

GROUNDWORK: TRAINING FOR THE ORDINARY CHRISTIAN LIFE



Prospectus 2010

Biblical — deeply rooted in the Scriptures

Practical — rich theology, applied in detail and relevant to real life

Relational — because the Christian life was never meant to be lived alone

Contextual — remain in your normal work and Christian community

Accessible — no prior theological education required

Flexible — schedule is adaptable to suit your circumstances

Affordable — quality training at a reasonable price

"We started The Porterbrook Network to equip churches to respond with the gospel to the needs of the contemporary world. We want to see lives transformed and brought under the kingship of Jesus. I'm delighted that Groundwork is using and adapting Porterbrook resources for Australia, and I pray that these will help local churches carry out Jesus' mission there."

Steve Timmis, Director,
The Porterbrook Network



What is Groundwork?

Groundwork is an evangelical and non-denominational training network that helps churches to ground their members in the gospel and equip them for the work of the ordinary Christian life. This 'ordinary Christian life' is distinctive: we make the teaching about our God and Saviour attractive as we lead lives of love for Jesus, his people, and his world. This is not just something we do on Sundays. The gospel of grace needs to shape every aspect of our lives: how we manage our households, how we go about our work, what we do with our wealth and resources, how we conduct our relationships. Groundwork Training equips participants to live for Christ in every sphere of life.

Why do we need it?

Every generation faces the challenge of carrying out Jesus' Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20) within their own

context. There are two aspects to Jesus' charge:

- make disciples — that is, see people turn and follow King Jesus for the first time (what we call 'mission');
- teach them to obey — that is, see people living properly under the rule of King Jesus (what we call 'discipleship').

The methods we use to promote mission and discipleship will differ according to our context — where and when we are in the world. Under a 'Christendom' model, the local church has a central, visible role in the wider community. The values in the community will be broadly 'Christian'. People will come to church events on Sundays and hear the gospel preached. In contemporary Australia, however, only 19% of people attend any kind of church at least once a month,¹ and we know that these are not all places where the gospel



“The Porterbrook Network is an innovative resource that offers affordable, high-quality training for mission and ministry in the 21st century. I warmly recommend it.”

Tim Keller, Senior Pastor at Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York

is proclaimed faithfully and clearly. The values in the wider community are far from being ‘Christian’, so there is endless temptation for believers to be seduced by the ways of this world.

The front line of discipleship and mission, then, is not just our public gatherings on Sundays, but the everyday lives of ordinary Christians, lived out together in obedience to King Jesus. Most people will not come to us to hear the gospel; we must take the gospel to them — in our homes, workplaces, schools, cafés, pubs, and parks. Our corporate life in our local churches must be a demonstration of the gospel. By the way we love Jesus, love one another, and love his world, we show that King Jesus’ reign is good.

To fulfil this vision, Christians need to be equipped for the ordinary Christian life.

How is Groundwork distinctive?

There are many institutions and courses that train people to teach from the Scriptures and to lead congregations of God’s people. We thank God for them. But Groundwork offers something very different. The apostle Paul teaches us that the body of Christ will be built up only as each part does its work (Ephesians 4). All of us are partners in the gospel with those who lead us (Philippians 1:5). And it is by our lives that we make the teaching about our God and saviour attractive (Titus 2:10). Groundwork therefore offers training for *all* God’s people as we live the ordinary Christian life together. It does this by being:

Biblical — deeply rooted in the Scriptures

In his word, God has provided all that we need for life and godliness. Groundwork materials lay a foundation as they start with the text of the Bible. They interpret our hearts and our world through that Scriptural lens, and they teach participants to do likewise.

¹ National Church Life Survey,
<http://www.ncls.org.au/default.aspx?sitemapid=23>

The gospel of grace needs to shape every aspect of our lives: how we manage our households, how we go about our work, what we do with our wealth and resources, how we conduct our relationships. Groundwork Training equips participants to live for Christ in every sphere of life.



