



REDEEMER BAPTIST SCHOOL ANNUAL SERVICE OF WORSHIP

7th December 2020

Principal's Address:

*Preparation for Life:
the Gift of 2020*



Fifty years of research tells us that when families are engaged in their child's learning, students do better; attendance increases, behaviour in school improves, homework return rates go up and, overall, children's achievement tends to improve.

— Penny Dakin, *The Parent Engagement Implementation Guide*, ARACY 2020

Society is obsessed with the hyphenated self words: self-expression, self-determination, self-actualisation, and self-fulfilment. But it's the wrong orientation. The self isn't what gives a person true freedom and empowerment. The apostle Paul describes the 'glorious freedom of the children of God,' the freedom that Christ's followers—those who deny themselves for their fellow human beings—can be assured of. I am liberated in the certainty that God loves me for who I am, as I am, and that is what empowers me.

— Erika Brinkman Barth, *Another Life Is Possible*, 2020

It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.

— Albert Einstein

To triumph fully, evil needs two victories, not one. The first victory happens when an evil deed is perpetrated; the second victory, when evil is returned. After the first victory, evil would die if the second victory did not infuse it with new life.

— Professor Miroslav Volf, *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*, 2006

REDEEMER BAPTIST SCHOOL

incorporating

The Hills Regional Skills Centre



Annual Service of Worship

and

The Principal's Address

Preparation for Life: the Gift of 2020

Monday, December 7th, 2020

God knows that a family cannot work with grudge, because it was made to work with love. And because God knows this, and in addition to that he wants our good and loves us, he then does something we don't always understand – he calls us to repentance, and he commands us to forgive. And he does so because repentance and forgiveness are the only cure and solution for guilt and grudge that are destroying us.

Carlos Mantica, *Are You a Collector of Wounds or a Collector of Kindness?*,
in *Living Bulwark* 2020

Education academics say the so-called iPad generation needs to experience boredom, because it is vital to learning. Boredom spurs creativity and can bolster problem solving skills.

Professor Pasi Sahlberg, *Gonski Institute*, 2020

Working through the dual tragedies of the ongoing bushfires and catastrophic drought have to take precedence over anything else in our whole education sector. And the coronavirus outbreak has made us conscious about how interconnected and vulnerable the world truly is. Wellbeing is the priority educational issue for the 20s.

Professor John Fischetti, *The big schooling issues for the roaring 20s*,
in *Education Matters* 2020

Forgiveness is a major part of love and the reason why I forgave, I forgave as a father and a husband because I knew, there is a saying in English, it says things are caught not taught. So, you can teach your kids something, but if you do something else, they catch that off you, it is contagious. So if I don't forgive and set that example, even if I told them to forgive, they will always not forgive. I don't want no anger, bitterness or revenge in my kids' spirit.

Danny Abdallah, *United in Tears: the Oatlands Tragedy*, SBS 2020

Service of Worship

Welcome and Introduction

Song Never Have I Ever Years 10, 12 & School

The Hills Regional Skills Centre Certificate Awards 5

Presentation of Sports and Academic Awards 6

Christmas: Treasure Hunt

Ding Dong Years 7–8
Mary Had a Baby Pre/Kindergarten
God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen Years 5–6
O Come All Ye Faithful Years 3–4
We Three Kings Years 1–2
Today is the Saviour’s Day Teachers

Luke 2:1–7. Anaya Rajaratnam 8

Prayer Mrs. Elizabeth Cannon (Aunty Lib)

Principal’s Address Mr. J. A. Cannon 9

Benediction

Song World Outside Your Window Years 9 & 12

The continuous and unembarrassed interchange of love and thought between God and the soul of the redeemed man is the throbbing heart of New Testament religion.

A W Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*, 1948

Every school day is a wonderful opportunity to grow future blessing.
Who knows how important this child's gift will become?

Russell Bailey, *Why is Education so Important*, in Observer 2020

If we can't agree on what's true, we can't
navigate out of any of our problems.

The Social Dilemma, Netflix 2020

Creation, incarnation, the cross, and the resurrection all shout the news that the meaning of humanness lies beyond the human, in the God who made us in His image and redeems us in His love for us. It is in this relationship with Him that we find our identity and our answer to the basic human question: Who am I?

Dr Stuart Fowler, *The Christian School as Community*, 2018

The Hills Regional Skills Centre Awards

Certificate I in Business

Pule Filise
Grishma Kattela
Ella Tazewell

Stephanie Herbert
Yashwanth Kolli
Robert Waller

Godnah Johnson
Rushi Pipalia

Certificate II in Business

Kamal Baghdadi
Elliot Fahd
LydiaMikhael

Dila Denizli
Kayla Fahd
Sila Zohre

Jordan Ebert
Alisha Maharaj

Certificate I in Construction

Alp Gezer

Thomas Portelli
Kartik Verma

Farzin Sheriff

Certificate II in Construction

Adam Gibson
Jack Wang

Michael Koh
Sirach Zohre

Khelsie Thompson

Certificate I in Hospitality

Matt Jeremy Ng

Certificate I in Information, Digital Media and Technology

Lydia Aaron Kumar
Alara Cosman
Rushi Pipalia

Akhil Akku
Grishma Kattela
Robert Waller
Lily Zheng

Andrea Alzened
Sarah Lee
Matthew Zhang

Sports Awards

Junior Sports Awards

Girls Junior Sports Award Niushka Shrestha

Boys Junior Sports Award Dorian Ndongo-Empesa

Senior Sports Awards

Girls Senior Sports Award Victoria Garth

Boys Senior Sports Award Edward Garth

Academic Awards

Year 1 Thaddeus Candra

Year 4 Gehna Ammangi
Inayah Absar

Year 2 Sam Ma

Year 5 Trinity Kim

Year 3 Peiyan Zhang

Year 6 Rhyon Cabauatan
Abhishek Clement

The Joseph Bailey Memorial Award

Jesse Kim

The Matthews Middle School Special Achievement Award

Amy Kwak

Cowper Smash Repairs Perpetual Trophy for Engagement, Perseverance and Improvement

