



Keeping Focus in Gospel Ministry



For some years we have used the phrase “gospel-shaped ministry” to describe what we, at Trinity, are training people for. I like this language because it covers the basis of Word ministry as well as its purpose and means. In short, it keeps the main thing the main thing.

Reading 2 Corinthians over the last few months I am struck by how Paul defends his ministry of the gospel by pointing to its effects on him. That is, how his gospel-shaped ministry shapes him. This pops up throughout the book but is most clearly present in 2:14–5:10. I’ll just focus on one part of that long section in this piece, but the whole is worth going over when you have an hour or two – you’ll be much encouraged when you do.

Paul summarises his message in 4:1–6, beginning with the point that because gospel ministry is a mercy of God, he doesn’t “lose heart” (4:1, 16) – by which he means that he remains “bold” in his proclamation (see 3:12). While it is true

that Paul received the task of proclaiming Christ to the Gentiles at his conversion on the Damascus Road, the nature of gospel ministry as a mercy from God remains true for all who have been rescued from sin, death, and condemnation by it. No matter who we are, telling people about Jesus is a God-given privilege.

How does ministry as mercy play out for Paul? First, gospel ministry is telling the gospel pure and simple – no embellishments, gaps, or twists (4:2). We are handing on what we have received, and not luring people in. We strive for purity of motive and transparency of life so as to let the gospel do its work by God’s Spirit. I think this is extremely difficult in a world invaded by digital platforms, church podcasts, and dear old Facebook. Who wants to look daggy or shine less than others?

Second, the truth of the gospel is spiritually grasped and not a matter of sheer intellect (4:3–4). Nothing is more

disheartening than ears which refuse to listen to the saving message of Christ. Every age has its stumbling stones, but Paul is not speaking here of so-called defeater beliefs but a spiritual blindness which he attributes to the hand of Satan. Gospel proclaiming brings us into spiritual warfare 101. We will take hits from unbelievers and believers which will bring us back to the mercy of God and to prayer. Paul details in 4:7–12 how such things shape us into the likeness of Christ, making us more useful for him and others.

Third, the gospel which wondrously reveals the light of the glory of God in Christ also frees us from self-focus and recognition so we can give ourselves to others that they might be saved (4:5–6). How else can someone stay in the one town or country for decades and faithfully proclaim and live for Christ – and retain their joy in him? Loving and working with people not like him was a hallmark of Paul’s ministry.

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Preparing People for Effective Christian Service

Laying foundations for a ministry that upholds, proclaims, and is shaped by the gospel.

ttc.wa.edu.au

Clarity in Gospel Ministry

You roll out of bed on Saturday morning, full of energy, not a care in the world, content with a good week's work — you knew what you needed to get done, you had plenty of time to do it, and you achieved everything you set out to do without distraction. If that has ever described your week, I want to be you! The reality of ministry, and all work under the sun, is that there will always be more good things to do than can possibly be done, wherever you serve. Awash in a sea of competing demands, how do you keep the main focus in focus? Here are a few thoughts from a fellow traveller on this journey.

1. Be clear on what the main thing is

It's impossible to stay focused if you're not clear on what the main focus of ministry is. Jesus is building his Church, and we get to partner with him in making and growing disciples. If you're a Trinity student or graduate hopefully you're on board so far! But how specifically is your church contributing to Jesus' mission? What is your mission field? What are your prayers, hopes, and dreams for how God will use your church to grow Jesus' kingdom? Whether you call it a vision, or a mission statement, or a goal — you need to clearly articulate what it is that you are praying God will do in and through your church.

2. Be clear on what you can contribute

We are all wired and gifted in different ways, and God brings us together into church bodies equipped with a myriad of gifts. So, although your church should have one over-arching mission, every member of the body will contribute to that mission in their own way — including you. As those who serve in Christian leadership, we should be prepared to do anything to serve God's people; there is no task too lowly or humble. But also, we won't end up helping anyone much if we don't do the



Jon Rumble

things that we've been equipped to do because we're too busy trying to do everything. As a church grows, there will be ever more ideas and opportunities. As long as they will contribute to the overall mission and not distract from it, everyone has an opportunity to ask: who could be equipped and trained up to lead a team to do this? You can't do everything, so be clear on what you can contribute.

