stated that I would like to see at least 2 new mission fields open this year. Already we have an new invitation to the Philippines with Rhogene S. Sagayoc, of the NEXT Generation Christian Fellowship in Malaybalay, Bukidnon. I will be spending a week with him with his church to establish the college and minister for him. I am assured I will be very busy, as indeed I need to be.

We have interest from New Zealand with a church that is looking at starting up the colleges, several years ago they made inquiries and they are reconsidering the situation now with some keen interest in the College options.

From the USA we have inquiries on a daily basis, however that does not seem to be fruitful but we will see what happens and from the African continent there are many requests but mostly are willing to run a college if we will underwrite the costs. It is much the same in India, there is plenty of interest if we will pay them.

Our position on Missions Colleges is that we will provide the curriculum in electronic form, we will do the marking and issue the awards but we do not provide money. We are firmly committed to the idea that the student should pay their way, we take into account the national financial situation and for such countries we will charge only $1.00 per subject per student. It is my strong conviction that we both need to be aware of the financial problems that students face in their situation, but at the same time they have to provide some measure of income as a practical faith exercise. It may seem an odd position for us to take, but, if the student does not have sufficient faith to believe and trust God for their fees while in college, how can they possibly cope on the mission-field?

Where in the world will we find ourselves next? In May Rosalind and I will be in the UK so I hope to be able to start something with my good friend in Oxford or somewhere in the UK.

General Election

By the time you get this Newsletter the electioneering will be well underway and we may even know the result before our next newsletter. It is not our place to tell you or try to influence you with any particular party or vote but I do want to encourage you to put aside your feelings and ideas and actually pray about it. This election, like all is important. The promises of the parties can only be taken on face value – far too much depends on what happens in the near and medium future, events over which they have no control. But God does know, in fact we should be asking him who to vote for if we want to have a government that is willing to stand for Christian values. So please, take the time to pray about your candidate, vote for the man the Holy Spirit lay’s on your heart and trust that God can deal with the issues for us if we honour Him first.
I came across this poem by an anonymous author who put the Christ-centred structure of the Bible in poetic form:

I find my Lord in the Bible
Wherever I chance to look,
He is the theme of the Bible
The centre and heart of the Book;
He is the Rose of Sharon,
He is the Lily fair,
Wherever I open my Bible
The Lord of the Book is there.

He, at the Books beginning,
Gave to the earth its form,
He is the Ark of shelter
Bearing the brunt of the storm,
The Burning Bush of the desert,
The budding of Aaron's Rod,
Wherever I look in the Bible
I see the Son of God.

The Ram upon Mt. Moriah,
The Ladder from earth to sky,
The Scarlet Cord in the window,
And the Serpent lifted high,
The Smitten Rock in the desert,
The Shepherd with staff and crook,
The face of my Lord I discover
Wherever I open the Book.

He is the Seed of the Women,
The Saviour Virgin-born;
He is the Son of David,
Whom men rejected with scorn,
His garments of grace and beauty
The stately Aaron deck,
Yet he is a priest forever,
For He is Melchizedek.

Lord of eternal glory
Whom John, the Apostle saw;
Light of the golden city,
Lamb without spot or flaw,
Bridegroom coming at midnight,
For whom the virgins look.
Wherever I open my Bible,
I find my Lord in the Book.

The board members are collectively the board of Vision International Colleges Inc. Vision Christian Colleges and the Internet Bible College.

We do pray for the richest of God’s great blessing to Barry and Vanessa Chant, they have been an invaluable source of wisdom to the colleges in the years in which they were active and participated in our seminar on same sex marriage.

To the three new members we welcome them and look forward eagerly to the input they bring, Michelle with a great range of Vocational education experience that includes experience in the Christian Ministry and Theology program.

Shane and Fiona bring a great wealth of input from a business and ministry perspective. Shane brings experience as a successful businessman and pastor.

Current Board Members

- Rev. Dr. Ken Chant, (Chairman)
- Dr. Alison Chant
- Rev Dr Dennis Plant (CEO)
- Pastor Rosalind Plant
- Rev Errol Stevenson (Finances)
- Steven Hart (Production)
- Elizabeth Plant (Accounting)
- Kristine Shead
- Sharon Jones
- Kristen Jones

Two Members have retired

- Rev. Dr. Barry Chant (Retired)
- Dr. Vanessa Chant (Retired)

Three new Members

- Michelle Lee
- Rev. Shane Conlon
- Fiona Conlon

The Annual General Meeting for Vision Colleges was held on Saturday 6th of April 2019 at the offices of Vision Colleges, 3/10 Redfern Rd, Minto, NSW 2560.
Honouring the staff

Jackie Muleya

Jackie has been with us now for a year, she came to replace, in some measure, Trish Hart who had been our very faithful Registrar but due to ill health had to retire.

Jackie comes from Lesotho, South Africa and is married to Goodson and they have three children. A girl Palesa 21 years at Western Sydney University and two boys Micheal 19 years in year 12 and Enoch 13 years in year 9.

Since she has been with us Jackie has proven to be a very gifted administrator in particular with the Vision International College program. Her role is primarily looking after the Database and that is no small feat. We use the VeTtrack system and it has to keep pace with the ever-changing requirements of various government bodies such as ASQA and NVCER and she is well on top of the program.