Practical — rich theology, applied in detail and relevant to real life

Bible knowledge should never remain academic. Simply memorising chapters and verses and abstract theological concepts is not enough. The Scriptures are not there to puff us up with ‘head knowledge’ — they are for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that we may be thoroughly equipped for every good work that God has prepared in advance for us to do. We need to help one another see in detail how the gospel applies to our everyday life. Groundwork does this by providing concrete applications and examples.

Relational — because the Christian life was never meant to be lived alone

God does not just save us as individuals, but he saves us into a family of his people. We show that we are Jesus’ disciples by the way we love one another. And together, we hold out the word of life and show the world what it means to live under Jesus.

If the Christian life is not a solo race, then nor should we train for it alone. So Groundwork encourages participants to

grow in discipleship and mission along with others in their Christian community. It also enables sharing ideas with people from different churches so that they might be a mutual blessing.

Contextual — remain in your normal work and Christian community

The local church is the best training ground. It is the front line of discipleship and mission. So Groundwork Training does not seek to remove you from your normal life context; rather, it is training ‘on the job’. It helps you learn to think Christianly about every aspect of the ordinary lives you are living — that is, how the gospel of grace shapes the way we manage our households, how we go about our work, what we do with our wealth and resources, how we conduct our relationships.

Accessible — no prior theological education required

Groundwork materials try to follow the Bible in using everyday language rather than technical jargon wherever possible. Our goal is not to hand out academic diplomas; it is to help you live more like Jesus.



"I do like the emphasis on character. That's at the heart of it. For example, it's helped me think about why I sometimes lose my temper with my family, and how I can apply the gospel to that anger."

Nick P., participant

Flexible — schedule is adaptable to suit your circumstances

There are no fixed evening lectures to attend or exams to sit. You can work through the materials at your own pace and whenever it is convenient for you.

Affordable — quality training at a reasonable price

Each module costs \$80 per participant. This includes online support and feedback on an assignment for each module. The assignments are obligatory for those who want to complete the Foundation Year or Advanced Year programme.

Because we want to encourage husbands and wives to do these modules together, there is a discount for married couples: the two of you can enrol in the same module at the same time for \$120.

If participants do not wish to complete the Foundation Year or Advanced Year programme and do not want online support or feedback on assignments, the cost per module is \$50. Spouses can do the same module at the same time for free.

What do you provide?

Groundwork Training is designed for people who want to learn how to serve Jesus better. Participants should complete the programme equipped with a set of values, skills, and relationships that will help them in everyday discipleship and mission. For a detailed breakdown of modules and outcomes, see page 14. Here is a summary:

Values

- a deep love for God and his word
- a prayerful reliance on the Holy Spirit in discipleship and mission
- a firm hold on key evangelical doctrines such as sovereignty, holiness, and grace
- a commitment to the community of God's people and the priesthood of all believers
- a passion to seek and save the lost

Skills

- read and understand Scripture in the context of salvation history — from creation to new creation
- apply the gospel in a detailed way to all aspects of life

“I love how it’s not just dry doctrine, but it’s fleshed out with examples from real life. I’ve been doing the studies with other people from my church, and it’s been great. These are the people I’m living and serving Jesus with, which makes it all very real.”

Lucy M., participant



- explain the gospel to people who don’t know Jesus
- teach the Bible in a range of contexts
- manage a household (i.e. marriage, parenting, and finances) in a way that honours Jesus

Relationships

- participation in a ‘learning community’ — a network of like-minded people
- improved relationships with family members and church members
- developing real friendship and servanthood in the wider community of unbelievers

How do you provide it?

Groundwork uses materials developed by Porterbrook, a training network in the UK, USA, South Africa, and Australia. The materials are written primarily by Steve Timmis and Tim Chester, who have also authored several books including *Total Church* (IVP, 2007). Tim Keller, Senior Pastor at Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York, says, “The Porterbrook Network is an innovative resource that offers affordable, high-quality training for mission and ministry in the 21st century. I warmly recommend it.”

The materials have been adapted for the Australian context, and some modules are written by Australians.

