

itp International Teaching Partners

News from Stuart and Kathleen Rochester



In the snow: pademelons, Mt Wellington, Tassie Devil

Dear family and friends,

August 2021

It's winter here. We have not yet had snow settle on the ground at our house, but there has been plenty of snow nearby on our mountain and in many other places in Tasmania. We are back into the swing of classroom teaching, even if our classroom is a Zoom screen and our students are scattered across the world. Once again, we are very grateful for this technology that seemed so very strange last year. Surprisingly, we can still get to know each student, they can get to know us, and the students can interact very well with each other in very meaningful ways, even though they are in such different cultural contexts. The fact that we have been able to visit and teach in many different cultures does help us to connect, especially as we are now on Zoom.

A sampling of our current students includes the following: a pastor-teacher in a seminary in Pakistan; a secondary school teacher in the Philippines; a pastor in Laos; an underground church leader (who has previously been imprisoned) in Bhutan; a 48-year-old pastor in Mindanao, Philippines; a young American woman; pastors from Fiji and Tonga; an American missionary in Mongolia; a Colombian missionary in Turkey; a Samoan village chief training to be a pastor-teacher; a Japanese lady training to be a pastor; a Christian Education director in Manila, Philippines; a Nepali training to teach in a Bible College; a Vietnamese man training to be a minister; and an Indian headmistress who senses that God is calling her to prepare for a different kind of ministry.

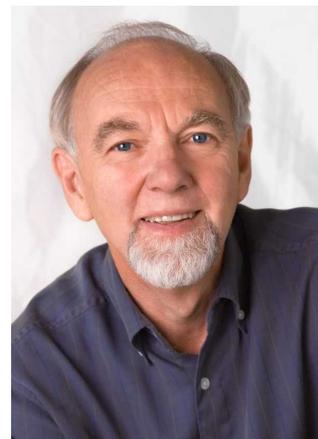
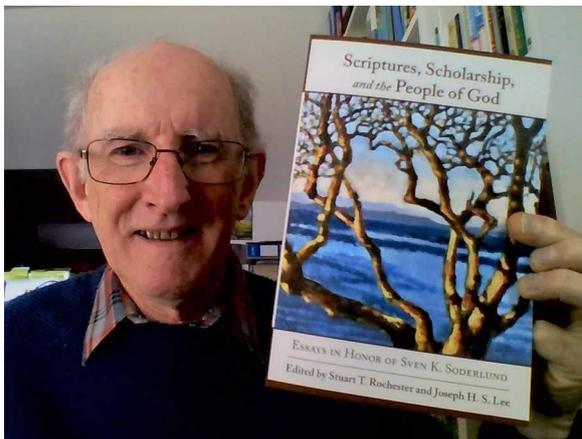


Our current students from 14 countries

We have just heard the very sad news from a young woman student in the Philippines that her brother's wife, a young woman in her twenties, six months pregnant, caught COVID and very quickly died this week. What a shock! We have had many emails from our students asking us to pray for other immediate family members with COVID. In most of the countries represented in our classes, the medical facilities are not able to cope with any kind of epidemic. When we hear of the elderly parents of our students being turned away from hospitals, whether their illness is COVID or something else, simply because the hospitals are overwhelmed, we sense a little of the huge grief and desperation that so many are living with, especially in this pandemic.

The African PhD student Paul, whom we mentioned in our last newsletter, has now succeeded in having his thesis approved, subject to some modifications, which Kathleen is helping him to complete. Stuart's successful PhD student, Carl, wrote a tribute to thank those who helped him along the way. After working with Stuart a short time, he remembered telling a friend that Stuart "walks softly but carries a sharp pencil." He added that Stuart, together with the second supervisor, "induced me to research and write in a manner that I had only dreamed of previously." As always, there have been many other thesis students in various countries, including Ethiopia, for whom we give help as supervisors, examiners, and proofreaders.

Stuart has been co-editing a *Festschrift*, a collection of essays to honour Dr Sven Soderlund, the scholar who supervised his Masters thesis at Regent College, Canada, more than 20 years ago (pictured on the right). Stuart's work has involved contacting the contributors, editing and proof-reading their chapters, communicating with his co-editor (another Regent College alumnus) and getting the book ready for printing.



The book has now been printed and presented to Dr Soderlund on Zoom, since those involved were scattered around the world. Sven was totally surprised and overwhelmed by the appreciation of his scholarship and pastoral attitude shown to several generations of students. Kathleen's writing of her new book, a spiritual autobiography, is paused during this current teaching block, but she hopes to complete it by the end of the year.

We have very recently begun a weekly Sunday evening fellowship in our home at 7pm, singing Christian songs around our piano and keyboard with some sharing and prayer. It's a very small group at the moment but seems to meet a need. If anyone local would like to join us, please contact us. Kathleen continues to preach in various churches about twice a month and we appreciate the opportunity to keep in touch with friends in various churches.

Kathleen has had a couple of unusual medical test results, which need further investigation. Doctors are puzzled. She is glad to be able to teach and to go for a walk each day, but she does have to keep within some limits and gets tired more easily.

With love,

Kathleen and Stuart

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