Jackie is the friendly African voice who is so efficient and has become a vital member of the college staff, cheerful, helpful efficient and most important with a great sense of humour and a positive outlook.

Outside of Vision Jackie is a busy woman as she also:

- Helps to improve the lives of disadvantaged individuals and groups by facilitating change and providing the means for self-help within their community setting
- Links new arrivals (refugees and asylum seekers) to their appropriate communities and provides assistance to individuals and group with special needs such as transport (Ute), food parcels, Furniture, spiritual and emotional support and other basic needs
- She spends a lot of time helping women from a variety of African and communities, going out of her way to support them in their everyday lives, equipping and empowering their numerous responsibilities as they care, love and be there for their families and the communities they are part of. Together Jackie and the Women try to come up with an idea of what it looks like to be an African woman in the Australian context with all the cultural, societal and religious pressures factored in.

Korn Korner

Taking Advantage

Jesus, Moses, and an old man go golfing. The first one to tee off is Moses. He smashes the ball and it is heading right for the water hazard before the green. Moses raises his club, the water parts, and the ball makes it to the green. Jesus gets up to swing, cranks it out, and it is headed for the water hazard. Jesus closes his eyes and prays. The ball skips across the water and lands on the green two feet from the hole. The old man's turn comes and he drives the ball. The ball looks like it is going to drop directly into the water. A fish jumps from the water hazard swallowing the ball, as an eagle drops from the sky, grabbing the fish. As the eagle flies over the green, a bolt of lightning strikes the eagle, making it drop the fish. As the fish hits the green, it spits out the ball and the ball falls into the hole, making a hole in one. Jesus looks at Moses and says, "I really think I'm leaving Dad at home next time!"

Not Me!

During an impassioned sermon about death and final judgement, the pastor said forcefully, "Each member of this church is going to die and face judgement." Glancing down at the front pew, he noticed a man with a big smile on his face. The minister repeated his point louder. "Each member of this church is going to die and face judgement!" The man nodded and smiled even more. This really got the preacher wound up. He pounded the pulpit emphatically when he came to the ultimatum: "Each member of this church is going to die and face judgement!!!" Though everyone else in the congregation was looking somber, the man in front continued to smile. Finally the preacher stepped off the platform, stood in front of the man and shouted, "I said each member of this church is going to die!" The man grinned from ear to ear.

After the service was over, the preacher made a beeline for the man. "I don't get it," the preacher said in frustration. "Whenever I said, 'Each member of this church is going to die,' your smile got bigger. Why?" "I'm not a member of this church," the man replied.
The Last Word

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NKJV)

A great deal is made of the instructions to us in these two verses, as it should be. The instructions, indeed commands, to study the word of God, to properly understand what it is saying is vital to the welfare of the individual Christian and therefore the Church locally, denominationally and of course globally.

On the strength of this verse: Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12) an assumption is drawn that Timothy was a young man, however, a little research shows us that in fact Timothy was probably in his mid to late 40’s. Youth? Within the context he was probably younger than some of the elders of the members of the Church but no youth. He was new to the congregation – a Johnny come lately – if you will, but no youth. As for being a Christian he was raised as a Christian by his mother and grandmother (1 Tim 1:5), he had been with Paul for a number of years, he was taught and mentored, experienced ministry at its best and worst, had come to know the Word of God as the guiding principles of his life.

It is to this man that Paul writes study to prove yourself a workman who will not be ashamed. Timothy already knew the word but Paul, a man highly educated in the Word and life, knows that continued study is required indeed essential.

We are living in an age of instant communication. The advent of the computer, the internet and the wonderful array of resources available to us is nothing short of incredible.

Research is so much easier today than ever before and time spent searching the scriptures to find the true context, reference, meaning and so forth can be reduced from hours to minutes – from a purely technical perspective.

From Youtube, Google, Facebook, Twitter and the many many internet sites and such like there is a plethora of information not all good, not all bad and some are mediocre

On one hand there are staggering wonderfully resources that can enrich and enlighten us, bringing us to a wonderful understanding and revelation in God’s word and God Himself. On the other hand some materials can be dreadful as we also have equal access so some of the worst possible material that can take the ill-informed down a path of mistakes, error, dreadful misunderstanding, even to apostasy.

For all of this the risk of error is clearly greater than it has ever been. It is not for the lack of information that we face this risk, but in this age of instant information we can all too easily accept that which is presented as fact, or correct, or error without taking the time to find out for ourselves.

It is the role of the Church and the preacher to preach and teach and present the word. But it is the responsibility of every Christian, without exception to study, to learn and understand so we can present the Word of God and the life of the spirit effectively and appropriately.

The scripture does not say study to get a Certificate. It does not say study to get a Diploma. No. It says study to show yourself approved unto God a work man or woman who cannot be put to shame by ignorant or unlearned presentation. (Plant’s paraphrase)

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1 See also Study: Heb. 4:11; 2Pe. 1:10, 2Pe. 1:15, 2Pe. 3:14 Approved: Act. 2:22; Rom. 14:18, Rom. 16:10; 2Co. 5:9, 2Co. 10:18; Gal. 1:10; 1Th. 2:4
Rightly Mat. 13:52; Mar. 4:33; Luk. 12:42; Joh. 21:15-17; Ac., 20:27; 1Co. 2:6, 1Co. 3:1-2; 2Co. 4:2; 1Th. 5:14; Heb. 5:11-14