Hess Lee

Academic Awards (continued)

Australian Defence Force Long Tan Leadership and Teamwork Awards

Year 10 Robert Waller
Year 12 Talar Alzened

Australian Defence Force Future Innovators Awards

Year 10 Gregory Burns
Year 12 Suzanne Jones

Caltex Best All-Rounder Award

Suzanne Jones

ACHPER Award for 1st in PDHPE

Suzanne Jones

The City of Parramatta Council Active Citizenship Award

Edward Garth

The M K Shaw STEM Award

Antonio Rajaratnam

The Noel F Cannon Founding Principal's History Award

Gabriella Anugraha

Reuben F Scarf Award for Commitment

Darren Li

Year 7	Dilara Dinkciler Eugene Kim Aparna Manoj Shawn Rajaratnam	Year 10	Victoria Garth
Year 8	Anubhav Ammangi	Year 11	Gokulraj Kuppusamy Evelyn Poyitt
Year 9	Cameron Frost Matthew Guirguis	Year 12	Talar Alzened

Luke 2:1-7

The Birth of Jesus

^{2:1} At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. ² (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. ⁴ And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He travelled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. ⁵ He took with him Mary, his fiancée, who was now obviously pregnant.

⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. ⁷ She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

New Living Translation, Second Edition

Preparation for Life: the Gift of 2020

We look at stories on a screen. YouTube, Netflix, TV. Stories about our past or our culture, about the outback or about lives like ours in a big city. These stories capture our interest when there is some big challenge, some big difficulty that has to be overcome. In previous cultures they didn't have screens or computer graphics to create unbelievable, must-see, entertaining, beat-the-bad-guys storylines. But just over 200 years ago, two brothers sparked everyone's interest when they published a small collection of imaginary folk tales which they called *Children's and Household Tales*. Just like we might share a link to an interesting YouTube or Instagram, people in their culture shared interesting stories by talking to each other. The complete collection of these shared stories carries the brothers' now famous name: *Grimms' Fairy Tales*. And many of the tales in the collection are indeed grim! There are stories about young people suffering horrendous circumstances until it seems for sure that they must break. But somewhere in the story a gift is given which seemed irrelevant at the time, yet through that gift comes not only rescue but also a long and happy life in much better circumstances than could have been imagined prior to the hardship.

Here's a fairy story in the Grimm tradition.

There was a young boy whose family had fallen on really hard times. All through the last summer there had been fires that burnt all the food crops and left an eery tinge of orange in the sky and dirty ash polluting the water. Then after the fires there was a huge flood. What was left of provision in their homes floated down the street and out to the ocean. Just in case that wasn't enough to bring them to their knees, a virus was carried by mosquitos from one person to the next until so many people became so desperately ill that the hospitals couldn't cope anymore. Loved ones were perishing on the streets in the thousands.

When the boy's sister became ill, he thought, 'There must be a cure—I shall go out into the world until I find a remedy for this cruel disease.' He was travelling for months and months without any joy until one day an old lady stopped him and said, 'Are you looking for a cure for the ills of the world?' The boy answered, 'Yes! My family has no food and my sister is ill on her bed and everyone in my country is suffering too much so I have come out to find a remedy for the cruel disease.' The old lady looked away to the north and said, 'If you follow my eye to the golden castle at the top of the glass mountain, there you will find the cure.'

The boy politely said 'Thank you' and ran as fast as he could for three days and three nights until he was at the foot of the glass mountain. But

the steep glass mountain was too slippery to climb. How could he get up to the castle to fetch the cure?

All of a sudden there was a huge roar in front of him from a lion whose mouth was big enough to swallow his whole body. 'Please, Sir Lion,' the boy said, 'the people in my village are now starving and my sister is ill. I am afraid that she cannot survive unless I fetch the cure in the golden castle at the top of this glass mountain.' Then the lion flicked his tail for the boy to grab onto and with four big strides took him to the castle gate.

'Thank you,' the boy said politely to the lion and, racing inside, quickly located the cure, slid down the glass to the bottom of the mountain, and ran towards home with double speed for three days and three nights just in time to give his sister the cure before her breathing would have stopped forever. And, as it happens in fairy stories, the whole land was cured instantly and the shelves in the supermarkets were full again and the town water in the dam was clean and there was singing and dancing in every hall and home.

Finally, when the lion told the princess in the golden castle on the glass mountain about the boy who fetched the cure, she rode on the lion's back to the boy's home. 'Thank you for the cure,' the boy said politely, even as he was overcome by her beauty. And the princess said, 'You are brave and caring enough to rule over my golden kingdom.' So later that day they celebrated their wedding. That was a long, long time ago. But today, if you find the golden castle on top of the glass mountain, you will still see them on a fine day enjoying a picnic by the lake with their pet lion.

We have all shared a very difficult year together. And we're not at the 'happily ever after' part of the story yet. It's great to be able to have some relaxation of the COVID-safe guidelines but even the fact that we're sharing this service online and not all together, without the magic of live performances, is a reminder that we're not yet over our difficulties. We look forward to a vaccine, hopefully, within a couple of months. And we're very thankful for our leaders—in particular our Prime Minister and Premier—and health care workers who have given us a much better outcome than what we see on our screens in some countries overseas. Even so, we look forward to the day when COVID is no longer mentioned on the news!

