

Spring 2012

Applying God's word to heart and mind



# Strengthening Marriage

The Mary Andrews College Oasis Marriage Seminar was held on 21 June. Dr Sharon May, author and speaker, was the keynote speaker, and more than 180 people were captivated by both her scientific understanding of brain function integrated with theological reflection on how relationships work best.

The day began with Rev. Dr Keith Condie, Dean of Students at Moore College, leading a Bible study from Proverbs 3. His challenge was to help everyone to remember that the fear of the Lord is always the beginning of wisdom, in all areas of life, including marriage. Dr May then explained how the anatomy of the brain affects the way we argue, and the way we feel before, during and after those inevitable arguments.

The Rev. Dr Mark Thompson Head of Department of Theology, Philosophy and

Ethics at Moore College, attended with his wife Kathryn.

*"It's been great to focus on our marriage again. Ministry couples are called to be models to those to whom they minister.*

*Being in ministry means that there are significant impacts on marriage and family.... we need to recognize those impacts and do the best we can to deal with them properly."*

Rev. Al Stewart the Director of the Department of Evangelism and New Churches, attended because his wife Kathy wanted to go!

Kathy had a pertinent take-home message. *"I need to keep remembering that wives*

*aren't necessarily always right! Sharon had some great things to say about arguing and repairing relationships", she said.*

Rev. Joshua and Karen Ng from Unichurch (UNSW) have seen a number of marriages in crisis. *"I have seen some extreme cases of the problems Sharon mentioned," he said, "It was great to see that these problems can be better managed if they are recognized earlier."*

Karen's view was that *"....it was great to have a scientific explanation for something every one knows....that it's never a good idea to argue while angry. Everything Sharon said tied in perfectly with the wisdom we have from the Bible."*

**“Ministry couples are called to be models to those to whom they minister.”**

Above picture: Kathryn and Mark Thompson, Karen and Joshua Ng, Kathy and Al Stewart

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Jenny Brown speaking at CCNA



# CCNA Conference

It took a long time to organise. At times, we thought we would never be able to get everyone together in the same room.

*work, and integrating that with Christian theology has been the great bridge at this conference."*

But we did it! The first ever conference held by the Christian Care Network of Australasia has come and gone, and has been a resounding success!

**“ My hopes were to bring together people from many different perspectives, to enable them to meet as Christians who want to love people better. ”**

Jenny Brown, a clinical social worker and director of the Family Systems Institute, was a participant as well as a presenter at the conference. She gained some new insights which will enrich her own work.

Chair of CCNA Margaret Wesley could not be happier.

*“My hopes were to bring together people from many different perspectives, to enable them to meet as Christians who want to love people better. It was fantastic! We had people from different states and different professions but everyone got on together so well. One attendee told me that this was the best conference she has ever been to! Also, bringing together cutting edge psychological research, the best medical insights about how people*

*“What I took away from the conference is understanding how the context of people’s grief is so important, and the relationship context is so important. Grief really does change our physiology, and I will be thinking and reading much more about that.”*

Already plans are underway for the next conference to be held in 2014. While the topic has yet to be finalised, we are thrilled to know that there will be many, many caring professionals lining up to attend.



Jill McGilvray, Jackie Stoneman, Diane Turner and CCNA Chair, Margaret Wesley

## An update from the *Mc Coys*

Liz and Terry McCoy have finished their 6 months of language study on Groote Eylandt and have now moved to their new, permanent home at Nungalinya College in Darwin. Liz told us,

*“Our home is on the college grounds; a two minute walk to work through a tropical setting every morning. Wonderful in the dry season..... might need gum boots in the wet!! It has an open plan lounge, dining and kitchen with two bedrooms and a study, bathroom and separate toilet and laundry. A white rabbit and two Bush Stone-curlews keep me company when I put out the washing! Thanks for praying - we already feel at home here!”*

Liz begins her teaching in September, while Terry has already found lots of opportunities to use his practical skills around the College.



The McCoys house at Nungalinya College

# Oasis Conferences

Be refreshed in God's Word



Di Morgan leading the room in welcoming Dr May to Australia with a pie and her Aussie name "Shazza"!

## Oasis: something serving as a refuge, relief, or pleasant change from what is usual or difficult, etc.

So says the dictionary.....and Oasis 2012 was all of those things!

For two gloriously sunny winter days in June, we listened and talked and prayed, laughed and cried and reflected.

Dr Sharon May has now become an unofficial Aussie, basking in the joy of her new-found nickname "Shazza", and singing the praises of the great Australian meat pie.

The title for the weekend, *"Life.....It's All About Relationships"*, seemed a wide open topic, yet in the hands of such an accomplished, warm and winning speaker, it quickly became a topic that touched the hearts and the minds of everyone there.

