



REDEEMER BAPTIST SCHOOL

Annual Service of Worship 2017

The Principal's Address

Conserving &
Cultivating Virtue

The Hub Auditorium
Hillsong Convention Centre
Monday, December 4th, 2017



REDEEMER BAPTIST SCHOOL

incorporating

The Hills Regional Skills Centre



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Conserving & Cultivating Virtue

The School as a Covenant Community

Hillsong Convention Centre
1–5 Solent Circuit, Baulkham Hills
Monday, December 4th, 2017

“Cicero remarked ‘To know nothing of what happened before you were born is to remain forever a child.’ Our schools and universities are at risk of impoverishing an entire generation of young people, and in turn all of Australian society, by denying young people the opportunity to learn about the enduring intellectual, cultural, and political heritage of Western Civilisation.”

—Dr Bella d’Abrera, *The Rise of Identity Politics*, October 2017

“Far too often we write off a backward child as hopeless, a clumsy animal as worthless, a worn-out field as beyond restoration. This we do largely out of our own lack of willingness to take the time and spend the effort to prove ourselves wrong: to prove that the difficult boy can become a fine man, that an animal can respond to training, that the field can regain its fertility.”

—Dwight Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 1981

“Being able to help students find and negotiate the joy, wonder, happiness, and pain in the everydayness of life is an increasingly important quality in today’s insecurities, with the mounting pressure of increased demands for efficiency. Learning the joy of life can be crucial for many learners in order to avoid or survive the darker depths of life.”

—Professor Kaarina Määttä, *Pedagogical Love and Good Teacherhood*, 2011

“The guardrails have disappeared, and the world risks careering off a cliff, but we are so captured by the lights and motion of modern life that we don’t recognise the danger. The forces of dissolution from popular culture are too great for individuals or families to resist on their own. We need to embed ourselves in stable communities of faith.”

—Rod Dreher, *The Benedict Option*, 2017

Conserving & Cultivating Virtue

The School as a Covenant Community

After tonight we all have some more licence to enter the great Australian season of the summer of sport. It's already begun, really, with an exciting program of Rugby League across Australasia culminating in the finals in Brisbane on Saturday. And did you catch that wonderful moment when the Fiji Bati, gracious in defeat, formed a circle of praise and prayer with the Kangaroos? We've held our breath whilst travelling the longest road in Soccer World Cup history to earn our spot (ahead of Italy!) at Russia next March, albeit with the loss of Postecoglou. 22 qualifying matches, 51 goals, and over 240,000 kilometres! All records to get a record fourth successive spot in the World Cup. And we're also already eagerly watching the Ashes Test series progress from Brisbane to Adelaide.

At the end of this week, online voting closes for the AIS Sport Performance Awards. You can select the best winning team this year from a range of options, including: the clean sweep by the Matildas in the Tournament of Nations in the USA; the defeat of Melbourne Victory in a tense penalty shootout by Sydney Football Club; or the Australian Diamonds victory over New Zealand in the Constellation Cup.

What does it take to win as a team?

Let's up the stakes. Back in July, Christopher Nolan's *Dunkirk* movie came to Australian cinemas. It's a retelling of a World War II story where—between 26th May and 4th June 1940, near the beginning of the war—338,226 allied soldiers were surrounded by the German army and then evacuated across the English Channel by navy ships supported by a civilian flotilla of more than 800 fishing boats and other small pleasure craft. Churchill described the rescue as a 'miracle of deliverance'. It's a great story told well in this year's cinematic version, if you can cope with the savage reality of war. Nolan is famous for his 'suspended disbelief' genre of films like *Interstellar* and *The Dark Knight Trilogy*. In an interview with *TIME* magazine, he was asked why he made this historically accurate depiction of an 'on earth' event. He said:

This tale is about the idea of home. It's about the desperate frustration of not being able to get to where you need to be. We live in an era where the virtue of individuality is very much overstated. The idea of communal responsibility and communal heroism and what can be achieved through community is unfashionable. Dunkirk is a very emotional story for me because it represents what's being lost.

What does it take for a country to experience a miracle of deliverance?

Let's up the stakes more and with relevance to our gathering tonight, that is, our children and their education. During this Term, I have received a number of letters from families whose children have completed their school education to HSC at Redeemer. Here is a sample.

