

EASTER AWAKENING MARCH - 'Bigger, Better Than Ever'



Sydney's EASTER AWAKENING MARCH on Good Friday gets under way from Hyde Park.
(Ramon Williams, Worldwide Photos)

Fresh Hope, New Dawn At Wesley Mission's Easter Sunday Service

'THE resurrection on Easter Sunday is a new dawn for all people offering fresh hope and opportunities.' That was the message from the Rev Dr Keith Garner CEO of Wesley Mission during Wesley Mission's Easter Sunrise Service at the Sydney Opera House on Easter Sunday.

'The message of Easter is one of amazement and surprise,' Dr Garner said. 'It is also a message of discovery and disclosure. It was women who discovered the empty tomb. They were the witnesses. Little did they know that their discovery was not the end of the story.'

Hundreds joined singer Daniel Kay, accompanying singers and the Wesley Impact! TV band as Easter hymns resonated through the Sydney Opera House and across Sydney Harbour.

'We meet today because we know Jesus has risen,' Dr Garner said. 'Jesus is more than just remembered, He is with us. From this moment we can live life from the morning sun. In the many challenges we have in our lives, Jesus brings a new dawn, new opportunities.'

The worship service, now in its 51st year, heard from Wesley Mission worker, Yvette McClorhy, who spoke about the transformation of her life after becoming a Christian, including her work with children and young people at Wesley Mission's Operation Hope camps at Vision Valley.

The crowd also heard of the support Wesley Mission is giving Elisha, a young woman who was unwanted by her mother and then survived on the streets by sleeping rough in bus shelters. With counselling and support from Wesley Mission, Elisha is dealing with her feelings of rejection and drug abuse. 'I feel happier. I feel that I've achieved something,' she said.

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WITH CHRIST ...



Rev Dr Clifford Allan Wilson

10 May 1923 – 4 April 2012

NEW Life Associate Editor DR CLIFFORD WILSON was called Home on Wednesday night 4 April 2012.

AT a Thanksgiving Service in Canterbury Gardens Community Church his family paid fine tribute to him, reminding us that Cliff Wilson was a remarkable man in so many ways. His life was filled with busyness and commitment, laughter and love as he loved and served God all his life.

Among his many involvements and achievements were the following: Missionary to India; first Regional Director of Emmaus Bible Correspondence School; Pastoral Service in Australia and the USA; Lecturer at Emmaus Bible College, Melbourne Bible Institute, New Zealand Bible School, Columbia Bible College, Pacific College of Graduate Studies, Toorak Teachers' College, Monash University; academic degrees in History, Education, Theology, Divinity and Psycho-Linguistics; Founder of Word of Truth Ministries; Radio Broadcaster (especially through HCJB) in Australia, the USA and throughout the world; Founding President of Pacific College of Graduate Studies and Pacific International University; Director of Australian Institute of Archeology; Author of more than 50 published books; Associate Editor of *New Life* Christian Newspaper.

Cliff Wilson served beside all of us who sat in the big chair at *New Life*, from Founding Editor Eric Daley to myself, and at times was Acting Editor. His contribution to the ministry of *New Life* was whole-hearted, constant and invaluable. He could always be relied on to provide background or give an assessment of any particular piece submitted for publication, often fleshing out the material and 'joining the dots' between a number of items.

Cliff was the perfect example of a Christian who was 'always ready to give an answer for the hope that is in (him)' (1 Peter 3.15). He was obedient to Paul's command in 1 Corinthians 15.58, 'Therefore stand firm, let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.'

In my eyes Clifford Wilson ranks among the great apologists and defenders of the Faith, and I believe that only in Eternity will we find out the full extent of the effectiveness of Cliff's compendious knowledge of all things Biblical, his strong defence of the Faith, his voluminous writing and broadcasting ministries.

In recent years he struggled against the effects of a massive stroke, the decline of his once acute mental powers and the loss of his beloved Barbara. He has entered into the joy of his Lord.