Thank you for going above and beyond to see our daughter thrive this term. What a term it has been! You did not only do what was required but went to great lengths to provide excellence in teaching and pastoral care.

Redeemer Parent

But COVID-19 won't be the last big difficulty that we or our children face. There are foreseeable events, like the rise in economic and political nationalism with governments assuming much greater control over individuals and organisations as they try to navigate out of the devastating wake of COVID-19 with record budget deficits left for future generations to repay. There may be personal tragedies, like the devastating loss of four children killed by a drunk driver in Oatlands at the beginning of this school year. There are unthinkable natural disasters, like two, consecutive, category 4 hurricanes (Eta and Iota) in Honduras last month leaving death, destruction and 3.5 million people now dependent on emergency aid—including our past student Patricia Varela Diaz (HSC, 2013), who chose to return to the violence and poverty in her home country as a university-qualified educator to serve her people in the name of Jesus Christ. And there are the biblical prophecies of escalating world violence, scarcity of resources, plagues, earthquakes, cosmic disturbances, fire, and deadly polluted waters towards the end of this age of world history.

So what are the gifts that we should take from this year to help us prepare for whatever we might face in the future?

The ambivalent gift of online screen learning—with self-discipline

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each one of you for all the amazing work you do every single day, particularly this COVID-19 year.

Redeemer Parent

Every school, every teacher, every parent and every student is well aware of the crucial necessity for online screens to deliver a modified education curriculum during pandemic school lockdowns. Likewise, students and teachers have embraced the ongoing benefits of some features of online learning. The World Economic Forum refers to some research that 'suggests that online learning has been shown to increase retention of information, and take less time, meaning the changes coronavirus have caused might be here to stay'. Even before the pandemic, the overall market for online education was projected to reach US\$350 billion by 2025. Unsurprisingly, big tech companies promote the prediction that 'data-based technologies will open up ways to transform practices, structures, and even cultures of schools.'

But along with at least the possibility of educational progress, according to UNICEF, 'millions of children are at increased risk of harm as their lives move increasingly online during lockdown in the COVID-19 pandemic'. Baroness Beeban Kidron of the UK children's lobby group 5Rights Foundation—in an

online paper this year on *The Future of Childhood in the Digital World*—states that ‘this generation of children are a “forgotten mass” upon whom we have allowed a social experiment at an unimaginable scale, an experiment in which we have failed to remember that childhood is the time in which everything you do, see, feel and imagine contributes to your makeup as an adult’.

A recent documentary, *The Social Dilemma*—featuring high-profile tech whistle-blowers like Tim Kendall (former President of Pinterest), Tristan Harris (former Google Design Ethicist), and Justin Rosenstein (co-inventor of the Facebook ‘Like’ button)—explores how the online system that is connecting us even more during the pandemic is also invisibly controlling us, using algorithms that encourage addiction to their platforms. They say that ‘social media is reprogramming civilisation’ as everything you are doing on line is being tracked, monitored and recorded so that tech giants can predict your behaviour and sell your profile to the highest bidder. Problematic Interactive Media Use (PIMU; characterised by addictive, excessive or compulsive behaviours towards screen media use) can have a devastating impact on a child’s educational, social and emotional development.

There has been a rising tide of research published this year on the harm to education from inappropriate overuse of online screens. Here is a sample.

- Internet addiction in teenagers leads to difficulty regulating emotions (University of Sydney).
- Excessive screen time has probably contributed to countries including Australia recording lower marks in PISA (Gonski Institute, UNSW).
- 84% of educators in Australia believe that digital technologies are a growing distraction in the learning environment (Gonski Institute, UNSW)
- Limiting digital media use in university discussion lessons creates greater student presence, improved engagement, and deeper learning (University of Copenhagen).
- The combination of high screen time and low green time may affect mental health (University of Adelaide).
- The ease of finding information on the internet is hurting students’ long-term retention and resulting in lower grades on exams (Rutgers University).
- On average across OECD countries, one additional computer per student in a school was associated with a 12-point decline in reading scores (OECD).

According to Dr Mary Redmayne of Monash University, there is overwhelming evidence that frequency of educational technology use in classrooms is negatively associated with achievement.

So, whereas there is undoubtedly a gift in our 2020 pandemic experience of the benefits of embedding aspects of online delivery as an alternate mode in school education, this is nevertheless a gift to be handled with care—a gift that requires additional oversight by parents, pastoral care from teachers, and the cultivation of self-discipline within each student. And as a Christian school we teach that there is powerful help for self-control as this virtue is a fruit of the Spirit, a natural consequence of knowing God as our heavenly Father and Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord.

The gift of learning as a community

2020 has of necessity been a year of institutionalised social isolation. For long periods we've been locked out from visiting close friends and family living in nursing homes. We couldn't visit a newborn baby and her mum in hospital. We couldn't attend a family wedding overseas or a family funeral interstate. We couldn't invite a bunch of kids over for a birthday party. We couldn't go to work in the office and we couldn't go to school.

Redeemer has always had, on average, excellent attendance of about 97%. Our student surveys tell us that the vast majority of Redeemer students enjoy coming to school. Given opportunity to make a free comment about their schooling, many Redeemer students say that school is their other family. But this year there have been many disruptions to our community of learning.

Even when we've been on campus, for most of the year we haven't been able to meet in Sargood Hall to sing together or consider the good news of Jesus Christ together. We have missed the mixing of K–12. We have missed the formal and informal gatherings of our wider school family with parents and friends at Gala Day, Open Days, Drama Club and other celebrations. And this massive disruption to schooling has been the shared experience of over 1.2 billion learners around the globe.