- *Redeemer Baptist School should take pride in the way it educates and nurtures students. In our experience, the school instils their students with strong values of tradition, honour, dedication, faith, love and respect. These values are so important to us but, sadly, we see less and less of these values around us. We express our most sincere gratitude to our Redeemer friends in helping to raise our children. Our association has been 10 years, a decade. A decade in the life of the sky is just a flicker of a star. A decade in the life of children is an eon.*
- *We express our deepest, heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you. Our son has finished his final exam today. Your daily sacrifices, wisdom, love, care, compassion, kindness, devotion, excellence, expectations and vision are what keep our school a safe haven, a place of hope and excellent place of learning.*
- *We thank you sincerely for your thoughts and prayers at a time when we needed it most. You have always extended yourselves beyond being educators for our children. You have always welcomed, loved and nurtured them as your own. Recently, you welcomed our son into your homes to help him refocus on his studies. We are deeply touched by your kindness.*

And then there's this note from one of our Year 12 students.

- *I very much appreciate all that the school has done for me, and the incredible support to help me achieve the best by the end of my schooling. The values I have garnered in this time I will carry throughout my education, into the workforce or wherever God calls me to operate. I am extremely blessed to have been surrounded by people so committed to the Lord, who express this through their lives and their teaching.*

Then there's a story that bears re-telling from earlier this year. A builder was driving along James Ruse Drive just after 8am when he noticed a severe motor vehicle accident that had only just occurred. Next to the car there was a young child wearing a Redeemer uniform. So the builder called his wife—who works in the School office—and she got a message through to me and, pretty soon, Redeemer was at the scene to transfer the child to the safety of School and offer the mum any support she might need. That mum sent this message to the School.

- *I cannot express how thankful and supported I felt. It gave me courage to count my blessings and thank the Lord for protecting us. We escaped*

without injury. The car was a total loss. We are privileged to be part of this beautiful school community.

What does it take for students to be delivered into a healthy adulthood through the competition, minefields, dangers and tragedies that they will face? It seems that the answer to coping with immense pressure against pretty difficult odds is, in a word, community. The winning team need to be able to trust each other. The personal unsung sacrifices of common people in the face of calamitous circumstances bring amazing relief. Teachers who support each other in loving their students may give them hope and resilience for a lifetime. Now humans are, and always have been, and always will be social creatures who need community. But I suggest that, in these days, there are particular pressures on families and growing up that increase our need to share a deeper life for the sake of our children.

Spotting fake news online

There is the problem often referred to as ‘fake news’. This is not just a political excuse for poor leadership by out-of-touch politicians. A Stanford University study about judging the credibility of information that floods smartphones and other devices concluded that ‘young people’s ability to reason about the information on the internet can be summed up in one word: bleak’. Two weeks ago a study released by Western Sydney University found that ‘social media is popular for getting news but most young people are not confident about spotting fake news online’. Only 10% of young Australians try to work out whether a story presented on the internet is true. The Stanford researchers are concerned about their findings.

We worry that democracy is threatened by the ease at which disinformation about civic issues is allowed to spread and flourish.

Equally concerned are their Australian counterparts.

To us, the circulation of fake news on social media is troubling, given what we know about how social media platforms create news filter bubbles that reinforce existing worldviews and interests thereby influencing young people’s capacity to participate in society as well-informed citizens.

Macquarie University academics, responding to the Stanford research, suggest that ‘saturated use of social media works against building critical thinking capabilities’ because there is not much thought that goes into (re)tweeting, liking or making yes/no responses. *Nest* founder Tony Fadell revealed earlier this year that he wakes up in cold sweats thinking, ‘What did we bring to the world? Did we really bring a nuclear bomb with information that can—like we see with fake news—blow up people’s brains and reprogram them?’

No doubt you are like me. If you're told about some local or global event you'll pull your news source out of your pocket and check on what's happened. I think that's a great advance in being an informed citizen. But nothing then beats the contest over ideas and facts as friends discuss and argue the evidence in face-to-face community. These encounters form our responses and sharpen our critical thinking, just like the Proverb says: 'As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend'. Likewise, access to facts and opinion on the internet is an important resource for all of our students but—for our children to properly discern between fact and manipulating opinion—they need the face-to-face community of their school teachers and peers.

Cultural amnesia

Another pressure on our children and families is the revolutionary break from yesterday's 'normal' which pushes society—including all of us—towards cultural amnesia. Those who don't agree with the latest progressive cause are slammed with being on the wrong side of history but the progressive cause is, itself, constantly changing. A former Dean of St Paul's Cathedral famously said: 'Whoever marries the spirit of the age will find himself a widower in the next.' In Australia, fifty years ago the progressives debunked the institution of marriage as unnecessary and laws were changed to make divorce easy, but now they claim ownership of the moral debate about marriage and all are compelled to forget that throughout history marriage has only ever been between a man and a woman. A former High Court judge, the Hon Dyson Heydon AC, stated in a recent lecture at the Australian Catholic University:

The modern elites call for their creeds to be tolerated. Then they call for them to be compulsory. Then they want them to be exclusive.

And in the process biology is forgotten, law is forgotten, children and religion are forgotten.