– Bob Thomas

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MALI: Christians Flee Imposition Of Sharia

HAVING seized the capitals of the three main northern provinces in three days – Kidal, on 30 March, Gao on 31 March and Timbuktu on 1 April – the National Movement for the Liberation of the Azawad declared it had achieved its military goal. (NMLA is the ethnic Tuareg rebel group that has seized control of northern Mali.) Consequently, on Thursday 5 April the NMLA announced a ceasefire. Whilst the NMLA has been fighting for political ends – specifically for autonomy in their homeland – they have been aided by Islamic jihadists who have been fighting for religious ends, specifically an Islamic state where Sharia (Islamic) Law is enforced.

No sooner had the NMLA achieved its goal than the jihadists of Ansar Dine hoisted the black flag of al-Qaeda and announced the imposition of Sharia. Some 100 Nigerian Boko Haram militants who assisted in the capture of Gao have also established a presence there. Sources advise there are four distinct flags flying in Gao: the NMLA, Boko Haram, Ansar Dine and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. However, it is the jihadists who are calling the shots, not the professedly secular NMLA.

The Tuareg rebellion has left northern Mali devastated. There have been reports of pack rapes as well as massive destruction and looting. The UN's office of humanitarian affairs reports: 'Maliens in the northern towns of Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu are hiding in their homes in fear following the weekend takeover by rebel groups, during which hospitals, health clinics, government buildings, and most NGO and UN offices and warehouses were looted, and in some cases destroyed, leaving the bulk of humanitarian operations suspended.' (IRIN, 3 April.) Head of the Malian office of Norwegian Church Aid, Julia McDade, told IRIN: 'Everyone [in Gao] is in hiding, everyone's vehicles have been stolen ... every single office has been ransacked.' Caritas Mali reported that its local office in Gao was destroyed along with the local church which served Gao's 200-strong Catholic community.

Reportedly, Ansar Dine has distributed leaflets con-

taining a contact number saying that anyone who feels threatened or endangered should call Ansar Dine for assistance. One resident reports being on a busload of families fleeing Gao that was ambushed by Tuareg militants who were robbing everyone. People called the Ansar Dine 'hotline' and jihadists were quickly on the scene. The passengers then watched in horror as the jihadists slit the throat of one of the Tuareg militants to cries of 'Allahu Akbar'.

The shocking violence and destruction, but especially the Islamist threat, has forced virtually the entire Christian population of northern Mali to flee for their lives. *The Guardian* received an unconfirmed report that the Christian prefect of the town of Bourem had been executed along with his whole family. More than 90% of Timbuktu's approximately 300 Christians have fled according to Baptist Pastor Nock Ag Info Yattara, whose congregation has worshipped in Timbuktu since the 1950s. He added that not one of its 205 people is left. In Timbuktu, Ansar Dine is controlling the city and its military base, while the NMLA is camped out at the airport. 'What I deplore,' laments Ousmane Halle, the mayor of Timbuktu, 'is the departure of the Christian community ... I cannot guarantee their safety. And these are people that have lived side by side with us for centuries.'

Please Pray Specifically That God Will

- Guarantee the safety of His displaced and threatened people and supply all their needs: spiritual, emotional and physical (food, medical supplies and refuge.)
- 'Frustrate' (NIV) the way of the wicked (Psalm 146.9c) so that northern Mali will not become an Islamic state and al-Qaeda sanctuary; may He intervene to restore democracy and liberty to northern Mali so that the light of Christ might shine there openly.
- Redeem the present sufferings for His own ends, that falsehood might be exposed and rejected, truth illuminated and lifted up and doors long closed be opened for Gospel ministry. – Elizabeth Kendal

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'For Such A Time As This – 'Mrs D.P.' Camps With The Family Of God ...

CHRISTIANS of every denomination, from country and city, gathered to listen to God's Word, sing His praises and rejoice in the fellowship of believers at the 61st Belgrave Heights Easter Convention. The camp sites were full, with 150 caravans and 60 tent sites. A number of grandparents were returning with children and grandchildren. The new recreation hall was used for the first time where 100 plus teenagers, led by six OAC workers, studied the book of Esther. 150 primary aged children heard God's Word and enjoyed each other's company in the small hall with 16 OAC helpers. Each day the crèche cared for about 35 toddlers. And this year there were many babies in prams, all of which is an encouraging sign for the future.

