



THE WAY

TERM 3: THURSDAY 10
AUGUST 2017



Biblical Training Day

FROM THE CHAPLAIN

Masterclass 2017 is run by the Bible Society every year and is a one-day event for Christian students in Years 10 and 11. Highly engaging speakers aim to inspire the next generation to grow in their knowledge of God; encourage the students to love others; and challenge them to discern the best choices to make on their Christian journey.

This year, Dan Paterson, who studied in Oxford, spoke about; 'Why I am not an Atheist'. He said that today, belief in God is a difficult pill to swallow. In past centuries our culture tended to appeal to God to make sense of life and the universe, now it seems that skepticism is the air we breathe. For thinking people in Western culture, Atheism is almost a default option for belief, and the long list of arguments against Christianity dominate religious talk online and in the public sphere. But in the end, he argued that it still makes more sense not to be an Atheist.

John Dickson, an historian and Minister, asked the question, 'Are we better off without Christianity?' The church is increasingly regarded as a burden, a spoiler, and even a poisonous influence on society. This is seen in the Crusades and the inquisitions. But Christianity also has its beautiful side, such as its contributions to human rights, the origins of charity, and the beginnings of education, universities and hospitals. His conclusion was that when the church does terrible things, it is departing from its master, Christ. But when it is doing beautiful things, it is doing exactly what Jesus said to do.

Natasha Moore, a graduate of Cambridge University, said that millennials (young people today) fiercely fight for justice and equality; they care about the marginalised. But as they come of age, we're also seeing a growing intolerance of disagreement. Former US President Bill

Clinton has said: "We only have one remaining bigotry. We don't want to be around anybody who disagrees with us." Natasha said that young Christians in their friendships and families, on social media, as students and citizens, have a unique opportunity to model what it means to disagree and to love at the same time.

One student commented:

"The masterclass we went to was a great experience and was very informative. It was a great encouragement seeing so many other young Christians that are around the area. I really enjoyed all the speakers but particularly John Dickson, as I was able to understand and process his talk well."

Another student said:

"Masterclass was a great experience. It was a great eye-opener to the way Christians should be responding when our faith is tested. One thing that really challenged me is how we as Christians should hold our faith with humility, and not be quick to anger or diminish people who have viewpoints/ opinions that we don't agree with (Proverbs 16:32)."

All of this mixed with music, prayer, fun and fellowship. It was an encouraging day for some of our Christian students who joined hundreds of other Christian students from around NSW from Independent and Government Schools to engage with topics that are highly relevant. Have a look at a short video of our excursion [here](#).

Stuart Tye
