

# Table of Contents

Introduction	3	
Study 1	Church The Presence of the Son of God in the World	5
Study 2	Word God Has Spoken and Still Speaks	11
Study 3	Worship Worship is Life, Life is Worship	16
Study 4	Witness Proclaiming Jesus By Our Words and Actions	21
Study 5	Work Redeeming the Time and Serving Our Neighbour	28
Prayer Points	33	

*Prayer Points Week 5*

## *Introduction*

**These five studies mark a clarifying of our self understanding at Central Sydney—the shape of our life together.**

It will be out of the knowledge of what God wants us to be that we will understand what it is that we are to do.

Each study is composed of a theological summary, followed by the Bible Study. Then there is a place for you to write down the implications, and finally a place for you to write the things we should value as a church and as individuals. Some values have already been added to 'prime the pump' and get you thinking. There will be opportunity to incorporate some of those values into the final statement of the shape of our life together.

We will be encouraging everybody to join in groups over this five week period, and your prayerful preparation will mean greater clarity for our church as we look forward for where God wants us to be.

*Prayer Points Week 1*

*Prayer Points Week 2*

*What We Value  
For the Individual*

*For Church*

- People for who they are, not for what they do
- Those who do 'ordinary' work as much as those in full-time paid ministry
- Those who work but are not paid
- Being Male or Female
- Teaching that breaks down false distinctions
- Encouragement to do good work
- The challenge to see God at work in all the vocations to which he has called us
- The attitude towards work as vocation rather than career
- 

**Study One** **Church**  
**The Presence of the Son of God in the World**

*Theology*

We are gathered together by the gospel about the Son of God and we are given the Spirit of Sonship so that, as a community and as individuals, we might continue to live the life of the Son of God in this world under our king, Jesus.

Being sons in the Son of God will mean that we display the four-fold characteristics of word, worship, witness and work.

WORD

WITNESS



WORK

WORSHIP

## *Bible Study*

God wants us to open our eyes and see what he is calling us to in Jesus. God is calling us to nothing less than to be the Son of God in Christ in the world. If we took this upon ourselves it would be blasphemy, but it lies at the heart of what God has always called his people to be.

All of our sensitivities continue to warn us against the great calling God holds out to us in Christ. But unless we enter into the reality of being the Son of God in Christ in the world we will only end up being disobediently polite and reduce God's purposes to a merely individualistic salvation rather than the cosmic redemption that God is working in Christ.

1. How many sons does God have in the bible? See Luke 3.38; Psalm 2; Exodus 4.22,23.

2. What are God's sons to do?  
Adam—Genesis 1.26-30

Israel—Exodus 19.5,6

David and his sons—2 Samuel 7.1-17

3. How does the diagram illustrate the role of the Son of God?



11. If God is bringing about a new creation, a new heaven and a new earth, will there still be work (not toil) to do?

12. What might it look like?

*Implications  
For Me*

*For Us*

5. Look at Ephesians 5.22-6.9 and Colossians 3.18-4.1. How fundamental did Paul see a right attitude toward our vocations as being?

6. Why are Christians so often comfortable with the public-private, sacred-secular division in our lives?

7. Why is the world so comfortable with the public-private, sacred-secular division in our lives?

8. How does Philippians 2.5-11 undermine those distinctions?

9. What are some of the modern heresies regarding work and sexuality?

10. How could Christians, in their own work and sexuality, witness to the world a healthy understanding?

4. Read Luke 4.1-13. How does Jesus succeed where all these other sons of God have failed?

5. What did Jesus reject in Satan's offers?

6. What path did Jesus choose instead of the path of power without glory?

7. How did Jesus' ministry demonstrate his faithfulness to the very end?

Read Galatians 4.4-7—

But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

8. What does Jesus' obedience do for Jews—those under the law?

9. As a consequence of now being God's sons through Jesus' work, what are they given?

10. All believers are given the Spirit. What does the Spirit enable us to do?

Calling God Abba Father denotes a relationship of intimacy, but also so much more. It is to bring order to the world out of chaos, and establish God's rule (kingdom) in Christ.

The New Testament calls us to no less a task in Christ than subduing the earth and filling it in Christ.

Read 1 Corinthians 12.1-29; Ephesians 4.1-16; Colossians 1.15-20.