Some may say that people are pretty sensible and, even though the law changes, society won't change much. My answer to that is: look across the border to Victoria where the blurring of the distinction between male and female is already educational dogma, and compassionate care for those with chronic or terminal illnesses has been replaced by the distortion of sanctioned death doctors! Or look at what has happened in Britain where—according to one religious rights lawyer—instead of promoting a healthy marriage culture, 'the law has become a sword which has laid waste to the family'. Her assertion is backed up with statistics.

Sixty years ago in the UK, 4.8% of children were born out of wedlock. Today a staggering 46.8% of children are born out of wedlock. In 1952

divorce was rare, affecting 33,992 people. Today, we are seeing divorces occurring at a rate more than six times that.

The Australian comparison is 14.7% of births ex-nuptial in 1983 compared with 34% in 2015; and the divorce rate has tripled since 1965 with 42,303 children affected by divorce in 2015. Paul Kelly, editor-at-large of the Australian newspaper, stated in April this year that as the new progressive morality overtakes Christian beliefs, we are sadly left with ‘a society in confusion over the meaning of virtue ... the law originating in Christian ethics is now obsolete and must be replaced by a new individual-centred morality’.

I believe that most, if not all, of you will agree with me that there are absolutes with regard to morality given to us by God which never change regardless of how much particular laws or the prevailing culture around us change. These absolutes are not given to stifle our enjoyment of life, rather, our humanity is enriched with integrity when we are faithful to our spouses and children or when we sacrifice our resources and comfort—trusting in God’s timing—to care for friends and relatives who are going through the debilitating suffering of terminal illness. But how will our children remember these virtues so that they, too, can live a good life if they are not surrounded by a community that is constantly telling the good news stories of our true humanity exemplified in full in the teachings and life of our Lord Jesus Christ?

The fourth industrial revolution

There are other megatrends which will have major disruptive impacts on all of our lives, like the emerging artificial intelligence ‘gig’ economy—the Fourth Industrial Revolution—which, according to the World Economic Forum founder Professor Klaus Schwab, ‘will fundamentally alter the way we live, work, and relate to one another’. Over the next twenty years, according to the Committee for Economic Development in Australia, 40% of our labour market (5 million jobs) is likely to be replaced by computers. One example is driverless taxis, already operating in Singapore, which Cabcharge will be introducing to Australia in the not-too-distant future. Research by the Foundation for Young Australians suggests that automation, globalisation and flexibility will change what we do in every job by 2030. A recent NSW Department of Education Future Frontiers Paper states that ‘the competencies today’s students need for a fulfilling life extend far beyond those required by young people from previous times’. As educators, we must adapt to prepare our students for their very different futures.

Professor Schwab sees potential for great efficiencies and improvements to health and the quality of life through the exponential changes happening in the present

technological revolution. But he also foresees the potential for dehumanising impacts on people. He says:

I wonder whether the inexorable integration of technology in our lives could diminish some of our quintessential human capacities, such as compassion and cooperation. Our relationship with our smartphones is a case in point. Constant connection may deprive us of one of life's most important assets: the time to pause, reflect, and engage in meaningful conversation.

One of our School parents directed my attention earlier this year to a new book with a very interesting title: *Parenting Teenage Girls in the Age of the New Normal*. A school counsellor recommending the book wrote:

We are entering an unprecedented phase of adolescent turmoil. Never before have young people had such power in their hands yet often lacking the cognitive maturity to make appropriate decisions. Parents can no longer afford to sit on the technological sidelines with their child's moral and intellectual integrity at stake.

The British celebrity chef and restaurateur, Jamie Oliver, has banned his teenage daughters from taking selfies as he is concerned about any alluring image of themselves that they may be projecting. In a recent *Essential Kids* article, Oliver's comments were put alongside the PAUSE acronym, to help parents who want to educate their children about safety online.

P*ermanent: Keep in mind that everything you share online can be permanent.*

A*udience: Before sharing anything, think about your audience and how what you post could affect them.*

U*nsure: If you're still unsure, ask someone you trust for their opinion.*

S*top: Stop and think about what impact your activities online could have on your privacy and reputation, as well as that of others.*

E*nd: If you become uncomfortable with anything that's been shared online, end your involvement and tell someone you trust.*

For the sake of our children—as was emphasised in a Macquarie University cyber health and cyber security presentation at our Senior School Parent Information evening earlier this year—we need to be involved with our children, exercising our parental responsibility, as we make decisions about appropriate engagement with emerging technologies. Our children are not immune to the damaging impacts of immediate connection to dark possibilities trolling their internet world. A

recent study of American students summarises the educational concern in its title: *Social media as academic quicksand*.