The programme trains people in the core areas of Bible and doctrine, gospel character, church life, and culture and world. Materials are delivered as written modules. The intention is that people discuss the ideas in them with their pastors and other church members, with a view to applying them to their everyday lives. The materials should stretch people theologically and practically, encouraging them to shape their whole lives around the discipleship and mission of the Great Commission.

If they wish, participants can do a short assignment for each module and work towards completing a training programme: the Foundation Year (eight modules) or Advanced Year (sixteen modules). The materials are delivered in two modes, full time and à la carte:

Full time

- two to three hours per week (including reading and group discussion)
- two modules per term (eight per year)
- online support and assignment feedback
- two seminar days per year to meet other participants from other churches and share what you've learnt

À la carte

- churches choose which modules they wish to use and when
- participants can still work towards completing the Foundation Year or Advanced Year training programme if they wish
- optional online support and assignment feedback

What might it look like?

The Groundwork programme is flexible to fit with your normal life. Here are some ways it could be run:

A Bible study group

The members of a weekly Bible study group decide to do a Groundwork module together for a term. They read the material during the week, then meet to discuss on Tuesday evenings. They focus on any questions they have from the material, and applications for them and their church community. They do their assignments, e-mail them to Groundwork for feedback, and come to a seminar day to discuss with people from other churches.

A church-wide training programme

A church runs Groundwork all year during school terms. They cover two modules per term, taking five weeks for each.

Congregation members sign up for as many modules per year as they wish. Those doing any given module are encouraged to do the reading for each week at home. They then gather for two hours on a Sunday afternoon in a lounge-room-style interactive seminar. Their training pastor leads discussion, gives his own perspective on issues raised in the modules, and helps participants concretely apply the material in their local context.

Part of an apprenticeship

Some young people are doing a 'gap year' programme with their church. They have set aside a day a week for theological input. They read the modules together in the morning, pausing to discuss the included reflection questions and to do the exercises. They have lunch together, then meet with a trainer to discuss the materials for a couple of hours in the afternoon.



Dates for 2010

Term 1

Monday, 1 February to Thursday, 1 April

Term 2

Monday, 19 April to Friday, 18 June

Term 3

Monday, 19 July to Friday, 17 September

Term 4

Monday, 11 October to Friday, 10 Dec

Seminar days

Saturdays, 19 June and 11 December



Foundation Year timetable and unit headings

Term 1	<p><i>Intro to Exposition and Biblical Theology</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does it say? 2. Why does it say it? 3. What does it mean for us? 4. What is it trying to do? 5. The story of promise 6. The promise of a people 7. The promise of a place 8. The promise of a kingdom 9. The promise to the nations 		<p><i>Gospel Change</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dynamics of gospel change 2. Repentance 3. Faith 4. Head and heart 5. Bible, prayer, community 6. Holiness: its nature 7. Holiness: relationships 8. Holiness: conversations 9. Holiness: thankfulness 	
Term 2	<p><i>Evangelism</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The message 2. The messenger 3. Building relationships 4. Talking about God 5. Presenting the gospel 6. Introducing to community 7. Living to provoke questions 8. Answering questions 9. 'Chatting' about Jesus 		<p><i>Gospel Living</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A life for God 2. A love for God 3. Looking to the cross 4. Looking to community 5. Looking to eternity 6. Living now: decisions 7. Living now: friendships 8. Living now: horizons 9. Living now: possessions 	
Term 3	<p><i>Doctrine in Missional Perspective</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trinity & fragmentation 2. Sovereignty & anxiety 3. Creation & materialism 4. Christ & suffering 5. Sacrifice & guilt 6. Reign & rebellion 7. Justice & self-justification 8. Life & powerlessness 9. Hope & hopelessness 		<p><i>Family</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Home, family, & mission 2. Marriage: what it is 3. Marriage: what it is for 4. Marriage & conflict 5. Divorce & remarriage 6. Marriage & children 7. Parenting 8. Singleness 9. Courting 	
Term 4	<p><i>Apologetics</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presuppositional apologetics 2. Relational apologetics 3. Defeater beliefs 4. Belief in God 5. Other religions 6. Suffering 7. Truth & tolerance 8. Hell 9. Science & miracles 		<p><i>Engaging Globally</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. God's love for whole world 2. The local church 3. NT planting & partnership 4. History of 'missions' 5. Missions in C20 6. From agencies to churches 7. Working with what you have 8. Starting from scratch 9. World mission, local church 	