In a webinar hosted by the ANU in June, Professor Michael McRobbie (ANU graduate, President of Indiana University) said:

One thing that this crisis has definitively proved is that the model of students doing their four years of study in their parents' basement is a complete travesty, not true at all. There is a desperation for young students to get back to a college education. Sociologists will claim that 50% of what a student

I just wanted to say thank you for everything you've done the past year, especially leading up to the trial and of course the HSC. I know that I would not be nearly as happy as I am with how I went today if it wasn't for you.

Redeemer Student

learns, they learn from interaction with other students in other aspects of their environment outside the classroom.

When school returned from online to the campus, Redeemer's average attendance in many classes rose to 98%. Evidently Redeemer students and parents were eager to return to their learning in face-to-face community with teachers and other students on campus.

In a survey of 5000 teachers in NSW, only 35% were confident that their students were learning well in remote learning and it was estimated that disadvantaged students were learning at about 50% of their regular rate (Grattan Institute). This was the context that we shared with schools throughout Australia. At the end of Term 2, the opening sentence of a news article titled *The homeschooling pandemic* said, 'COVID-19 won't be remembered for a long list of positives, but at least many families got the opportunity to gain a far deeper appreciation for our teachers and school communities'.

Thank you very much for being a family who really cares about our children. God bless!

Redeemer Parent

If learning is simply about the transfer of knowledge for the purpose of employability and national economic gain, then a fully online model—with better attuned technology—could be the future of education. But we agree with the recently released Cardus Education Survey (CES) Australia which states that education should be 'orientated towards the cultivation of character and commitment in the hearts and minds of students to enrich and benefit their neighbours and community'. And we believe that this formation of good character relies on a community of adults (teachers and parents) who share an understanding of what constitutes the unchanging parameters of truth and goodness. We concur with the Australian Education Ministers' *Alice Springs (Mparntwe—pronounced M-ban tua) Education Declaration* (December 2019) which includes that, in Australian schools:

- Every student must develop strong literacy and numeracy skills in their earliest years of schooling and go on to develop broad and deep knowledge across a range of curriculum areas; and
- Our education system must also prepare young people to thrive in a time of rapid social and technological change, and complex environmental, social and economic challenges.

But, again, we agree with the CES which states that 'academic excellence and economic utility should not be the only priorities for education but that civil, religious and spiritual formation of graduates is critical to the common good'.

4913 Australians aged 25–39 who completed secondary school between 1998–2011 in Government, Independent and Christian schools were included in the CES—these are some of the key findings.

- More than 70% of Christian school graduates—up to 20% higher than Government or Independent school graduates—say that school prepared them to find a sense of meaning, purpose and direction in life.
- Volunteering is more common among Christian school graduates than other school graduates.
- Christian school graduates are more likely than other school graduates to marry and never divorce.
- More Christian school graduates believe that ‘God is a personal being involved in the lives of people today’ than graduates from Government or Independent schools.

Again, we agree with the CES which observes that:

No school is truly neutral to ultimate questions about the purpose of education and normative questions about the kinds of people their students should become. These are questions of ideals and value—moral questions. School practices thus must be seen as embodiments of the answers that school communities provide to these ultimate questions. More importantly, these practices make a lasting impression on students in terms of how they ought to relate to others once they graduate.

You all participated with us in seeking to maintain the community of a Christian school at Redeemer during the necessary but less than ideal online phase this year. For the purpose of history, I believe that it is important that we record what we did in our overnight transformation to a season of online learning.

On Monday 23rd March, the Premier advised that all schools should go online. So your teachers prayed, we asked God for inspiration, and we got to work. Then on Tuesday 24th March, Redeemer started delivering online lessons to all classes, Pre-Kindergarten to Year 12, with some basic principles to make online learning as a school community as effective as it could be.

During the corona period, I was very impressed that the teachers came out early in the cold morning and took care of the students while taking the temperature and checking the corona. If it weren't for this delicacy and love at school, the children would have had a hard time during Term 2. So thank you!

Redeemer Parent

- Teachers and students together learnt how to implement our Canvas Online Learning Management System.
- We had a common timetable with a focus on English and Mathematics, a daily physical fitness routine, and regular breaks from focussing on a screen.
- All students were required to submit work for each online lesson, every day.
- Students or parents could contact teachers for technical or curriculum support.
- Teachers were assigned to follow up students who, for whatever reason, did not appear to be engaging with the online curriculum.
- And each day began with the Senior Master leading the School in devotions that gave hope and direction from our faithful God for students in unprecedented circumstances.

What is the gift here for our students? You have a community of teachers and support staff committed to each other in Jesus Christ for a lifetime to serve you in this ministry of a Christian worldview in education. And this ongoing church community is here for as long as God wills to share the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ with past, present and future students and their families in any celebration or tough situation that life presents. We invite students and parents to join us in a long-term covenant spanning the whole thirteen years of school education as a solid basis for mutual giving and receiving for a lifetime.

The gift of excellent achievements in 2020

Throughout 2020, despite the disruptions—with opportunities provided by their teachers—Redeemer students continued to demonstrate excellence with hope. This award-winning poem was written by one of our Year 7 students, Lola Wang, during Term 2.

Flowers

Head down,

Walking on a quiet path,

A scent of fragrance is blowing in the wind,

Suddenly awakens the human body,

Giving people new hope.

A couple of weeks ago, our local Member in the NSW Legislative Assembly—The Hon Dr Geoff Lee—advised the NSW Parliament of the extraordinary achievements of Redeemer students this year.