For many, the first meeting was an introduction to Rev Tim Meyers, newly appointed Principal of Melbourne School of Theology. Linking with the over-all theme *For Such A Time As This*, Tim centred our thoughts on specific times in our lives ... times of hunger, brokenness, change, fear, opposition and thirst ... all drawn from the *Gospel Of John* and linked with many Old Testament stories.

Living Bread In Times Of Hunger (John 6.1-35)

Jesus said, 'I AM the Bread of life'. He is the Logos – the spoken, living, appropriated, infilling, nourishing, refreshing, written Word of God. This is the message of Easter.

Divine Presence In Times Of Brokenness (John 17.22-26; Hebrews 3.1-6)

Remember Jesus' words, 'I in them and You in Me.' The call of God is the pursuit of Christian living. It is who we are; not what we do. We are the House of God. This theme was traced through Genesis in Jacob's dream, Exodus in the wilderness wanderings, in the days of the kings and the prophets and finally linked to Jesus (John 1.51). We are God's House. His Spirit lives in us. We have His peace because He lives within; the hope of Glory; the meeting point of Heaven and Earth.

Reassurance In Times Of Change (John 1; Hebrews 1.8-13)

In an ever changing world, Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. We are reassured by His eternal pre-existence and His unchanging nature. The Hebrews were tempted to return to the old sacrificial system. But it is useless to look back to the past. God is the only one who never changes. Malachi 3.6, so His promises never change. We have a perpetual High Priest, Friend and Advocate. The

cross is the unifying dynamic between past, present and future. We are reconciled with God. Jesus is the residual constant in our lives.

Confidence In Times Of Fear

(John 11.25,26,42; 2 Corinthians 5)

A confused and grief-stricken motley group of men and women were transformed by the Resurrection, as was Paul by a personal confrontation with the living Lord. We need to live in the fear of the Lord. Our whole lives must be Christ-centred; doing only what is motivated by the love of God. We have confidence in the cross of Christ; in the love of Christ, in the renewal of Christ and in the commission of Christ. He has given us the message of reconciliation. We are His ambassadors. God uses us to show people His way because the love of Christ (His love for us) controls and constrains us. He is alive! Why should we fear?

Wisdom In Times Of Oppression

(John 17; 1 Corinthians 1)

We need to feed daily on the Bread of Life. Don't store up yesterday's bread, or love the world more than Jesus. Do not rely on your personality or performance in the ministry. Paul said it is the power of the Cross; the Gospel displayed in my ordinariness that achieves His purposes. The paradox of the cross is that it is foolishness to those who are perishing, yet the power of God to those being saved. The Cross was a symbol of death. So we must be willing to die to our own desires and ambitions. His wisdom is displayed in our weakness. His life in me can overcome all oppression.

Living Water In Times Of Thirst (John 7.1-39)

To a man dying of thirst, water is a life saver. Water is life-giving in a desert land. So God's Word is the water of life to a thirsty soul. The Feast of Tabernacles was the most popular and well-attended festival in the Jewish calendar. It was to remind them of the protection, provision and salvation God gave to His people throughout their desert wanderings, and down through history. The Feast lasted seven days. Each day the High Priest poured out a cup of water, which was central to the festival. On the seventh day this was repeated seven times. That is when Jesus declared that He is the Living Water. He was saying 'I am the Messiah you have been waiting for, the festival is fulfilled. Come to Me to be redeemed, renewed, restored and refreshed.' From the rock in Exodus came the Rock of Ages. The Spirit-filled life is the life through which living water flows. (To p.5)

Ian Coffey Unpacks The Book Of Esther – Mrs D.P. Reports ...

REV Ian Coffey, and Ruth, were speakers for the fourth time at Belgrave Heights Convention. Ian was a child of the manse, growing into faith in Christ. Aged 19 he went to a camp with the thought that his life had to be 'all or nothing'. He responded to God's call and has been in Christian ministry for 40 years, and married for 38 years. Ian and Ruth have four sons and three grand-daughters. He is Vice Principal of Moorelands College, Dorset, and Director of Leadership Training.

Ian opened the convention on Good Friday with a powerful exposition of 1 Peter 2.24 on *The Wonder Of The Cross*. In the Cross we find everything we need: the person on the Cross; the penalty at the Cross; the purpose of the Cross; the power through the Cross. In his other talks, Ian unfolded the amazing and challenging *Book of Esther*, which inspired the title of the Easter Convention (Esther 4.14.)