11. What do you think it means for the church to be the body of Christ, and filled with his Spirit in the world, in relation to the whole idea of the church being the Son of God in Christ?

12. How does church—the presence of the Son of God in the world—make sense in relation to these passages?

13. Describe the life of the true Son of God in the world—Jesus.

We embrace our vocation in the relational roles God has given us to fulfil - male and female; single and married, husband, wife, father, mother or child, and in the work he has given us to do.

Our vocation, our work, is not where we find life - we find it in God. Our work is the place God has called us to live out our life in Christ and serve our neighbour.

'Ordinary' paid work is valued as much as 'full-time' paid gospel ministry and non-paid work.

In our vocations we have the opportunity to glorify God and serve our neighbour.

## *Bible Study*

1. What was the work that God called Adam and Eve to perform at creation?

2. What do you think God meant when he said, "Subdue the earth and fill it"?

3. With the Fall, how has work become corrupted? (Part of this may be the way that we value ourselves and others.)

4. Since the Fall, how has our understanding of sexuality (gender) become distorted?

# Study Five

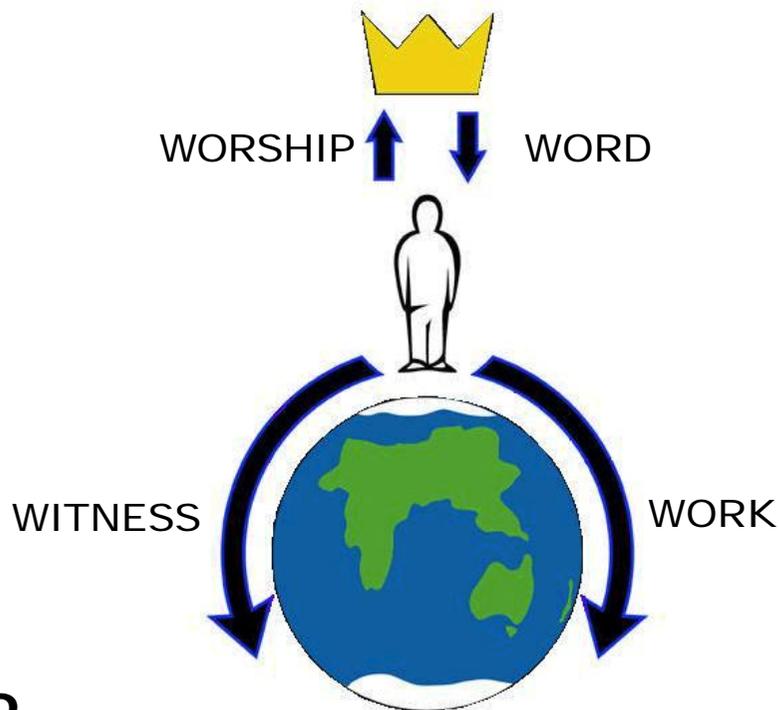
# Work

## ***Redeeming the time and serving our neighbour***

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges that faces Christians today is to live a life that is integrated—a life where their sexuality and their 'work' is integrated into their understanding of being children of God. Unfortunately, sexuality and work are no longer considered vocations given by God, but have been trivialised in modern devotional theology to be the background against which we live our piety, rather than the field in which God has called us to live.

### *Theology*

There is no public/private or sacred/secular division in life - Jesus is the Lord of all, of heaven and earth, things seen and unseen. Therefore he calls us to work out the truth of his Lordship in every area of our lives. This will mean the embracing our God-given vocations as human beings made in his image.



14. Now read Romans 8.15-27. Describe the life of God's sons in Christ in the world.

15. What similarities should there be between our attitude and that of Christ?

16. How is suffering part of the very fabric of the experience of the 'son of God'?

17. What is it that, despite the suffering, enables a 'son of God' to keep moving forward? (cf Hebrews 12.2)

### *Implications*

Some implications for this first study could be: How do we live under God? How do we in Christ subdue the earth and fill it? Think of the structure of many of Paul's letters to give you an idea of how that might work out in your life and in the life of the church.

*For Me*

*For Us*

## *What We Value*

From your implications above, make short positive sentences that describe what you value for yourself, and what you think we should value together as a church.