Knowledge plus Understanding plus Skills plus Relationship

Redeemer Baptist School has a unique foundation in intentional Christian community. It's not perfect—all the teachers will readily admit that—we know each other too well to make that claim! You also know us too well to accept that claim. But I think that it is fair to say that the relationship in community that is offered to students and their families at Redeemer is somewhat unique. We are a school family.

The Apostle Peter, a disciple of Jesus, wrote this in a letter to 1st century Christians:

*Giving all diligence,
add to your faith virtue,
to virtue knowledge,
to knowledge self-control,
to self-control perseverance,
to perseverance godliness,
to godliness brotherly kindness,
and to brotherly kindness love.*

Here is a program for the education of our children in and for community.

Your children have achieved an amazing range of accomplishments this year which are detailed in this report. Lots of excellence in STEM. Remarkable growth in NAPLAN that drew the commendation of the national education authority, ACARA. Gold, silver and bronze state medals in sport. National and state recognition in communication and the arts. And most of our Year 12 students already have an offer of enrolment at university, based on their academic achievements, even before the ATAR has been calculated.

But we are not content to stop at excellence in knowledge and understanding and skills. The actor Will Smith, who played Dr Bennet Omalu in the film *Concussion*, said this in one of his motivational speeches:

To live in service, not to you but to live in service to humanity, to live in service to your family, to your church, to your city, to your country, to the world, that is the purest form of joy. If you're not making someone else's life better then you are wasting your time. You can't be scared to die for the truth. The truth is the only thing that is ever going to be constant. It's very simple. This is what I believe and I'm willing to die for it.

Adding self-control, and perseverance, and godliness, and brotherly kindness, and love. Here is a program for all of schooling—here is a program for all of life. A recent New York Times bestseller explored the theme of the importance of building character ahead of a great career:

We live in a society that encourages us to think about how to have a great career but leaves many of us inarticulate about how to cultivate the inner life. The consumer marketplace encourages us to live by a utilitarian calculus, to satisfy our desires and lose sight of the moral stakes involved in every-day decisions. We live in a culture that teaches us to promote and advertise ourselves and to master the skills required for success, but that gives little encouragement to humility, sympathy, and honest self-confrontation, which are necessary for building character.

Like Christopher Nolan said, in our culture ‘the virtue of individuality is very much overstated’. Simply put, to build character we need community. To stand for unchanging truth in a culture where truth is fluid, we need community. To cultivate the human virtues of compassion, humility and service in the context of ever more pervasive artificial intelligence, we need community. To remember who we are and what is our purpose as humans made in the image of God, we need community. And not just a community that is drawn together by an ephemeral ideal responding to a particular need in contemporary society. We need a community whose basis is in relationship with the God who is eternal, who revealed His holy love for all the world in His Son Jesus Christ, who continues to speak to us in the words of the Bible and the inner witness of His Holy Spirit. It is this forgiven community responding to the wonderful love of our heavenly Father for us and all the world that you and your children are invited to participate in at Redeemer Baptist School. And we believe that there is great blessing from God for every one of our students throughout their schooling and in all of life as their characters develop toward consistent expression of brotherly kindness and love.

Redeemer in 2017

In the context of our Christian community, Redeemer students have again excelled this year.

City of Parramatta Australia Day Awards

- *Shanella Kang*, Young Citizen of the Year High Achiever Award

Intel ISEF (International Science & Engineering Fair, Los Angeles)

- *Mary-Anne Poyitt*, Grand Award 3rd in Plant Sciences for her project *Up the Creek*

STANSW Young Scientist Awards

- *Gilana Behan* and *Miriam Poyitt*, 1st & 2nd Biology, Years 10–12
- *Lachlan Bolton*, Intel ISEF finalist & 2nd IATE Models & Inventions, Years 10–12
- *Bilge Zohre*, 1st NMI Measurement Award & 2nd Working Mathematically, Years 10–12
- *Evette Khaziran*, STEP Environmental Award
- *Junior Savaiko*, 1st Sebel Testing & Evaluation Award

BHP Billiton Science and Engineering Awards

- *Gregory Burns*, Primary Winner 2017
- *Nathan Burns*, Primary Encouragement Award 2017
- *Mary-Anne Poyitt*, *Priyanka BC* & *Aisling Mulvaney*, national finalists 2017
- *Melisa Denizli* & *Aletheia Yosaviera*, national semi-finalists 2017
- *Lachlan Bolton* & *Evette Khaziran*, selected as finalists in the 2018 Awards

University of NSW ICAS Medal in Science

- *Krishna Batra*, Year 4

Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards

- *Ruth Burns*, 2nd in Australia AL secondary
- *Anthony Guirguis* & *Antonio Rajaratnam*, Highly Commended AL secondary
- *Elida Aras*, Highly Commended AL primary

