



Dear Friends,

Last week, Kathryn and I travelled to a family wedding in Stanthorpe, Qld. On our way up north, we stopped over at Inverell. While there, we contacted RPC members, Marg Campbell and Martin Clarke and sent them a photo of the Presbyterian Church at which they and their respective families were members. Marg also gave us the addresses of the two homes where she had lived, both of which we visited.

We had our own reasons for visiting Inverell. Over the past few years, Kathryn has done a deep dive into her family history. Her great, great grandparents, both of whom were born in Germany, settled in Inverell in the mid to late 1800s. Their names are inscribed on a monument located in the town centre that is dedicated to Inverell's pioneers. When we visited the monument, Kathryn was thrilled to discover that some of her mother's forebears were also pioneers in the Inverell area!

The next day, we travelled to the local cemetery to visit the graves of her great, great grandparents. We then went to the Inverell library to meet with members of the local historical society. They had a file on Kathryn's forebears which she was able to look through. The previous day, we had also visited Inverell's pioneer village which houses some of Inverell's historical buildings, one of which was a store-residence once owned by her great, great-grandparents.

Kathryn is keen to return to the Inverell district in the near future to visit the places where her forebears lived, worked and farmed.

One of many things that amazes me about the Bible is its universality and its particularity. The Christian religion is universal. It's not just for a single nation or ethnic group. Christ is Lord of all. He is the Saviour of the world. The Christian message is for all people in all places in every age.

The Biblical story is also filled with details. God chooses specific people to whom he reveals himself and who he saves. There are innumerable genealogies detailing family histories. Places matter. Eden, Babel, Canaan, Egypt, Jerusalem and Shiloh in the OT, just to name a few. It's the same in the NT – Bethlehem, Galilee, Cana, Samaria, Golgotha, Rome, Ephesus and Corinth.

I suspect like many people, I have often skipped over biblical genealogies. But as I have got older and learned to appreciate family histories, I have become more interested in the biblical family trees. How so?

Biblical genealogies remind us that Christianity is a historical religion. The true and living God who comes to us in Jesus Christ acts in human history to bring about his purposes. God has revealed himself and acted to save individually named people as well as specific nations, regions and cities, all of whom are integral to his plan to redeem creation. God is sovereign over all human affairs AND he personally knows me and my situation, and cares for me.

Biblical genealogies, like family trees, also remind us that we are connected to more people than just me or my immediate family, and that we are part of a much bigger story. Human identity is formed by many aspects of our personhood, nature, culture and upbringing. It is also formed by wider family histories. People like Kathryn study their family history, in part, to better understand their families and themselves.

I was listening to the Book of Ruth this week in preparation for Kevin preaching from it later this month. It ends with a genealogy culminating in the birth of King David. This reminded me of Jesus' genealogy in Matthew's gospel, which includes the genealogy from Ruth. Ruth, Boaz and David are all part of Jesus' story. The amazing thing is that you and I, by faith, are also part of Jesus' story and therefore have our own place in the Christian family tree!

God Bless,
Mark Adams