### *For the Individual*

### *For the Church*

## *What We Value*

### *For the Individual*

- Evangelism
  - the clear presentation of the gospel of the crucified Son of God
  - boldness and courage in delivering the message appropriately
  - Dependence upon God message and means to bring others to him the folly of what we preach and the weakness of who we are
- The support of Christian Missionaries.
- Lives that are lived in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ
- Service to the sick, the downtrodden and the disenfranchised – the continuing ministry of Jesus in this world.
- 

### *For Church*

- Evangelism
  - the clear presentation of the gospel of the crucified Son of God
  - boldness and courage in delivering the message appropriately
  - Dependence upon God message and means to bring others to him the folly of what we preach and the weakness of who we are
- The support of Christian Missionaries.
- Lives that are lived in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ
- Service to the sick, the downtrodden and the disenfranchised – the continuing ministry of Jesus in this world.
-

## *Social Responsibility*

13. How should Christians as individuals and churches demonstrate social responsibility?

14. Should we join in marches for reconciliation with the Aborigines, or against war?

15. Read Philemon. What were some of the radical outworkings of the gospel in the lives of the early Christians in regard to social expectations?

*Implications  
For Me*

*For Us*

## *Study Two*

## *Word*

### *God Has Spoken and God Still Speaks*

#### *Theology*

**God has created all things by speaking life into chaos and light into darkness through his Spirit-filled Word.**

**God created Israel, His people, to be the bearer of his spoken Word in the darkness of the nations' idolatry and bring life through the knowledge of the True God.**

**God has spoken ultimately in His Son, the Word made flesh, Jesus, the Christ in whose face we see God.**

**God has spoken through the apostles, who by the power of the Holy Spirit have testified that life and light have come into the world through the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus.**

**God still speaks life and light into this world and into our lives by the Spirit empowered word he has spoken so that we might know him and be light-bearers for others in the darkness.**



## *Bible Study*

1. Read Genesis 1.1-5. What elements are active in God's creation of life on earth?
2. Read 1 Thessalonians 1.4,5. What elements are active in God's new creation?
3. Look up 1 Corinthians 1.18-2.5. What is God's message to the world? (v18)
4. How does the world respond to God's Word of the cross?
5. Why does God choose to speak the foolish and weak Word of the cross to the world? (v20-21)
6. What is working with the Word for people in the world to see the cross as the wisdom and power of God? (2.4,5)
7. What do Jews demand?

7. If we separate the gospel message from our living how might that pervert the gospel itself?

## *Evangelism*

8. Summarise the gospel message.

9. Does your gospel message have anything about the here and now, or just about heaven after we die?

10. What point is there to the resurrection if we are just going to be in heaven?

11. When we proclaim the gospel, what are we inviting people to do?

12. Could it be that our disengagement with the world has meant that our evangelism is less potent?

4. Christians often debate the priority of evangelism and social responsibility. If we look at Jesus' ministry what do we see in relation to these two broad categories? Give examples.

Word—Evangelism	Works—Social Responsibility

5. Why do we tend to favour one side over the other when in Jesus we see that witness is a word/act?

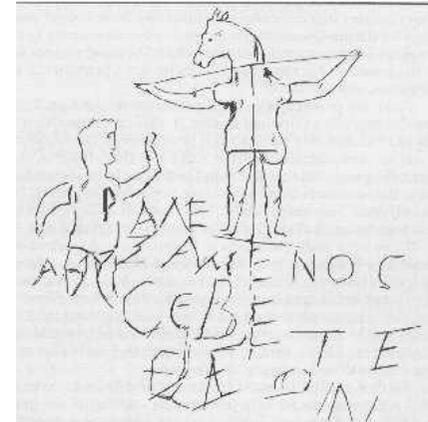
Jesus not only talks about the kingdom of God—he lives it, demonstrates it, expresses it in every aspect of his living.

6. Read Philippians 2.12-16. How does the idea of word and act, evangelism and life, show itself as the two sides of one coin?

8. How was this true in Jesus' ministry?

9. What do Greeks look for?

Look at the picture below as an example of how people heard the message of the crucified saviour.



10. The caption reads "Alex worships his God". Describe the person being crucified.

11. What does the Word create? (v26-29)

12. How does our life together in part mirror that of the Word of the cross?

13. To what end? Why?

14. Why does God speak his powerful words in weakness and his wise words veiled in foolishness? (v29-31)

15. What is the nature of human rebellion?

16. From the example of Paul, we get an insight of how we should present the word to the world—witness. What did Paul ensure about his method of proclaiming the message of the cross? (2.1-3)

17. What was the reason for doing this? (v4-5)

We are people of the Word. We are created by the Word of the gospel, a word that is foolishness to the world and our life is sustained by the Spirit-filled Word that God continues to speak through his word, the Bible.