3. Be clear on how you manage yourself


It's possible to be clear on what the main thing is and what you can contribute to making that happen, and still get distracted because you're completely overwhelmed trying to manage all the demands. There is no perfect way to manage your time, energy, and attention. Analogue or digital, we all work differently. The important thing is to have some kind of system to manage everything and be clear on how you work. If at any point you're losing focus on what's really important, change the system!

Here are some resources I've found helpful:

- Tim Challies, *Do More Better*: Short, and a good place to start on keeping track of your schedule and tasks.

- Ryder Carroll, *The Bullet Journal Method*: Helpful if you're analogue-based but things are falling through the cracks.
- Cal Newport's books, especially *Deep Work*, *A World Without Email*, and *Slow Productivity*: Lots of helpful advice on focusing on what really matters.
- Carey Nieuwhof, *At Your Best: How to Get Time, Energy, and Priorities Working in Your Favour*: Lives up to its title.
- Software like *RescueTime*, *Timing* or *Toggl*: Helpful for finding out how your time was spent.

4. Be clear on what the main thing is

I know I already said that. But you need to keep coming back to it! Again and again. There's no point being clear on what you can contribute and how you work if you lose sight of what it's ultimately all about. Jesus is building his Church, and we get to play a part by partnering with him in making and growing disciples. How awesome is that! 

Jon Rumble MDiv 2014

Executive Pastor, Providence City Church

Keeping Focus in Gospel Ministry

Continued from cover page

The more he became their servant, the more Christ was elevated in his message and seen in him.

There are many forms and contexts of Word ministry — praise God! May the gospel shape us as well as our ministries!

In this issue, you will find stories of keeping focus on God and his gospel from a number of Trinity graduates working in a variety of ministry contexts. My prayer is that you will be encouraged by them and how God is at work.

Yours in Christ 

Don West Principal

Planning Your Way

In June last year, I was sitting on the edge of an ER bed in Sofia, Bulgaria's main hospital. The brain surgeon had just examined my CT scan. "We need to open up your skull," she said. "Soon. Days; not weeks." While thoughts of death and its impact on my family crossed my mind, my initial reaction was to lament that my summer plans were kaput.

Getting Here: In 2019, our family of six arrived in Bulgaria. Over the next four years, we built a centre for evangelism in our city, got involved with a village church, and continued learning Bulgarian. June in Europe is a time of great anticipation. School ends and long, hot days begin. The youth and adults we connected with had plenty of time to enjoy the outdoors, play board games until the early hours, and talk about Jesus. (Yeew!) Bring on July and August, forging new friendships and opportunities in the village. These connections would carry us into the dark and grey January afternoons. I anticipated a summer dedicated to glorifying God by sharing his marvellous news with new friends despite my challenges with their language.

But no one knew why there was an abscess in my brain. Naturally, I questioned, "Why are you doing this, Lord? Why now?"

Getting Back: The days surrounding the surgery were intense. Each family member coped with the uncertainty in their own way. Though we trusted God's care, at times I felt we were like juggling balls in a clown's act. By God's grace, the surgery in Greece went well. Five weeks later, we decided to return to Perth for further medical check-ups and family recuperation.

Getting Some Perspective: When I first spoke with my good friend, and our sending church's pastor (a Trinity graduate), he gave me a proverb: "The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps" (Prov 16:9). As I described our ordeal, he seemed less shocked than me, perhaps due to his years as a missionary in a closed country. He had faced heart-wrenching situations and life-threatening encounters, always with Jesus by his side. His familiarity with God's timing gave the proverb greater weight.


Getting to the Limit: A few weeks later, it felt like we were juggling balls again. My wife, Anne, suffered panic attacks from burnout, lost her milk from stress, and our baby daughter started losing weight. My surgery scans showed abnormalities. We wondered how we would return to our work, schooling, and life in Bulgaria. After we all received excellent counselling from a family therapist and, planning carefully,



A village church service in north-west Bulgaria

we decided to return in September, when school started. This raised alarms among friends and family, concerned for our well-being. At a Pioneers monthly prayer meeting, my former New Testament lecturer sent me this verse: "The Lord is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed" (Deut 31:8). My experienced and wise brother was also less shocked by our challenges. He had journeyed through difficulties and unexpected traumas, familiar with God's timing and faithfulness. He reminded me of this with the verse.