Foundation Year, Term 1

Bible and doctrine

Introduction to Exposition and Biblical Theology

This module gives people the basic skills to understand the word of God and apply it to their lives. The first units show people how to examine specific Biblical passages by asking the questions: What does it say? Why does it say it? What does it mean for us? What is it trying to do? The latter units give a framework for understanding the whole story of the Bible, from creation to new creation, looking at the themes of promise, people, place, kingdom, and nations.



Gospel character

Gospel Change

The gospel does not just rescue us from the penalty of sin on the last day; it also delivers us from the power of sin now (Romans 6:12–14). This module aims to show people the glory of the gospel and the transforming power of grace. It encourages participants to choose a ‘change project’ for the module — to choose a particular area of sin in their lives where they would like to see God transform them by the power of his Spirit. It explores the dynamic of repentance and faith, how God addresses the gospel to our heads and our hearts, and how he gives us the Bible, prayer, and his people as a means of grace to us. Out of an exegesis of Ephesians 4–5, it gives worked examples of holiness in our relationships, conversations, and grateful attitudes.

Term 2

Culture and world

Evangelism

This module broadens our horizons for how we share the gospel with people. It moves beyond the ‘evangelistic meeting’ and ‘door-knocking with tracts’, showing how different members of the body of Christ can use their gifts to make Christ known. It is designed to give people a clear understanding of what the gospel is, confidence in the power of the gospel to save, and wisdom to speak in a way that is full of grace, seasoned with salt. All of this is set in the context of building genuine, loving relationships with people who do not know Jesus, and introducing them to the Christian community so that they can see the gospel in action.

Church life

Gospel Living

This is an introduction to living as the people of God. It does not focus on structures and strategies, but rather looks at how we can love one another and how together we can love Jesus’ world in our everyday lives. This module shows how our whole life is worship — every aspect of our lives is informed by Jesus. It discusses how we are a people who look backward to the cross and forward to the new creation. It explains how we should live therefore in the present, with a particular focus on decision-making, friendship, mission, and possessions.

Term 3

Bible and doctrine

Doctrine in Missional Perspective

This module teaches the basic truths of Christianity in a way that is relevant to everyday discipleship and mission. It uses the Nicene Creed as its base, showing how the timeless truths of the gospel apply both to us and to those who do not know Jesus. It explains how the gospel is good news for the world. For example, topics include the triune God in a fragmented world, the sovereign God in an anxious world, the person of Christ in a hurting world, the sacrifice of Christ in a guilty world, and the hope of the Spirit in a hopeless world.

Term 4

Culture and world

Apologetics

This module introduces the idea that we are all worshippers of something. All humans worship either the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, or they worship idols. So when people disbelieve the gospel, it is not primarily an intellectual problem; it is primarily a worship problem, a heart problem. The module begins with a discussion of preaching the gospel in the context of loving relationships (so that we do it out of genuine love for our hearers, so that we know what people's idols are, and so that they can see what the gospel looks like in our lives). It then examines some common apologetic questions (belief in God, other religions, suffering, truth and tolerance, hell, science and miracles), addressing both the heart issues and the intellectual issues.

Gospel character

Family

This module is designed to help people live in a way that honours Jesus in their families, whether they are married, divorced, single, parents, or not. It gives a Biblical overview of the nature and purposes of marriage and parenting. This provides the grounding for practical instruction on conflict, raising children, living as a single person, and courting. It has a special emphasis on how local churches can support marrieds, parents, and singles. It explores how each life-stage can be an excellent base for discipleship and mission.