### *Implications For Me*

Israel—

The kings of Israel—

Jesus—

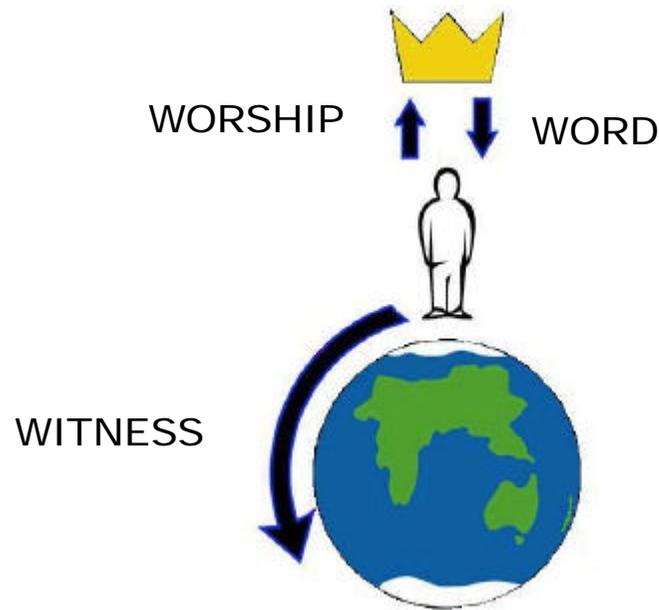
2. Try to summarise what was common in each, and its relationship to the kingdom of God.

3. Look at Matthew 28.18ff where Jesus commissions the eleven disciples. How is the diagram an appropriate representation of what Jesus is calling his disciples to do?



We believe God is the primary evangelist who, in Jesus Christ, has come into the world to seek and save the lost. Those he has saved, he calls alongside himself in the work of witness.

Witness is two-fold: the testimony of our mouths and the testimony of our lives. We proclaim by our words God's victory in the death and resurrection of his Son, Jesus. We proclaim by our lives the renewing power of God already at work in this world that turns us from being lovers of self to lovers of God and our neighbour. We long to see others come to know the God who has revealed himself in Jesus.



## *Bible Study*

The Sons of God—Adam, Israel, the kings of Israel and Jesus—have always had a witnessing role that comes from the knowledge and love of God.

1. Describe the witnessing role for each of these figures.

Adam—

## *For Us*

### *What We Value*

#### *For the Individual*

- Reading God's word personally
- Studying God's word personally
- Preaching of God's word
- Application of God's word in our time and place
- 

#### *For the Church*

- Reading God's word corporately
- Studying God's word corporately
- Preaching of God's word
- Application of God's word in our time and place
-

## Study Three

## Worship

***Worship is Life, Life is Worship***

Worship is the response that we make to God's word. It is never independent of the revelation of himself in Jesus Christ.

### *Theology*

Our only reasonable response to God's gracious Word of salvation in His Son is a life that aims at loving God with all our mind, heart and strength.

This God-ward life is Christ-shaped - a life of dying to self and finding, in death, a new way of living for God and our neighbour.

The God-ward life is Spirit-filled, word-full, prayer-full, people-full, repentant and forgiving.

The 'school' of worship is the community of God's people – the Church, the Body of Christ, the Temple of the Holy Spirit, the Bride of Christ where we are reminded how to love God well, to praise his name, to listen to him, to speak to him, to repent and forgive. It is in our worship together that we learn how to worship apart.

True Worship can only be by the work of the Spirit in us for it is the transformation of our lives. The Spirit transforms our living from mere existence and self-love to a life of love and service to God and our neighbour in our transformed living.

### *Bible Study*

1. Read Romans 12.1. Where does true worship flow from? (cf Romans 11.32)

## Study Four

## Witness

***Proclaiming Jesus by our words and actions***

"Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is the ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless missions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.

"Worship, therefore, is the fuel and goal in missions. It's the goal of missions because in missions we simply aim to bring the nations into the white-hot enjoyment of God's glory. The goal of missions is the gladness of the peoples in the greatness of God.

