

# School of Christian Studies

“Be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2)

Dear Supporter,

I invite you to be part of a new Christian outreach venture to enable Christians in rural and remote areas of Australia to participate in SOCS courses, reinforced by a short visit during each unit by the relevant SOCS lecturer.

You will know from your own experience the benefits of studying the Bible and other subjects, with lecturers who are from the Reformed and Evangelical theological position. Former students of SOCS have told us how their theological study has made a significant difference to their preaching, their Bible study leading and their Christian witness at home and work.

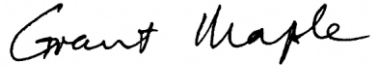
The timing of this new project is significant. The decline of numbers in small country towns and the ageing of many of the people in those districts mean that local Christians have more opportunities and responsibilities for ministry than ever. At the present time people in many small communities do not have the benefit of regular weekly ministry by clergy. More and more of the work of ministry is being left to lay people. Your support will help the wider church bring the benefits of the Gospel to those with fewer opportunities to experience them. This is one way those of us who enjoy the plethora of Christian services in the capital cities can support our Christian brothers and sisters in this situation.

We have proved that SOCS can help people gain competence in pastoral ministries, education for schools and parishes, running Bible study groups, and teaching and preaching. For example, Jim Parsons began studying with SOCS while living in the north west of NSW. He is now heavily involved in team ministry at Ross River Anglican church south of Townsville where he preaches every other week, leads a Bible study group and is involved in children's ministry as well as working in his son's business. Larissa Brisbane, who is currently volunteering in Fiji, has found SOCS studies to be 'incredibly practical' in her situation. Fran Usher lives in Esperance, Western Australia and is using her studies to enrich her ministry to women and to three generations of her own family. Bill Cochrane operates a dairy farm in northern Victoria and is using his Diploma in Theology in preaching at the Community Church, Lockington, leading an interdenominational men's prayer group and running an after-school children's program.

I would like to see lay people in such situations have the opportunity to undertake our distance units to gain the vital theological, pastoral and educational resources that many take for granted.

We plan to start the project in NSW and invite people from smaller and isolated centres to enrol in a unit such as New Testament 201. The lecturer would speak at a one day intensive at the larger centre for all participants. We would want to subsidise the travel costs of pensioners and others experiencing financial hardships. These needy people would also be offered bursary type assistance for their fees, texts etc. There would also be start-up costs in contacting the people who might benefit from this study.

Would you please consider supporting this project? We are confident that this project will be funded because the financial generosity provided by SOCS supporters in 2009 has enabled us to commence implementing SOCS distance education with the Moodle system in 2010.



Grant Maple  
Director SOCS

14 May 2010

**I would like to support SOCS' ministry in helping Christians in remote areas study theology**

Please accept my gift of: *(Donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible)*

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Please send your donation to:

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Macquarie Centre NSW 2113

Or fax this form to:

(02) 9936 6032