Church life

Engaging Globally

This module argues that 'global mission' is a bit of a misnomer: all mission is local — it just depends on where in the world you are! It explores the centrality of the local church and church-planting in God's plan to redeem the nations. It focuses on how local churches can partner with churches in other parts of the world to reach the lost.





Advanced Year timetable and unit headings

Term 1	<p><i>Bible Teaching in Missional Perspective</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make it plain (Stott) 2. Make it real (Keller) 3. Make it felt (Mahaney) 4. Preparing Bible studies 5. Leading Bible studies 6. Introducing storytelling 7. Preparing stories 8. Teaching through stories 9. Learning in community 	<p><i>Work and Wealth</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work: nature & purpose 2. Authority & submission 3. Secular or sacred? 4. Unemployment 5. Money & possessions 6. Organising money 7. Debt & investments 8. Career vs job 9. Taking risks
Term 2	<p><i>Culture</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Christ and Culture 2. Biblical history of culture 3. Recent cultural shifts 4. Lifestyles of the... 5. Assessing artefacts 6. Film: <i>Juno</i> 7. Songs: Ben Folds 8. TV: <i>The West Wing</i> 9. Novel: <i>The Secret Scripture</i> 	<p><i>Keeping it Missional</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meetings 2. Prayer meetings 3. Bible studies 4. Sermons 5. Business meetings 6. Visiting 7. Pastoral care 8. Marriage preparation 9. Baptism & communion
Term 3	<p><i>Church History from a Missional Perspective</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The early church 2. The Medieval period 3. The Reformation 4. The Anabaptists 5. The Puritans 6. The Great Awakening 7. Modern mission movement 8. The modern era 	<p><i>Living the Cross and Resurrection</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Humble confidence 2. The way of the cross 3. The value of Christ 4. Hiddenness & glory 5. Suffering followed by glory 6. Power to be weak 7. Life to die 8. Resurrection promise 9. Adventurous hope
Term 4	<p><i>Engaging with the City</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A vision for social reform 2. Evangelism & social reform 3. Models of development 4. Principles of social action 5. A vision for the city 6. Globalisation & imperialism 7. Political renewal 8. Economic renewal 9. Cultural renewal 	<p><i>Missional Church and Church-Planting</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ecclesiology 2. Ecclesiology 3. Missional ecclesiology 4. Missional ecclesiology 5. Church-planting: strategy 6. Church-planting: method 7. Church-planting: models 8. Church-planting: models 9. Church-planting: practice

Advanced Year, Term 1

Bible and doctrine

Bible Teaching in Missional Perspective

This module explores different ways of teaching the Bible to Christians and non-Christians. It gives some basic principles and practical tips for preaching, leading Bible studies, and telling Bible stories. These are taught against the backdrop of learning about Jesus in community, and proclaiming Jesus' lordship to those who do not know him.

Gospel character

Work and Wealth (available June 2010)

We live in a culture which idolises work and wealth and the status they bring us. This module seeks to bring the light of the gospel to bear on the way we view work — paid and unpaid — and how we can use our wealth and possessions for Jesus' glory. It has practical advice on such things as how to be generous, how to choose a job, how to behave in the workplace, how to deal with unemployment, and how to take risks with our wealth for the sake of the gospel.

Term 2

Culture and world

Culture

Christians have very different approaches to their culture. Some want to shun the world — create a ghetto, hunker down and wait for the Rapture. Some want to participate in every aspect of contemporary culture — retail therapy, rave parties, and New Age festivals. This module introduces a way of looking at culture through the lens of the gospel. Christ is the judge of the world; he will destroy all his enemies. Christ is incarnate, humbly sharing in human culture. Christ is sovereign, ruling over the world. And Christ is the redeemer of the world, shaping all things according to his will. The module helps participants develop skills to assess the lifestyles of people around them, and to 'read' popular culture in light of the gospel. What does Jesus have to say about our films, novels, TV shows, and music?

Church life

Keeping it Missional

Our tendency in churches can often be to slip into maintaining our existing programmes, without thinking how they fit into the Great Commission. This module looks at how to keep a missionary edge to everything we do — whether it is our Sunday gatherings, our marriage preparation classes, or even our annual business meetings.