In this difficult year when schooling has been disrupted, I am pleased to inform the House that Redeemer Baptist School students in my electorate have continued to achieve excellence across the curriculum. In the BHP Foundation Science and Engineering Awards, three of the four national winners were Redeemer Year 11 students. Ethan Tjhin and Gokulraj Kuppusamy won the Engineering award with their project entitled Methane on Wheels, which combats global warming by minimising the amount of methane gas being released into the atmosphere as organic waste is blended to harvest biogas. Edward Garth from Year 11 won the Investigations award with his project entitled Creating Safer Driving Routes. Edward quantified intersection dynamics to develop a quicker, less variegated and safer algorithm. Ethan, Gokulraj and Edward were also nominated by BHP to represent Australia at the Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair [ISEF], which was to be held in Los Angeles in May this year. However, due to COVID-19, the 2020 ISEF was abandoned.

Redeemer Middle and Senior School students have also excelled in Mathematics. Gregory Burns from Year 10 won first prize in the Mathematical Association of NSW's Investigating with Mathematics competition with his project entitled As Easy as Pi. Gregory also won first place in the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers' National Mathematics Talent Quest. In the International Competitions and Assessments for Schools assessment, Anubhav Ammangi from Year 8 was awarded a medal for first place in Mathematics. Anubhav was also included on the CSIRO Bebras Australia Honour Roll for Computational Thinking.

Redeemer students have also excelled in literacy. In the Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards, which draws entries from students in schools across Australia, Curtis Giang from Year 5 and Lola Wang from Year 7 were the primary and secondary school winners, and Adrian Burns from Year 7 was the secondary school runner-up in the Learning Assisted category. In the upper primary school category, Dorian Ndongu-Empesa from Year 6 won second prize. With eight other student awards, including Shortlisted and Highly Commended, Redeemer was also the national primary school winner. The primary school judge, author Kathryn Apel, commenting on the Redeemer student poems, said that it is 'wonderful to see entries across a range of ages, categories and poetic forms, demonstrating wordplay, unique voice, creativity and polish'.

Zachary Jones from Year 2 won a silver certificate in the NSW Education Standards Authority [NESA] WriteOn competition for his imaginary adventure with his dog, chasing the mythical phoenix. Gabriella Anugraha from Year 11 was shortlisted in the Western Sydney University What Matters? writing competition for her essay 'Fair is Foul and Foul is Fair'.

Evelyn Poyitt from Year 11 won third prize in the Sparklit Australian Christian Teen Writer Awards with her poetic composition ‘Some People’, in which she urges us to consider what impact our unique, passing, ‘snowflake’ lives will have on the world, perhaps ‘causing strife’ or settling ‘purposefully, so tenderly, and soaking deeply—a touch never to be forgotten’.

Following the Higher School Certificate Music 2 practical examinations, Antonio Kwok—who graduated at the beginning of this year with a Diploma Licentiate in Music from the Australian Music Examinations Board—was nominated by NESAs to perform in the HSC ENCORE program of outstanding HSC performances and compositions. Redeemer was also recognised by the City of Parramatta Council in its Australia Day awards this year. Anthony Bolton, a Redeemer student who matriculated with his HSC last year, was given the Young Leader of the Year award in recognition of excellence in active service while demonstrating leadership, compassion and kindness to enrich lives and inspire the community. Redeemer Baptist School’s contribution to charitable projects for regional and remote Indigenous communities was also recognised with the council’s Community Group award. I commend all the students at Redeemer Baptist School for their efforts this year and acknowledge the teachers and the community for their hard work. Redeemer continues to give hope and the opportunity for excellent achievement to all its students.

After Dr Lee’s speech, Redeemer students were awarded a raft of Young Scientist prizes including the 2020 Young Scientist of the Year and the 2021 Broadcom International MASTERS Delegate.

Chronicles of God’s gifts in student achievement

City of Parramatta Australia Day Awards

- *Anthony Bolton* (HSC, 2019): Young Leader of the Year
- *Redeemer Baptist School*: Community Group Award

Cicadarama publication

- *Antonio Rajaratnam* (Year 12): research photo of Sand Fairy cicada included in *A Photo Guide to Common Cicadas of the Greater Sydney Region*. Teachers Joel Poyitt and Kent Warner also contributed photos to this publication.

BHP Billiton Foundation Science and Engineering Awards

- *Gokulraj Kuppusamy* (Year 11) & *Ethan Tjhin* (Year 11): Engineering Award Winners (1st)
- *Edward Garth* (Year 11): Investigations Award Winner (1st)
- *Ivan Wallace* (HSC, 2019): national Investigations Finalist
- *Suzanne Jones* (Year 12) & *Darren Candra* (Year 8): Semi-finalists (Investigations)
- *Lillian Azzi* (Year 4): Primary Encouragement Award
- *Danielle Gibson* (Year 8): 2021 NSW nominee (Secondary)

I would like to take a moment to congratulate you, your school and especially Antonio Rajaratnam on achieving FIRST PLACE in the 2020 Young Scientist Awards. This national recognition is a touching testament to the superior effort and values instilled in your students by their families and by your faculty.