Getting On: Fast forward to now, and everything is as it was before the mystery abscess. We are back in our Communist-era apartment, everyone's health is good, our daughter's weight gain is impressive, the MRI scans are clear (there is a brain), and our evangelism and pastoring work is chugging along.

The Lord never gives us more than we can handle. Even if it feels overwhelming, it isn't, because he is in control and cares for us. Prayer weaves this story together. At every moment, either we or those around us were praying to God, who is the King in control. This story is not about human shock and reaction but about God's faithfulness: his timing, presence, care, mission, and plans. Do not fear; he goes ahead of you and it all glorifies him. 

Fletcher Creelman MDiv 2017
Missions Worker with Pioneers, Bulgaria



TRINITY
INFO NIGHT &
OPEN WEEK

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INFO NIGHT
9 SEPTEMBER

OPEN WEEK
9-13 SEPTEMBER



Near-Sighted, Far-Sighted Focus

In one sense, in keeping focus on the main focus of ministry, the country is no different to any other location. We must keep the gospel of Jesus' death and resurrection at the forefront of all that we do now and into the future. At Geraldton Anglican Cathedral we have two plans: a near-sighted plan and a far-sighted plan to ensure we keep the focus right.

Near-sighted

We have a simple yet meaningful threefold focal (mission) plan for the gospel, which we use for all our ministry assessment and development: REACH others for Christ (Matt 28:19-20), BUILD one another up in Christ (Eph 4:15-16), LIVE for Christ (Gal 2:20). This ensures we have an outward focus, a body of Christ focus, and a personal focus for the gospel now. Each of our ministries must be helping the church to achieve at least one, preferably two of these mission goals. Each ministry leader will be

asked to assess their ministry effectiveness based on these mission goals. For example, a new mums' Bible study group is considering how they intentionally BUILD and LIVE. To achieve these goals, they will have multiple strategies. Some examples for BUILD are that they will be reading, exploring and applying the Bible together each week to build their knowledge and love of God. They will also commit to praying, pastorally caring, and keeping each other accountable in their personal lives to help achieve the goal to LIVE for Christ.

To train up these current ministry leaders we conduct ministry equipping sessions. Amongst other modules, Trinity in Town is helping us to do this each year with units from the Certificate in Christian Studies curriculum.

Far-sighted

Whilst keeping the current generation focused on the gospel is critical, so too is planning for the next generation (and generations after). This is where country churches have a greater challenge. How do we ensure that there are faithful, able, reliable people being prepared now, ready to lead the next generation? 2 Timothy 2:2 says, *"What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful people, who will be able to teach others also."*

We want to disciple and equip the next generation of disciple equippers, who will equip the next generation, and so on. The Diocese of North West Australia has historically been a net importer of trained ministers.



Lachlan performing a baptism at Holy Cross Cathedral, Geraldton

ANNUAL LECTURE


With Gary Millar

Monday 21 October
7:30pm - 9:30pm
Subi Church



REGISTER ONLINE



This year we have launched a Ministry Training Pipeline that will give the opportunity for rural and remote North West Christians to experience and consider future vocational ministry. There are three key stages to this pipeline: Ministry Apprenticeship (2 years), Theological Study (3 years) and, Curacy (2-3 years as an Assistant Minister in training). A person can enter into the pipeline at any stage. This is an eight year, far-sighted, equipping program to ensure that the next generation also keeps the gospel focus of ministry in the Anglican Church of North West Australia. 

Lachlan Edwards BTh 2005

Dean, Geraldton Anglican Cathedral

In the Workplace

I am a ministry worker with City Bible Forum, a parachurch marketplace ministry operating for more than 33 years in Australia. What started as a ministry in the Sydney CBD has now, under God's hand, spread to other capital cities and regional centres, including Perth and WA. It facilitates faith and work integration, with a particular focus on evangelism.

Partnership and interaction between churches and between various parachurch ministries is integral for gospel ecosystem vitality for kingdom growth.


We focus and confine our equipping and mobilising work by filling gaps and complementing, not duplicating, the discipleship that is the remit of the local church. A key example is not running typical Bible study groups for Christians. Rather, we facilitate Evangelistic Prayer Teams (EPTs) as the engine room where Christian workers meet together to support each other's workplace mission endeavours. Christians meet and briefly discuss the EPT Bible material as a springboard to focus the rest of the session praying for their workplaces and colleagues. Prayers intentionally focus on their spiritual conversations and invitations to meet Jesus in the pages of the Bible.