Term 3

Bible and doctrine

Church History from a Missional Perspective

This module gives an overview of the history of the Great Commission. That is, instead of focusing on the institutional church, it tries to look at the history of God's people. It does not get bogged down in the doctrinal disputes and ecumenical councils of the last two millennia, but looks back with gratitude on the way God has spread the gospel across his globe. It seeks to help us draw lessons from our faithful forebears which might guide us in how to present the gospel to our generation today.

Gospel character

Living the Cross and Resurrection

Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9:23) This module outlines how to follow Jesus on 'the way of the cross'. It looks at how our lives bear witness to Jesus in sacrifice, submission, self-denial, service, and suffering. It shows how God gives us the power to follow Jesus — the power of the Spirit whom Jesus poured out after his resurrection.

Term 4

Culture and world

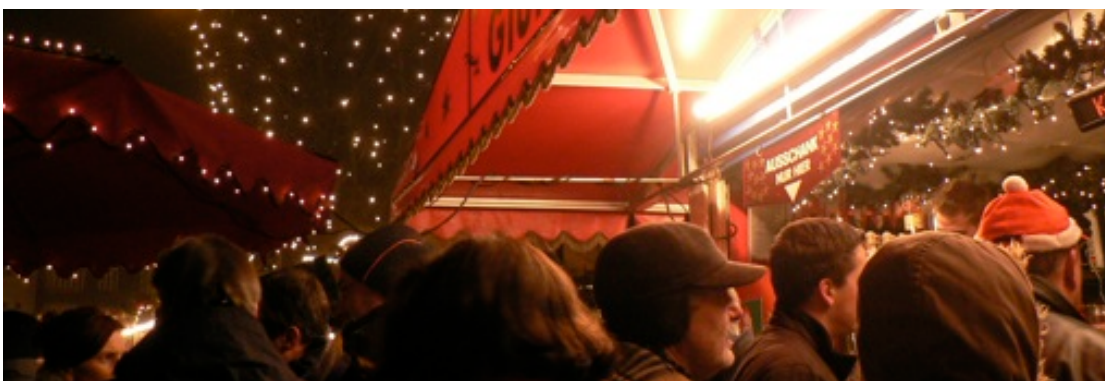
Engaging with the City

This is an introduction to the gospel and social involvement. It particularly looks at how the gospel affects the city as the focus of political, cultural, and economic life. It (a) presents a theology of social involvement and its relationship to evangelism, and (b) introduces a missiological approach to political, economic, and cultural renewal.

Church life

Missional Church and Church-Planting

At the heart of this module are the convictions that (a) our God is a missionary God whose purpose is to redeem a people for his glory, and (b) that the people he saves (i.e., the church) are his main strategy for redeeming more people. That is, it outlines a theology of the church as both the goal and the agent of mission. It provides some New Testament principles for church-planting, then considers different models and strategies. It presents a vision of littering our dark world with communities of gospel light.





Groundwork training outcomes

		Foundation Year								Advanced Year							
		Intro to Exposition and Biblical Theology	Gospel Change	Evangelism	Gospel Living	Doctrine in Missional Perspective	Family	Apologetics	Engaging Globally	Bible Teaching in Missional Perspective	Work and Wealth	Culture	Keeping it Missional	Church History from a Missional Perspective	Living the Cross and Resurrection	Engaging with the City	Missional Church and Church-Planting
Values	a deep love for God and his word	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	a prayerful reliance on the Holy Spirit	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	✓		✓
	a firm hold on key evangelical doctrines	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓					✓		
	a commitment to the community of God's people and the priesthood of all believers		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
	a passion to seek and save the lost			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Skills	read and understand Scripture in the context of salvation history	✓			✓				✓	✓		✓					
	apply the gospel in a detailed way to all aspects of life		✓		✓		✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	
	explain the gospel to people who don't know Jesus			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓				
	teach the Bible in a range of contexts	✓				✓				✓			✓				✓
	manage a household (i.e. marriage, parenting, and finances)				✓		✓				✓						
Relationships	improved relationships with family members and church members		✓		✓		✓					✓			✓		✓
	developing real friendship and servanthood in the wider community of unbelievers			✓	✓			✓	✓			✓				✓	✓
	participation in a 'learning community'	participants discuss the materials in their church, as well as with people in other churches both online and at seminar days															