- *Krish Bansal, Alara Cosman, Arjun Datta, Tyron Jung & Grace Oh*, Commended
- *Redeemer Baptist School* was awarded a Commendation

HSC Encore Nomination

- *Liam Shaw*, Music Performance

IMEB Licentiate Diploma with Honours

- *Edward Ma*, Classical Piano

Publication: Award Winning Australian Writing 2017

- *Elvice Ikuo*, In My Language They Call Me Ume Ibiago

Australian Geography Competition Medal

- *Miriam Poyitt*, Year 10, equal 1st in Australia

NSW Education Standards Authority (NESAs) WriteOn Competition

- *Shabdha Kukunooru* (Stage 3), bronze award

History Mastermind

- *Emily Burns, Dila Denizli, Edward Garth, Evelyn Poyitt & Markrous Tawfik* led Redeemer's Year 8 team to victory at the HTA History Mastermind.
- *Alisha Maharaj, Gokulraj Kuppusamy, Esther Park, Anaya Rajaratnam & Ethan Tjhin* also won a medal for 3rd place

University of Wollongong STEM Awards

Year 9 Awards

- Winning school STEM award
- *Telisha Petrick*, Textiles Technology & Indigenous STEM awards
- *Rowin Wanigaratne*, Mathematics winner & overall STEM runner-up
- *Shiven Bansal & Joe Cho*, overall STEM group winner
- *Vivienne Kew & Alpay Filizkok*, STEM winner & IST runner-up
- *Adithya Manoj*, IST runner-up
- *Simeon Cannon*, Year 9 winning teacher award

Year 10 Awards

- *Mary-Anne Poyitt*, Science runner-up

- *Ambaye Akele*, Mathematics winner
- *Melisa Denizli*, Mathematics runner-up

AusSIP Employability Award

- *Katherine Allen, Lisa Yu & Christopher Morozoff* (Hospitality)
- *Sudesh Tunga* (Information & Digital Technology)
- *Melisa Denizli, Mary-Anne Poyitt, Pariselle Hughes & Bilge Zohre* (Business)

Lions Voice of Youth Public Speaking Competition

- *Gokulraj Kuppusamy*, 2nd place

Premier's Reading Challenge

- *Ruth Burns, Madeleine Filson, Suzanne Jones & Mikalah Zammit* received a PRC medal
- 17 Redeemer platinum awards & 23 Redeemer gold awards

Premier's Volunteer Recognition Program

- 29 students (Years 9–12) received Certificate Awards including students involved in the Gala Day construction work on the Oasis Ministries Centre at Boggabilla

Julie Owens MP Christmas card competition

- *Levi Trevitt*, runner-up
- *Favour Odogwu*, finalist

Western Sydney University Dean's Merit Lists

- Alumnus *Emma Poyitt*, School of Education
- Alumni *Judson Bailey & Thomas Bailey*, School of Humanities & Communication Arts
- Alumnus *Daniel Roman*, School of Business

Western Sydney University Dean's Medal

- Alumnus *Judson Bailey*, School of Humanities & Communication Arts

Australian College of Educators World Teachers' Day Awards

- Awarded to *Helen Marsh & Isobel Forrester*

Sport team championships

- SWISSA senior boys Oztag with *Alex Nissan* as captain
- SWISSA senior girls basketball with *Msgana Akele* as captain
- SWISSA intermediate girls netball with *Carla Zammit* as captain
- SWISSA senior boys soccer with *Ed Kudaya-More* as captain
- SWISSA division 2 girls tennis with *Emily Burns & Victoria Garth*
- North West Secondary Schools Tennis (Term 2) with *Emily Burns & Victoria Garth*

Swimming, Athletics and Cross Country

- In the SWISSA swimming carnival: *Marina Yuan, Jayden Kwak, Mikalah Zammit, Carla Zammit, Anthony Bolton, Megan Ongley & Lachlan Bolton* were age champions and Redeemer was the champion school
- In the SWISSA cross country: *Victoria Garth, Gregory Burns, Emily Burns, Peter Lee, Panialeise Hughes, Anthony Bolton, Andrea Burns, Gabrielle Jones & Lachlan Bolton* were age champions and Redeemer was the champion school
- In the SWISSA athletics carnival: *Jordan Ebert, Mikalah Zammit, Adam Gibson, Carla Zammit, Anthony Bolton, Andrea Burns, Junior Savaiko, Gabrielle Jones & Lachlan Bolton* were age champions and Redeemer was the champion school