"But worship is also the fuel of missions. Passion for God in worship precedes the offer of God in preaching. YOU can't commend what you don't cherish. Missionaries will never call out "Let the nations *be glad!*", *who cannot say from the heart, "I rejoice in the Lord... I will be glad and exult in thee, I will sing praise to thy name, O Most High"* (Psalm 104:34; 9:2). Missions begins and end in worship.

"If the pursuit of *God's* glory is not ordered above the pursuit of *man's* good in the affections of the heart and the priorities of the church, *man* will not be well served and *God* will not be duly honoured. I am not pleading for a diminishing of missions but for a magnifying of God. When the flame of worship burns with the heat of God's true worship, the light of missions will shine to the most remote peoples on earth. And I long for that day to come!"

John Piper *Let the Nations Be Glad!* pp11-12

### *Theology*

Witness is the privilege of those who have heard God's word and worship him - those who pray that others will join them in the worship of the only true God.

and evening prayers to focus and structure your heart and mind on living a life of responsiveness to God because of his mercy. At the point of the prayers of intercession you should pray prayers for people, the church, and for the world. At the point at which the Psalms are read, begin with the first Psalm and learn to pray with the people of Israel. It may be worthwhile to covenant as a group to pray these prayers for a week, then discuss what you learned in the discipline.

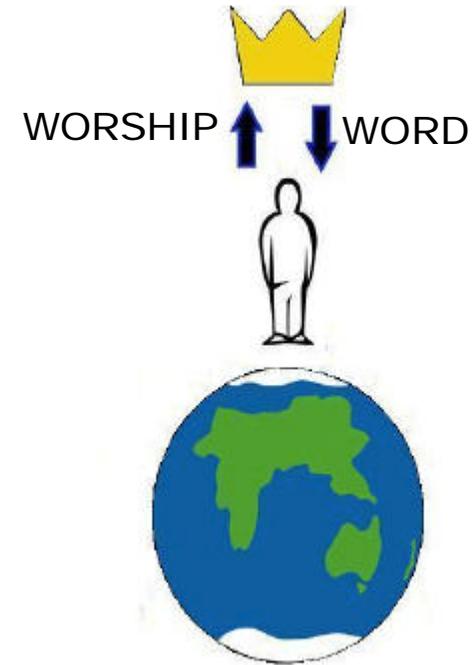
*Implications  
For Me*

*For Us*

*What We Value  
For the Individual*

*For Church*

- Times we spend together as opportunities to be reminded that being human is a matter of worshipping God.
- Prayer for one another to be God dependent, Christ-like and obedient.
- Reminders of the significance of the everyday and encouragement to live our whole life as a response to God's mercy.
- 



2. How does Paul's doxology—Romans 11.33-36—give us a sense of the Christian impulse to worship God?

3. What is the reasonable ('spiritual' is not a good translation) response to this great and merciful God?

4. Where does Paul get his language of "offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God" from?

5. In what way then, is the Christian life to be like Christ's life?

6. "What Christians do when they get together on Sunday isn't worship—worship is what you do every day." What is wrong and what is right with this statement?

7. Read Romans 12.2. How does Paul see the process of a Christian living out their worship in the world?

8. What are Christians to resist?

9. What are Christians to submit to?

10. Worship contains the idea of allegiance. How is the question of competing loyalties played out in v2?

In the second part of v2 it seems that a mind that is transformed will be able to negotiate the vast array of choices we are confronted with.

11. How will our mind be transformed?

12. What is your commitment to these 'God-given means of grace' for transformation?

13. What things will be evident within a worshipful life?

14. Where does a Christian learn how to pray, how to read their Bible, how to praise, how to love, how to forgive, etc?

15. What then is the connection between the worship we do as a Christian community and the worship we do in our lives apart?

The church has a rich tradition of corporate worship—ways that Christians in the past have learned to orient themselves about the God who has spoken and is rich in mercy, and be available for him in their daily lives. One of our problems as modern Christians is that we think that everything old is useless and that authenticity can only be found in spontaneity. As GK Chesterton said, "Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors—it is the democracy of the dead. Tradition refuses to submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking about. All democrats object to men being disqualified by the accident of birth; tradition objects to their being disqualified by the accident of death."

With this study you have been given a version of Cramner's Book of Common Prayer. The suggestion is that you might use the morning prayers