Member of the Public

STANSW Young Scientist Awards

- *Antonio Rajaratnam* (Year 12): 2020 Young Scientist of the Year Award & 2021 ISEF Prize (Grand Awards), 1st Rowe Scientific Investigations Biology (11–12)
- *Danielle Gibson* (Year 8): 2021 Broadcom MASTERS International Delegate & NSW BHP Foundation Science & Engineering Awards Nominee (Grand Awards), 1st Investigations Chemistry (7–8), 1st NMI Measurement Award (Working Scientifically), 1st MANSW Working Mathematically (7–8)
- *Akhil Akku* (Year 10) & *Zohaib Khan* (Year 10): Equal 1st AARNet Communications Award (Working Scientifically, Secondary), 1st Innovations and Engineering Design (9–10)
- *Gregory Burns* (Year 10): 1st MANSW Working Mathematically (9–10), 2nd NMI Measurement Award (Working Mathematically)
- *Victoria Garth* (Year 10): Equal 1st AARNet Communications Award (Working Mathematically)
- *Stephanie Herbert* (Year 10) & *Godnah Johnson* (Year 10): Equal 1st AARNet Communications Award (Working Mathematically), 3rd Sebel Testing and Evaluation Award
- *Emily Burns* (Year 11): Bronze, Rowe Scientific Depth Study Award
- *Kayley Garth* (Year 10): 3rd MANSW Working Mathematically (9–10)

- *Veda Patibandla* (Year 8) & *Aran Yoganandha* (Year 8): 1st STANSW Most Promising Awards (Secondary)
- *Karmichael Candra* (Year 4): Equal 1st Scientific Investigations (3–4), 1st RACI Chemistry Encouragement Award (Primary), 1st Sebel Testing and Evaluation Award
- *Lucius Figueira* (Year 4): Equal 1st Scientific Investigations (3–4)
- *Thaddeus Candra* (Year 1): 1st OSHClub Inventions and Innovations (K–2), 1st MANSW Working Mathematically (K–2)

Regeneron ISEF (International Science & Engineering Fair) 2020

- *Edward Garth* (Year 11), *Gokulraj Kuppusamy* (Year 11) & *Ethan Tjhin* (Year 11): BHP Foundation nominees to represent Australia

Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards

- *Lola Wang* (Year 7) 1st & *Adrian Burns* (Year 7) 2nd in Australia LA Secondary
- *Curtis Giang* (Year 5): 1st in Australia LA Primary
- *Dorian Ndongo-Empesa* (Year 6): 2nd in Australia Upper Primary
- *Redeemer Baptist School*: Primary Schools Award (1st)
- *Lillian Azzi* (Year 4): Commended Upper Primary
- *Kingsley Chen* (Year 4) & *Joseph Sesay* (Year 4): Highly Commended LA Primary
- *Jesse Kim* (Year 2) & *Favour Tejan-Kella* (Year 2): Commended LA Primary
- *Victoria Garth* (Year 10): Commended Secondary
- *Angela Huang* (Year 7): Shortlisted LA Secondary
- *Baiza Akele* (Year 10): Highly Commended LA Secondary
- *Redeemer Baptist School*: Commended Secondary Schools' Award

NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) WriteOn Competition

- *Zachary Jones* (Year 2): Silver Award (Stage 1)

Western Sydney University Whitlam Institute What Matters? Writing competition

- *Gabriella Anugraha* (Year 11): Short-listed

Sparklit Australian Christian Teen Writer Awards

- *Evelyn Poyitt* (Year 11): 3rd Prize
- *Anaya Rajaratnam* (Year 11): Finalist

Premier's Reading Challenge

- *Isabella Burns, Cameron Frost & Matthew Guirguis* received PRC medals
- There were 24 platinum awards & 40 gold awards

MANSW Investigating with Mathematics Competition

- *Gregory Burns* (Year 10): 1st Year 10 (NSW)

AAMT Maths Talent Quest

- *Gregory Burns* (Year 10): 1st Year 10 (Australia)

UNSW ICAS Medal

- *Anubhav Ammangi* (Year 8): Mathematics

CSIRO Bebras Australia Computational Thinking Challenge

- *Anubhav Ammangi* (Year 8): Honour Roll

HSC Encore Performance Nomination

- *Antonio Kwok* (Year 11): Music 2

AMEB Diploma

- *Antonio Kwok* (Year 11): Diploma Licentiate in Music (LMusA)

Western Sydney University Dean's Merit Lists

- Alumnus *Callum Bailey* (Year 12, 2017): School of Health Sciences
- Alumnus *Melisa Denizli* (Year 12, 2018): School of Psychology
- Alumnus *Alexandra Garth* (Year 12, 2016): School of Nursing & Midwifery
- Alumnus *Georgina Garth* (Year 12, 2017): School of Humanities and Communication Arts

Institution of Engineers Australia and Office of the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer

- Alumnus *Michael Jones* (Year 12, 2014): Bradfield Award, Student Engineer of the Year

President of the NSW Branch of the Young Liberals

- Alumnus *Chaneg Torres* (Year 12, 2011)

Prime Minister's Prizes for Science

- *Stuart Garth*: Highly Commended for Excellence in Science Teaching in Secondary Schools

Teachers' Guild of NSW

- *Russell Bailey FACE HFTGN*: Honorary Fellowship

BHP Billiton Foundation 2020 Science & Engineering Teacher Award

- *Diane Garth*: CSIRO Crest nominee

Swimming

- In the SWISSA swimming carnival: Sean Park (Year 7), Jeffrey Dong (Year 8), Johnny Gergis (Year 10), Evelyn Poyitt (Year 11), Jayden Kwak (Year 11) & Mikalah Zammit (Year 12) were age champions and Redeemer was the champion school.

Tertiary success

- In 2019, 92% of our HSC cohort were offered enrolment in university or diploma pathways
- In 2020, 91% of our HSC cohort were offered enrolment in university or diploma pathways prior to completing their HSC examinations

Thanks for helping our son to get into Macquarie Uni for his desired course. We really appreciate your support.

Redeemer Parent

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

- 18 High Distinctions: *Anubhav Ammangi* (Mathematics [2], Computational Thinking, Science & French); *Yoon Choi* (Mathematics & French); *Dhruv Doddi* (Computational Thinking & French); *Antonio Kwok & Christine Huynh* (Mathematics); *Christopher Herbert* (Science); *Andrew Zhao*

(French); *Ashaz Atif, Solomon Aynalem, Robbie Waller, Leon Yangdong, Anaya Rajaratnam* (Geography).