Association of Independent Co-Educational Schools (AICES) Sport

- *Callum Bailey, Joe Cho, Chris Lamboa & Junior Savaiko* were selected to represent SWISSA in open boys soccer
- *Msgana Akele, Elvice Ikuo, Gabrielle Jones, Chelsey Karvon & Carla Zammit* were selected to represent SWISSA in open girls soccer
- *Jordan Ebert, Peter Lee & Aryan Sehgal* were selected to represent SWISSA in under 15's boys soccer
- *Brooke Akele, Talar Alzened, Likara Bloomfield & Caitlin Lievano* were selected to represent SWISSA in under 15's girls soccer
- *Callum Bailey, Anthony Bolton, Lachlan Bolton, Chris Lamboa & Junior Saviko* were selected to represent SWISSA in open boys touch football
- *Gregory Burns, Jordan Ebert, Edward Garth & Adam Gibson* were selected to represent SWISSA in under 15's boys touch football
- *Jordan Ebert, Andrea Burns, Lachlan Bolton & Gabrielle Jones* were athletics age champions and *Gabrielle Jones* was athlete of the meet

- Redeemer won the AICES athletics carnival

CIS (Combined Independent Schools) Sport

- *Isabella Burns* won gold (100m), primary athletics
- *Gabrielle Jones* won silver (400m) & bronze (javelin), secondary athletics
- *Callum Bailey* won bronze (discuss), secondary athletics
- *Chris Lamboa* won bronze (javelin), secondary athletics
- *Anthony Bolton, Lachlan Bolton, Andrea Burns, Joe Cho, Jordan Ebert, Megan Ongley, James Poyitt, Junior Savaiko & Carla Zammit* also represented AICES at CIS athletics (secondary)
- *Jeri Akele, Joshua Frost, Eden Halabi, Sonia Khan, Mowa Ohunayo & Jessica Sesay* also represented ASISSA at CIS athletics (primary)
- *Joe Cho & Peter Lee* represented AICES at CIS cross country (secondary)
- *Adrian Burns, Isabella Burns, Eden Halabi & Victoria Sultana* represented ASISSA at CIS cross country (primary)

PSSA (NSW Primary Schools Sports Association)

- *Isabella Burns* represented CIS at PSSA athletics (primary)

World Dwarf Games, Canada

- Alumnus *Rebecca Kim* represented Australia in women's football

Tertiary success

- In 2016, 95% of our HSC cohort were offered enrolment in university

National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

- Redeemer results were identified by ACARA as substantially above average gain

English, Mathematics, Science and Computers conducted by the University of NSW; Mathematics conducted by the Australian Mathematics Trust; Australian Geography conducted by the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland; Language Competence (German) conducted by ACER

- 23 High Distinctions: *Samuel Kim* (English), *Krishna Batra* (English & Science), *Miriam Poyitt* (English & Geography); *Anubhav Ammangi* (Mathematics & Science); *Yoon Choi, Tom Li, Antonio Kwok & Henry Zhang* (Mathematics); *Elaine Orange & Daniel Ouyang* (Science); *Robbie Waller* (IT & Geography); *Khaleel Lalji* (IT); *Kayley Garth, Evelyn Poyitt*,

Anaya Rajaratnam, Huzayfah Choudhury, Pariselle Hughes & Adam Karvon
(Geography)

- 69 distinctions & 200 credits

Many students starred in excellent productions, including: Kindergarten's *Good Good Father*; the Preparatory School's *Ants'hilvania*; Junior Drama Club's *The Lion, the Witch & the Wardrobe*; Senior Drama Club's *The Duchess of Covent Garden* (from George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*). HSC Music students entertained with high quality performances, as did the School of Music, for parents and students in Sargood Hall. And the School will lead a Carol service in NSW Parliament House.

Redeemer's staff and facilities continue to be a resource for: Sydney Symphony, to produce education kits for schools; and the Australian College of Educators, with their *Educating the Cyber Generation update for all teachers* forum in Sargood Hall.

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 2017

- Year 10 students raised \$31,342.05 in their Gala Day program to: assist remote Indigenous youth from Tennant Creek and Harts Range, NT; contribute to the completion of the Oasis Ministries Centre for the Indigenous community in Boggabilla.
- Redeemer hosted an extended visit from one of the leaders of the Barai tribe where the *Itokama* sister school is located, providing training and resources including medical supplies to benefit the Barai tribe.
- Redeemer supported the *TransIndia Ministries Logos International School*.
- 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 with transport and pastoral leadership.
- Past *Burnside* residents were given access to Sargood Hall and Reid Home for their annual Ex-Burnsiders Reunion.
- Redeemer contributed speakers to the *Refresh Summer Camp*.

Commitment for life-long learning

Our School Handbook starts with a section headed *The School—A Covenant Community*. In a community-poor world, we expose our hearts as we seek to welcome your children and your families into the wider school family. Another New York Times bestseller published this year summarises the personal significance of the historical drift from community to individualism:

The long journey from a medieval world wracked with suffering but pregnant with meaning has delivered us to a place of once unimaginable comfort but emptied of significance and connection. The West has lost the golden thread that binds us to God, Creation, and each other.