To clarify: all of the modules express all of the values to some extent. The ticks represent emphasis. For example, the Family module is clear that we must prayerfully rely on the Holy Spirit to build a godly family. But this is not the module where this is argued at length: it is stated as a 'given' with reminders woven throughout. Hence there is no tick in that column.



Groundwork lays a Biblical foundation that helps every Christian to think Christianly about every aspect of our lives. Simply memorising and regurgitating chapters and verses and abstract theological concepts is not enough.

Doctrinal statement

1. We worship one God in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit

There is only one true and living God, who exists in love from all eternity in the unity of the Godhead, one God in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This God we know as our heavenly Father in Jesus Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit. He is the awesome sovereign Creator of all things: the source of all life, the object of all true faith, the ground of all hope, and the fountain of all love. God is abundantly gracious and merciful towards his creatures, full of compassion, while also wonderfully pure and perfectly just.

2. We delight in the good creation (of the sovereign Creator God)

God the almighty Creator brought all things into existence. He continues to sustain all things by his power, and sovereignly rules over the entire creation and all human history, working all things in accordance with his perfect will. The creation is good and real, while also utterly dependent on God. Human beings are created in God's own image: from the beginning, he made us male and female, called us to share in his rule over the creation, and designed us to live with him and each other in loving community.

3. We mourn the presence of evil in God's good creation and in our own lives

The first human beings disastrously asserted their independence from God, seeking life apart from him, and turning from the Creator to his creation. This first sin resulted in the rupture of human relations with God, the enslavement of humanity to evil, the breakdown of human community, and the entry of death and corruption into God's good creation. All human beings have willingly participated in the sin of our first parents. Outside of Christ we are guilty before God and stand under his just condemnation. Outside of Christ, we are enslaved to sin and utterly unable to save ourselves.

4. We rejoice in the love of God and the redemption won by Christ Jesus

On account of his great love, God acted decisively to renew his damaged creation and to redeem humanity. This work God began with Abraham and the nation of Israel and completed in his one and only Son. This one and only Son of God, who participates from all eternity in the fullness of God, took human flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is one person, both fully God and fully human. By Jesus' life of perfect obedience and perfect love,

“It’s been really helpful as I seek to share the gospel with my work colleagues. It’s encouraged me to trust in the power of God’s word, and the fact that he changes hearts. And it’s helped me see how we can do mission together as a church.”

Kara McL., participant



God inaugurated his kingdom. By Jesus’ sacrificial death on the cross, God reconciled all things to himself: Jesus willingly bore our sin, and died our death, suffering the wrath of God for us in our place. By Jesus’ powerful bodily resurrection, God defeated death and began the work of renewing the entire creation. By Jesus’ ascension, God enthroned his Son as Lord of all things. Jesus now sits at God’s right hand, ruling over all things and waiting for his enemies to be made his footstool.

5. We rely on the power of God’s Holy Spirit for life and mission

The Lord Jesus, enthroned at the right hand of the Father, has poured out the Holy Spirit on his people. This Holy Spirit of God, existing eternally in the unity of God, is now given by God to dwell in all those who are in Christ by faith: he brings God’s life-giving power to his people. This same Holy Spirit inspired and illuminates the Scriptures, convicts of sin and enables faith in Christ, regenerates believers and produces the fruit of Christ-likeness in us, gifts and enables God’s people to serve in love, empowers gospel mission to the ends of the earth, and guarantees eternal life and bodily resurrection to those in Christ.