- 91 distinctions & 217 credits

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 2020

- Redeemer led a medical mission to the Barai tribe in Papua New Guinea—where our sister school is located at *Itokama*—with a team of doctors, paramedics and nurses led by the Principal. Hundreds of Barai were treated in pop-up clinics in three villages and there was a miraculous reconciliation between two warring villages in the tribe as a result of the mission.

19th Jan 2020: Seven months of separation after the fight but with the help of God, Redeemer Baptist School led Kuai community to Sunday service, reconciliation and a meal together on the same day. This is truly a great miracle!

Barai Tribal Elder

- Redeemer hosted a visit of 95 students and 15 teachers from *Tianjin* in January.
- Redeemer's Camp Long Beach was used by the *Rural Fire Service* as dormitories for firefighters during the catastrophic summer fires at the beginning of the year.
- Redeemer was represented by the Principal with a selection of Years 11 & 12 students and staff at the Official Opening and Thanksgiving Church Service for *The Oasis Centre*, Boggabilla, in March. Our Year 10 Gala Day program contributed personally to the construction of the Oasis Centre in 2016, 2017 and 2019.
- 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.
- Pariselle Hughes (HSC, 2019) coordinated a team of volunteers to raise funds and provide thank you cards for the *Rural Fire Service Association* (RFSA).
- Redeemer contributed speakers and leaders to the *Refresh Summer Camp*.

- Students completed professional placements or work experience at Redeemer from *Excelsia College* and *Bedford College*.

The gift of new and refurbished infrastructure in 2020

- The historic memorial garden outside Sargood Hall—commemorating Burnside boys who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our country in World War II—was fully restored.
- Extensive heritage restoration of the *Son of the Rock* building was undertaken in its 100th anniversary, including a fully refurbished school kitchen.
- School roads were reconstructed including the establishment of a parking area for parents with a dedicated pedestrian zone.
- Boom gates were installed to prohibit unauthorised vehicles passing through the School.
- New IT resources—including a class set of notebook computers—were purchased during online learning as resources with long-term benefit.
- A ramp was installed to *Son of Reid* building for disability access.
- Heritage reconstruction of the toilets in *Blackwood* building has commenced.

The gift of a full and holy cure

In the grim tale that we started with, the boy got through the difficult challenges that he faced, took hold of the gifts to help him along the way, found the cure, and then everything was put right for everyone ‘happily ever after’!

That’s what we’re all hoping for with a vaccine. Perhaps some time next year we won’t have to worry about social distancing; we’ll be able to sing together; we won’t have to work out the latest rules about how many can come over for dinner; and you won’t have to have your temperature taken at the start of every school day. Then, sometime—hopefully in the not too distant future—we’ll be able to travel overseas again to see friends and family or just to enjoy God’s good creation.

A vaccine would indeed be a wonderful blessing but it cannot be a full cure to the problems of humanity that we already face or those that we may face in the future.

T S Eliot, the English poet—in a poem about what may have been but is not—says with precise clarity: *human kind cannot bear very much reality*. Every one of us is burdened by reality that no vaccine can heal: pain amplified by bitterness because someone else has done something terribly wrong against us; guilt accumulating purulence inside us because we have done wrong against others; our own mortality or the grief of being separated from someone who we love, someone who loves us;

the shock from some tragedy or evil that we have witnessed that continues to reverberate waves of fear; the agony of the present moment as we try desperately to avoid our own cup of suffering.

We don't like to think for very long about our own painful circumstances but the process of this last twelve months hasn't given us an option—the reality of a virus that will not just go away is always before us in the media, limiting our freedoms, glooming our future.

It's the last day of the school year so we're already beginning to celebrate Christmas. There is a very old Christmas carol, written in the 700s, that says this:

*A great and mighty wonder, a full and holy cure!
The Virgin bears the Infant with virgin-honour pure!
Repeat the hymn again: "To God on high be glory,
And peace on earth to men!"*

*Since all He comes to ransom, by all be He adored.
The Infant born in Bethl'em, the Saviour and the Lord.
Repeat the hymn again: "To God on high be glory,
And peace on earth to men!"*

The hymn says that with Christmas comes *a full and holy cure*. This isn't a fairy story. This is the gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God born at Christmas. This is better than any vaccine for in the coming of Jesus Christ there is a cure for the stains of sin for which there is no other remedy. This is what was prophesied about the coming of Jesus.

*Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows ...
He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities ...
And by His stripes we are healed. [Isaiah 53:4–5]*

And this is what Jesus said about the purpose of His coming.

The thief comes only in order to steal, kill and destroy. I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness. [John 10:10]

And this is what first century Christians wrote about what Jesus accomplished in coming at Christmas and then dying for our sins and rising from the dead at Easter.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. [Romans 6:23]

And this is what the Apostle John saw in his vision of the end of this age when Jesus returns.

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away ... And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Now God's home is with people! And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. And now I make all things new!' [Revelation 21:1–4]

This one who was born on Christmas morning has finished His work to save us from all evil, to help us in our time of need, and to give us a future that is full of hope and love forever. This is the reality that renews our joy every day as we share our life in Christ in the context of the community of Redeemer Baptist School. This is the good news that Christians through two millennia have wanted to share with others. This is why people stand spontaneously when Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus* is sung at Christmas—because the good news of the reign of Jesus Christ is that evil and sin and death is finished, and that all who trust Jesus to save them will share in that victory. That old Christmas carol is responding to the best news ever.

*Repeat the hymn again:
"To God on high be glory
And peace on earth to men!"*

I pray that you will know the joy of the full and holy cure that is yours in Jesus Christ this Christmas. Enjoy your holidays. We look forward to seeing you all at the end of January 2021.