So I am encouraging you as parents to continue engaging in a long commitment with us as we build the truth and trust in community that strengthens a chord of connection which will add meaning to the successes, and strength when there are difficulties, and comfort when there are losses in our shared life. We believe that enrolment in Redeemer is not just buying a service in academia but, much more, a promise on our part to do our best to care for the very souls of your children. And when as teachers and parents we join together to live for others with our children through the school context, there are life-time gains. Recent research about adult outcomes from high school experience in North America has shown that:

The experience of a close-knit school community, combined with a religious culture that values putting others—especially the less powerful—before oneself, and making sacrifices for the common good of the community, carries over into a strong commitment to volunteering and giving in civic life as an adult.

Redeemer is a K–12 school in which knowledge and wisdom are woven together in a process over many years. We trust that any student will benefit from any time that we are blessed to share with them at Redeemer. We believe that students who share all the way through to the HSC reap the highest rewards both academically and with regard to ongoing character development in community. We agree with the sentiment of the Dean of Scholarship at Brisbane Girls Grammar School who published in an article earlier this year:

Learning is a slow process. It needs relationship, trust and commitment for it to grow and develop into something meaningful and transformative. It is in such a space that rich, robust and genuine life-long learning emerges, a concept of learning so important to the continued development of our civil society.

Dr Geoff Lee, State Member for Parramatta, picked up on this theme of the School benefiting community in a speech in Parliament—recorded in Hansard—on 15th November:

I recognise the excellent work of Redeemer Baptist School. As in past years, Redeemer Baptist School staff and students continue to apply their learnings to benefit the broader community. On the northern border of the Redeemer campus is the riparian corridor of the Redeemer Creek, which runs into Lake Parramatta. A couple of years ago, the Redeemer junior secondary technology class realised that the trees growing along the creek were not old enough to contain hollows that could house native fauna. As a technology project, they built boxes with narrow openings simulating tree hollows and attached them to the tall tree trunks. This year they discovered a family of sugar gliders in one of their boxes, a brushtail possum in another, lorikeets in another, an echidna on the footpath close to their heritage classroom, and a bush turkey wandering down near the creek. Only three sightings of individual sugar gliders have been recorded in the Atlas of Living Australia in the Parramatta area in the past 20 years so the Redeemer colony, which is close to our growing city metropolis, is unique.

Evette Khaziran, a Year 10 Redeemer student, observed the behaviour of the sugar gliders over a period of five months using video cameras equipped with night sensors. She then used her observations to improve the design of the simulated tree hollows. Her investigative science was rewarded when she won the STEP Environmental Award in the Science Teachers' Association of New South Wales [STANSW] Young Scientist Awards. This is a fantastic example of how Evette and her young colleagues at Redeemer have benefited from their local environment throughout the course of their education. In 2017, Year 11 student Mary-Anne Poyitt extended her research to studying the various species of flora along the Redeemer riparian corridor. For her excellent work, Mary-Anne received third place in the Grand Awards at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in Los Angeles in May. Mary-Anne's study may help ecologists revive plants near creeks and in other natural environments in Australia.

This year Redeemer's senior construction students sacrificed their holidays to join a team of volunteer licensed builders and tradesmen to work alongside Boggabilla locals to build the Oasis Ministries Centre, which serves as a church and a meeting place for Indigenous communities around Boggabilla. This year the Redeemer project, which was spearheaded by Year 10 students, became a catalyst for connecting a relatively privileged church across the border in Goondiwindi with the needs of their Aboriginal neighbours in Boggabilla. These contributions to community are recognised in their 2017 continuing excellence curriculum.

I acknowledge Year 10 student Miriam Poyitt who won the Australian Geography first prize medal; Year 4 student Krisha Batra won the University of New South Wales ICAS science first prize medal; Year 9 student Ruth Burns came second in the national Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards; Year 8 student Gokulraj Kuppusamy came runner-up in the Lions Voice of Youth Award; Year 6 student Gregory Burns won the BHP Billiton Science and Engineering Primary Winner award; Year 6 student Shabdha Kukunooru received the bronze award in the NSW Education Standards Authority WriteOn competition. First prizes in the STANSW Young Scientist competition were awarded to Year 10 students Gilana Behan, Bilge Zohre and Junior Savaiko. Gold, silver and bronze medals in the Combined Independent Schools athletics were awarded to Year 6 student Isabella Burns, and Year 12 students Gabrielle Jones, Callum Bailey and Chris Lamboa. They are a remarkable spread of achievements.