6. We look for the return of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the judgement, and the renewal of all things

By God’s promise, Jesus will come again in glory. On that day when he is revealed as Lord, Jesus will raise the dead in their bodies, transform those who are still alive, and execute just judgment on all. Those who have turned to God in Christ will be welcomed into the fullness of life in the kingdom of God. Those who have continued to assert independence from God will receive just condemnation, being excluded from the presence of the Lord for all eternity. Jesus will thereby fully consummate God’s kingdom over the creation, subject all things to himself, destroy all that is evil, and make all things new, before submitting even himself to the Father so that God will be all in all for all eternity.

7. We confess that God alone is able to save

God saves those individuals whom he chooses by an act of pure grace – utterly unmerited and wonderfully free – incorporating them in Christ by his Spirit through faith. By the Spirit, God enables us who were dead in our sins to turn from sin and trust in him alone for salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. In Christ,



The programme trains people in the core areas of Bible and doctrine, gospel character, church life, and culture and world. The intention is that people discuss the ideas in them with their pastors and other church members, with a view to applying them to their everyday lives.

God adopts us as his children, sets us free from the power of evil, justifies us, forgives the guilt of our sin, fills us with his Spirit, incorporates us into his church, and promises us eternal life. This salvation is by God's grace alone and for God's glory alone; it is received by faith alone in Christ alone.

8. We embrace the challenge of the Christian life

God calls us whom he has saved to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, willingly responding to the work of his Spirit in us, as he transforms us together into a Christ-like body for his glory. In Christ God has saved us from the guilt, penalty and power of sin; when Jesus comes we will finally be set free also from its presence. Until that day, we count ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus, helping each other to put sin to death by the Spirit through repentance and faith, and longing for the redemption of our bodies at the return of Christ.

9. We treasure God's Church, the bride of Christ

There is one holy, universal and apostolic church: the redeemed community of God's people, gathered by God from all the

nations and throughout history. This one church, built upon the foundation of the prophets and the apostles, is united in Jesus Christ alone, and shares fellowship by the Holy Spirit. Our myriad local churches testify to the grace of God and anticipate the day when God will finally gather all his people to himself at the coming of Christ. While we wait, we live with each other in loving community, serving each other and the world as the Spirit enables, calling on all to trust in Jesus, speaking the truth in love, and building up the body to maturity in Christ.

10. We cherish the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, in which we hear the voice of God

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God written. The Scriptures derive their authority from God himself: authorised by the Lord Jesus, and inspired by the Holy Spirit, they were written by human authors commissioned for the task by God. We therefore receive the Scriptures with grateful hearts, submitting ourselves to God, who graciously speaks to us through them, and accepting his written Word as the final authority in all matters of faith and conduct in our common life.

“It’s helped us narrow the gap between what we say we believe and how we live. Compared to a year ago, I can see how I’ve come to view the world differently, to ask how every aspect of my life fits into God’s mission to save people.”

Lucy M., participant



Directors and contact details



Stuart Heath is a husband and father who has taught theology and English to adults. He has been involved in church-planting in Australia, France, and the UK, working with Anglican, Baptist, and independent evangelical churches. In 2008-2009, he has worked for The Porterbrook Network in Sheffield, UK, the training arm of The Crowded House. He has a BA in French from Macquarie University, a Master of Divinity from Sydney Missionary and Bible College, and a Cambridge Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults.



Murray Smith is married to Lynette and they have three young children. He is the Pastor for Teaching and Training at Kirkplace Presbyterian Church in southern Sydney. Murray also lectures in Biblical Studies at the Presbyterian Theological Centre, and previously taught at Macquarie Christian Studies Institute. He is the author of *Jesus: All About Life* (Bible Society NSW: Macquarie Park, 2009), a short introduction to Jesus for under-20s. Murray holds an MA in Reformation History (USyd.), an MA in Early Christian and Jewish Studies (Macq.), and a Grad.Dip.Ed. in Religious Education (UNE). He is currently finalising a doctorate on Jesus and Christian Origins in the Ancient History Department at Macquarie University.

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**When applicants request feedback on their assignments, we will send them a short form asking for some additional information. This will give us a better appreciation of the applicants' theological viewpoint and ministry setting, which will help us give the most useful feedback possible.*

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