Our core mission statement is "to reach the world through the workers with the good news of Jesus." A central goal is "to see a thousand people meeting Jesus in the pages of the Bible." That's non-believers reading the Bible with a Christian we train and support. Every network and activity works towards that goal. Outreach events, discussion groups and blogs all introduce Jesus or biblical thought at different levels to meet seekers where



Léni-Jo McMillan

they are in their spiritual investigations. People are always invited to examine the bigger questions in more depth, especially options to read the words of Jesus directly for themselves with someone. To keep our goal in focus, each staff team has a short, sharp weekly meeting to pray and make specific commitments for the following week towards this "Wildly Important Goal" amidst the whirlwind of everyday ministry work.

These prayerful team and individual activities support our key ministry initiatives and keep us focused on reaching the world with the good news about Christ. 

Léni-Jo McMillan

BTh 2015

Perth City Bible Forum Leader

Student Profile

Our Purpose: Preparing people for effective Christian service

It is only with your partnership in financial support and prayer that we can prepare men and women like these for Word ministry

My name is Joy Owuor and I am currently studying part-time for a Diploma of Theology. I am actively involved at North Beach Baptist Church (NBBC) as an MTS Apprentice in children's ministry, under the guidance of my mentor, Hayley Pearce. Before this role, I gained experience in children's ministry alongside studying nursing at TAFE. Hayley's mentorship has been enlightening and encouraging, expanding my understanding of ministry.

My family and I have been part of NBBC for nearly a decade, having moved to Australia from Kenya. I grew up in Cape Town, South Africa, where I embraced Christianity at a young age. My faith journey has been about discovering God's unconditional love and grace through various Christian communities, camps, and mentorships.

Initially hesitant about theological studies due to past academic challenges, I reconsidered after supportive discussions with pastors, mentors, family, and friends. Pursuing theological studies at Trinity has strengthened my faith and prepared me for vocational ministry, especially in children's ministry. The supportive community and rigorous academic environment have deepened my understanding of the Old Testament and my relationship with Christ.

Please pray that my studies continue to enrich my faith and deepen my love for Jesus Christ.



Please donate now
and support us in training
students for Word ministry

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Ministry Matters

Keeping Focused


“What will make us better in what God has called us to do?” That’s a question Archie Poulos has focused on for many years during his ministry with Moore Theological College. At Ministry Matters in May, Archie conducted a workshop on his research into building competency in ministry.

We began with brainstorming; firstly, what is needed for competency in ministry, and secondly, the development needs and ministry issues that should be addressed to enhance ministry. I personally found it helpful sitting in a group of well-trained ministers of the gospel who, first, share the same convictions and priorities for ministry and second, face the same challenges I do in ministry – from balancing many competing demands to being able to clean the hair out of the church’s vacuum cleaner.

We were presented with a model for integrating purpose and performance which Archie has adapted for church ministry. The model identifies ten roles required for a competent ministry. They include defender, discipler, innovator, modeller, missionary, networker, shepherd, guardian, steward and integrator. While the scope of some of these roles are fairly intuitive, I suggest listening to the talks available on the Trinity website for an explanation: ttc.wa.edu.au/college-resources

The second main part of Archie’s presentation was a look at the gap between purpose and performance from surveys of Sydney Anglican ministers. The most interesting data to me was that of perceived strengths. Personally, I think it is unsurprising that shepherd, modeller and discipler came out on top among all the responses with missionary in fifth. I suspect we would have the same result if Trinity graduates were surveyed. After all, are these not what we do theological training to become equipped for? I was also not surprised that guardian, networker and steward came out on the bottom.

The third main part of the day was a look at behaviours and their modification where we got practical. We identified personal areas of growth and set goals.

My key take away was that effective Christian ministry will have all of these roles being filled, though not by one person. I took time later that week to list how and by whom the roles are (or are supposed to be) fulfilled at my church. It is helpful to be more aware of all the roles and identify how we can grow as we serve our Lord Jesus in gospel ministry. 