Redeemer believes that having a heart to respond to the needs of our neighbours and our environment with the love of God and with gifts cultivated through schooling is of primary importance in education. This is a foundation for a future generation of young Australians equipped to contribute excellence with compassion in their vocations and our communities. I commend the great work done at the school. I offer my congratulations to all staff and students and wish them all the best for another successful year in 2018.

A boy from Western Sydney

I conclude with a story published on the Western Sydney University online news a couple of weeks ago. I was invited to attend the graduation of one of our past students, José Unilongo, who had finished his second degree; a Bachelor of Construction to complement his Bachelor of Housing. Prior to the ceremony, I sought the university's permission for an extra ticket for Heather MacMillan—José's Design & Technology teacher—to attend the ceremony with my wife and me. As I shared a little of José's story, the university representative was intrigued. So she arranged for a very happy photo to be taken of José, his mum, Heather, Lenore and me at the ceremony and told us that she wanted to publish his story.

Now journalism always captures the story as though the characters in the picture are the only players. But Dr Shaw, our Headmaster Emeritus—who wasn't mentioned on the Western Sydney website—was the Headmaster when José was enrolled at Redeemer in 2007. Without our knowing, prior to his enrolment, José had already been caught on the wrong side of the law. He ended up in Dr Shaw's office after only a short time in Year 11 because he had started to arrive very late to school. We didn't know, until an officer from Juvenile Justice arrived at the interview, that he had broken a curfew imposed by the police. Then Dr Shaw and I

conspired to offer another chance to José, with agreement from his mum. José could continue his enrolment so long as he agreed to live in homestay until the completion of his HSC. We could then ensure satisfactory attendance.

I remember travelling to a conference in Canberra on the night before José's major Design & Technology project was due in. José was ready to throw in the towel. The pressure was too much. So I talked with José and then arranged for Ian Cannon and Andrew Burns—teachers from the Preparatory and Middle School—to spend the afternoon and early evening at the Science & Technology Centre with José to give a substitute father's gentle but firm encouragement to complete the task that he had begun.

Then in his second HSC year, Glenn Frost and Geoff Seaman guided José through a Certificate II in Construction and José's contemporaries in the church enjoyed his company on the soccer field. A young life that could have been lost to NEET statistics (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), or worse, was being reclaimed. Then on his way through university he kept coming back to get tutorial assistance from Heather MacMillan and Chris Jones, and academic counselling from our Headmaster. One of our past school parents was also involved in helping José negotiate a proper legal resolution to the wrongs of his past.

My wife and I had a role to play both as Principal and as house parents but there was a whole community—many more names than I have mentioned—who all contributed to the safe and successful delivery of José into adulthood. He now has a good job in the construction industry and has bought a block of land on which he intends to build a home for his family.

A spectacular, moving story! The vast majority of our students' stories have little in common with José, except this: for every student at Redeemer there is a large community of teachers, staff, supporters and parents who are all praying for you, all eager to support you, all interested in the ongoing outcome of your life's journey, and all ready to give from their hearts when there is real need.

Will you all be committed with us for every student, hoping even when the outcome looks bleak that we can by God's grace be given the inspiration and the means to discover the path for the fulfilment of God's good plan for each and every one? My prayer and challenge is that Redeemer Baptist School will always be—in the fullest sense possible—a covenant community bringing blessing to all of our students and their families and, through them, to the wider community.

God bless you. Enjoy your season of sport during these summer holidays!

“We need the courage to stand for the truth against all comers no matter the cost. Luther stood against the combined might of the empire and the papacy in Worms in 1521, to declare he was bound by the Scriptures and his conscience was captive to the word of God. When the Diet was over he was both excommunicate and an outlaw. Yet he knew that the truth taught in God’s written word was more important than his own safety or convenience. He would not mute its voice or accommodate its teaching to the consensus of those around him. Error is always dangerous, no matter how qualified or powerful those who espouse it—or how many.”

—Dr Mark Thompson, Principal, Moore College, *Moore Matters*, Spring 2017

“The greatest legacy one can pass on to one’s children and grandchildren is not money or other material things accumulated in one’s life, but rather a legacy of character and faith.”

—Rev Billy Graham, *BCN*, 2011

“Knowledge cannot alone be ennobling. Knowledge has to be molded into living conviction that would lead into inner noble-mindedness. Every teacher has to blaze with the spirit of sacred love that does not seek its own, that does not look at the present but the future; love that can even punish when considered necessary. That kind of love towards pupils has to smolder in a teacher’s heart. That kind of teacher’s love affects the whole school in a protecting way.”

—Uno Cygnaeus, *Uno Cygnaeus’s Writings about the Foundation and Organization of the Finnish Elementary School*, 1910