With extraordinary clarity and humour, she explained the correlation between brain physiology and our emotions and reactions



Laughter and reflection at Oasis Conference

to others. At times, the hall echoed to roars of laughter. At other times, tears were wiped away as the women there realised that they need not be slaves to the past...that change was possible. Mary Andrews College Director of Studies Jackie Stoneman

“ Life.....  
It's All About  
Relationships ”

(who led two Bible studies which many people named as highlights of the weekend) could not be happier with the way this conference ran.

*"Though Sharon's reputation was universally admired, I was anxious to see how she would go in front of an Australian audience. I need not have worried! The words that people kept mentioning to me were "authentic" and "real". There was no hint of a performance about her. She spoke from her heart as well as from her enormous knowledge and experience. People just loved her! What I appreciated most is that Sharon May is all about what we at Mary Andrews College are all about: teaching women to inform their hearts and their minds from God's word and to equip them to serve Christ in every area of life. We are so grateful to Sharon for making the trip, and so grateful to God for the great talents he has given her."*

If you were unable to make it to Oasis, the talks are available on CD. To order them, visit [www.oasis.org.au](http://www.oasis.org.au)





## A word from *Jackie*

Rev. Jackie Stoneman,  
Director of Studies

Dear Friend,

As we prepare for the arrival of spring weather again, it is good to remember that it is the Lord who sends us the seasons and the times in which we live. So it is only appropriate to take a moment to reflect on all the great blessings we have had from the Lord's hand, and how much we have to look forward to!

I hope you have enjoyed reading about our busy conference season! It was really hard work to present three huge conferences in just eight days, but what a blessing they were to so many people! We are so grateful to the armies of people who smoothed the way in everything from logistics to food, to music, to operating the technical equipment. We are especially grateful to Sharon May whose warm manner and sharp mind captivated and informed us...and gave us plenty to smile about at the same time!

Almost immediately after the final conference (CCNA), I took off to Tasmania with Jill McGilvray, Chris Gerardis and Debbie Gould to present a southern conference on pastoral care. We got such a warm welcome from the Apple Islanders, and requests to come again. I hope we can. In fact, I hope we can hold conferences under the Oasis banner all over our country. Please pray that we might be wise in how we expand the Oasis conferences beyond Sydney. It takes so much energy and organisation, and we can do it only in the Lord's strength.

Now the year is speeding on its way to Christmas. We are looking forward to partnering with Col Marshall yet again in a second Oasis/ Vinegrowers Conference. I am preparing for our next Myanmar visit early in the new year, and look forward to seeing how the gifts you have sent and the prayers you have prayed will have been used by God in furthering the gospel in that land.

We are praying for a huge influx of new students in 2013. As we apply God's word to heart and mind, we can expect an increase in ministry being done in the churches of our city. We are also getting into the swing of holding intensives in some subjects, and find that the participants really appreciate condensing a semester's worth of work into just four days.

Dear friends, there is so much to do! Please pray that all the staff at the College would keep the gospel central in all we do. Please pray for strength and energy as we seek God's will for the College.

Yours in Christ's Service

**Rev. Jackie Stoneman**  
Director of Studies  
Mary Andrews College

## Mary Andrews College and Vinegrowers

**Col Marshall, author of *The Trellis and the Vine* is thrilled to be presenting a second Vinegrowers seminar, as part of our ongoing Oasis conferencing.**



Col told us, "I had no hesitation in accepting a second invitation to speak for Mary Andrews College! We had such a great response to the first Vinegrowers seminar in March. There was a wonderful interaction around the room. From

being a disciple to being a disciple maker, discussion flowed freely. I can really see how this seminar impacts people in all kinds of personal ministries, and the impact these ministries can have in strengthening a congregation."

Vinegrowers is an organisation devoted to teaching skills for making disciples for Christ throughout a whole lifetime. This seminar gives an opportunity to learn, not only from Col Marshall, but from the other people who attend. In any one seminar there will be decades of experience from which every attendee can learn. Whether you have been a Christian for years, or have just come to know Jesus, a Vinegrowers seminar will give specific skills in talking to people of all ages, interests and backgrounds. At Mary Andrews College, we believe that the responsibility to make disciples for Christ rests with every member of a congregation, not just the minister.

Please join us in this opportunity to meet, talk, pray, reflect and learn about a lifelong task that will last into eternity.

The Vinegrowers Seminar (part of Oasis Conferences) will be held at Dapto Anglican Church, Moombara St, Dapto on Saturday 10 November 2012, from 10am to 4pm. Everyone is welcome! Cost for the day (including lunch) is \$60, but a discount will apply to group bookings of 10 or more. **For more information call (02) 9284 1470 or visit [www.oasis.org.au](http://www.oasis.org.au) to register.**



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