The next generation of gospel workers—wonderful men and women who will give themselves to go anywhere at anytime to share with anyone the announcement and summons of the gospel—will need to know God deeply. It will not be enough to pass on what we have heard from others. We will need to be able to show by our lives that we have been with Jesus.

Mark Thompson, in *Societas* 2020

The vulnerability of adolescence is already a cocktail of unknowns. Add the disappointment of not being able to realise much-looked-forward-to milestones and I believe we will see an impact on their mental health. Are we prepared for this?

Professor Jennifer Rowley, *The hidden cost of COVID-19 to the 2020 Year 12 cohort*,
The University of Sydney 2020

After analysing data relating to 500,000 students in 64 countries, we found discipline is more important than investment. That is, all else being roughly equal, a school with good discipline will outperform a well-resourced one.

Dr Hana Krskova, *Discipline is more important than investment*,
in *Education Review* 2020

Reconciliation is simply the embrace between repentance and forgiveness. It is the encounter between one who says, “I’ve been foolish, I did wrong. Please forgive me. This will not happen again,” and the one who says, “I have been foolish too in not forgiving you, and have unnecessarily borne the bitterness of rancour. Of course I forgive you!”

Carlos Mantica, *Are You a Collector of Wounds or a Collector of Kindness?*,
in *Living Bulwark* 2020

The spread of coronavirus has upended life for American teenagers, with 95% of 13–17 year-olds in the U.S. reporting the cancellation of in-person classes at their school. Eight in 10 teens (80%) say they're following news about the coronavirus closely, and concern is high: 61% are worried they or someone in their family will be exposed to the virus, and 63% are worried about the effect it will have on their family's ability to make a living or earn money.

Laura Wronski, *Common Sense Media poll: Coronavirus and teenagers*, 2020

I see all of nature as the work of God, and science is the study of that. It's so inspiring to me to see the tiniest workings of God's creation.

Dr Caleb Dawson, *All things bright and beautiful*, in *The Australian* 2020

Christian teaching has long emphasised that we are sinful people in need of a Saviour; that we are capable of great evil, as well as great good.

Patrick Parkinson, *The erosion of marriage: family and faith in a multicultural society*,
New College Lectures 2020

Factors affecting disengagement leading to detachment include identity issues, learning difficulties, lack of financial resources, family dysfunction, mental illness, extra-curricular activities, school connectedness, academic motivation, relationships with teachers and peers, and bullying. Conservative estimates are that at least 50 000 children and young people of school age have detached from any educational program or institution, across the country at any given time.

Dr Jim Watterston and Megan O'Connell, *Those Who Disappear: The Australian education problem nobody wants to talk about*, Melbourne Graduate School of Education 2020

Watching two or more hours of television per day at age eight or nine is associated with lower reading performance compared with peers two years later, equivalent to losing four months of learning. Using a computer for more than one hour per day was linked to a similar degree of lost numeracy.

— Dr Lisa Mundy et al, *Electronic media use and academic performance in late childhood*, in Plos One 2020

The Lord had to humble me first through my captivity to get his attention. Then in his mercy he came and raised me up and lifted me to the very top of a wall. And from there I can only shout out in gratitude to the Lord for his great favours which he showed me without measure.

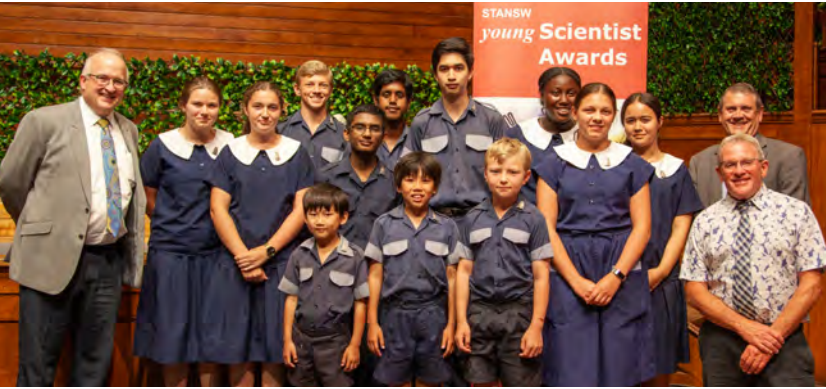
— St. Patrick of Ireland, *My Confession*, 387–460AD

Schools and families represent two parts of a broader moral ecosystem in which young people are formed, where conceptions of the good and the practices that embody those ideals are taught and reinforced. Healthy schools need healthy families and vice-versa. Young people need both for their growth and development into adulthood.

— Albert Cheng & Darren Iselin, *Australian Schools & the Common Good: Cardus Education Survey Australia*, 2020

Behind every integer lies a disintegrated personality. There's something that is not working the way God intended it to. There's someone who is shattered inside. Mankind wonders what is going wrong, where our failure is. We Christians know the answer: no matter how different the road one might have followed, the point of departure is always the same. All of our failures, both personal and social, have their root in the inner breakdown of humankind through sin and separation from God.

— Carlos Mantica, *Are You a Collector of Wounds or a Collector of Kindness?*, in Living Bulwark, 2020



Valete —Year 12

Dawit Abebe
Brooke Akele
Talar Alzened
Didem Aras
Ruth Burns
Dennis Dennis

Adam Gibson
Anthony Guirguis
Panialeise Hughes
Suzanne Jones
Caitlin Lievano

Darren Li
Tuan Mai
Jade Pathinather
Marcus Portelli
Adithya Prakash

Antonio Rajaratnam
Khelsie Thompson
Jack Wang
Mikalah Zammit
Simge Zohre
Sirach Zohre