Bruce Polmear MDiv 2010

Associate Pastor,
 Claremont Baptist Church

Ministry Matters with Archie Poulos



Friendships and Time Away



Discussion and reflection at the Dunsborough Retreat

One of the great opportunities for students at Trinity is the chance to form and maintain meaningful relationships in a focused academic environment. While our primary time on campus is dedicated to attending lectures, working on assignments, and studying in the library, these shared experiences create unique and incidental moments that foster strong connections.

It's true that one of the great blessings and privileges of the Christian life are the new relationships God puts us in. Not only is God now my Father and Christ my brother, but so too are we now blessed with a multitude of brothers and sisters in Christ. Extending that thought, this means that my classmates are not simply classmates, but in a very real way we are family.


So, at the start of the semester break, a group of students and families headed off to Dunsborough for a few days. There we got to enjoy what was essentially a family holiday. The event and location itself was organised through Spero Ministries, a ministry that facilitates retreats for Christian leaders. There was no packed itinerary,

no professional development. The agenda was simply for us to sit down, relax, and enjoy each other's company.

The location was a small estate nestled in the hills overlooking Dunsborough and Geographe Bay. Coffee in the morning, with lunch and dinner together in the afternoon and evening. Some of us played board games, others went for bike rides or had a swim. One day we all went for a short walk along the coast, on another day a group of us visited local sights. In the evening there were conversations by the fireside.

Now while there was no agenda, we took the time before each meal to hear the testimony of someone from the group. What a joy it was to learn how God has been at work in our lives, both to bring us to salvation and to increasingly transform us into the image of Christ.

Overall, it was a wonderful time. My encouragement to those reading this, especially if you are a student here at Trinity, is that you do likewise. It doesn't need to

be a trip to Dunsborough but take the time to intentionally enjoy and invest in this family that God has put you in while you're at Trinity. God willing, these are the men and women you will be serving alongside with in ministry for the next few decades. There will be ups and downs, and we will need each other if we are to persevere. 

Mal Walker

MDiv Student

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9 SEPTEMBER

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Keeping Focus in Times of Transition

First, it is always good to praise God for his many blessings. We thank God for all those who helped us to achieve our goal for the Trinity Mid Year Appeal. Thank you for your prayers and support that allow us to stay focused on training gospel workers.



Ben Johnston

Second, Trinity Theological College has entered a season of change. Change can be scary, challenging, awkward, and exciting. Healthy transitions don't just happen. Doing transitions well

requires much prayer and planning. Our beloved Principal, Don West, will be stepping down from his role as Principal of the College at the end of the year. Don has served at Trinity for 27 years and led the College as Principal for the

past 21 years. We praise God for Don and Athena. They are wonderful examples of dedicated Christian servants of the Lord.

Keeping our focus means praising God for these faithful servants. We are planning an evening of celebration for the College and our friends on 12 November at North Coast Church. We would love for you to sign up to come.

Here are three ways that you can support Trinity in these changing times.

1. Please keep Trinity Theological College in your prayers.
2. Please join us for our Trinity Celebration on 12 November.
3. Please support Trinity as you are able. Your gifts greatly assist us in our mission of training gospel workers.

Ben Johnston
Development Officer

Give thanks for:

- The great start to Semester 2 with 14 new students
- A positive response to the Mid Year Appeal
- The privilege of serving God and helping to equip men and women for gospel ministry

Pray for:

- Prospective students to register for Open Week (9-13 September) and many applications to study in 2025
- Preparations for the Annual Lecture on 21 October with Gary Millar
- A wonderful celebration for Don and Athena West on their departure from the College
- Wisdom and discernment for the Principal Search Committee

Dates for 2024

9-13 Sep	Open Week
21 Oct	Annual Lecture
2 Nov	Quarterly Prayer Breakfast
12 Nov	Trinity Celebration

Trinity Celebration

Join us for an evening of thanksgiving for God's merciful goodness to and through Trinity Theological College over the past 27 years, including reflections on the ministry of **Don and Athena West** on Don's retirement as Principal.

With guest speaker **Kanishka Raffel**, Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, worship leader Tenielle Neda, and testimonies from students past and present.

Date: Tuesday 12 November
Time: 7:30pm - 9:30pm
Venue: North Coast Church
Cost: \$15
Dress code: Business attire

Register by 9 October

Refreshments and dessert included, please advise of any dietary requirements