God Moves In A Mysterious Way (Esther 1,2)

The Festival of Purim has its roots in this book. It is a fun-filled, exciting and noisy time for the Jews. The hero is cheered, the villain is booed, as we read *Esther*. God is not named in *Esther*, but throughout we see His providence at work, and the obedience of His people to their God. The Lord is still at work today just as He was in the ancient Persian city of Susa, Xerxes' summer residence. Xerxes ruled most of the known world, and his plan was to conquer Greece. When Queen Vashti refused to appear at court, she was vanquished. The council feared a similar rebellion by all wives. Warnings were noted here against pride, materialism, over-indulgence, carelessness, bad advice and over-reactions. Xerxes is defeated in his Greek campaigns and returns very disgruntled. His wise men organize a pageant to discover the most beautiful girl. Esther, the cousin of Mordecai the Jew, was selected from many to become the new queen. He advised her not to reveal her Jewish identity. At times discretion is the better part of valour. God was in the shadows, directing the heart of this pagan king. He is still working out His purposes today.

Right Place, Right Time (Esther 3,4)

Jews erupt into boos, yells, foot-stamping and whistling when Haman's name is read. He is mentioned 53 times. The king had elevated him to a position of power. But he was an embittered man because Mordecai the Jew would not bow in homage to him. He was enveloped with hatred against the whole Jewish race, and persuaded Xerxes to

sign an edict of annihilation of the Jews. Ethnic cleansings, or pogroms, have been conducted by murderous regimes down through the ages. It is only the Cross that can deal with such atrocities. Esther asked that the Jews fast for three days, which is always connected with prayer, until she was sure of God's leading. She was offering up her own life, as death was the result for anyone entering the King's presence uninvited. How wonderful to have a Saviour to whom we can come at any time with any request.

A Man Obsessed (Esther 5)

Esther shows humility, courage and faith. Haman displays pride, hatred and self-interest. We need to take a step into the unknown as Jesus guides. Esther obeyed her God and her cousin, Mordecai. Xerxes extended his golden scepter to his queen, so she was able to make her request for the king and Haman to join her for a meal. This banquet had been prepared beforehand, showing Esther's faith in God and the people's prayers. But Haman, although pleased to be included, was obsessed with Mordecai's lack of respect.

Be Sure Your Sin Will Find You Out (Esther 6,7)

Haman was an Agagite, a descendent of King Agag of the Amalekites, who hated the Jews with a passion fueled by Satan. In today's world of hatred and division it is Jesus who has broken down the barriers and commanded His disciples to forgive and love. God is at work behind the scenes.

Come On And Celebrate (Esther 8,9,10)

There is a theme of reversal in Esther. So many things are turned around. Yet God's people were still condemned because the Laws of the Medes and Persians cannot be reversed. Haman's estate was given to Esther, who in turn entrusted it to Mordecai. This is a reminder that nothing goes unrecognized and unrewarded in God's eyes. Esther pleads with the King who allows Mordecai to send a second decree permitting the Jews to defend themselves. So the Good News was spread throughout the empire – and many Persians became Jews! God has worked in extraordinary ways throughout history and He is still working. We are God's special people sent to deliver the Good News. We should recognise the good things God has done in our church and our lives, and celebrate these milestones. God still seeks people who understand that who they are, what they are, where they are, are all-important 'for such a time as this.'

Chuck Colson Making 'Slow But Encouraging Steps To Recovery'

CHUCK Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship and the Colson Centre for Christian Worldview, continues to take 'slow but encouraging steps toward recovery' following surgery on Saturday 31 March. The medical procedure was performed to remove a pool of clotted blood on the surface of Chuck's brain, which was discovered when he fell ill during a speaking engagement.

According to the Prison Fellowship website www.prisonfellowship.org, over Easter weekend, Colson hit some 'important milestones.' He was awake for several hours on Holy Saturday, and he was taken off the ventilator. He was also able to speak for brief periods. Showing his characteristic grace, he said, 'Thank you very much,' to a nurse, even though she had to perform an uncomfortable procedure, and he also gave an affectionate greeting to Patty, his wife of more than four decades. Chuck remains listed in critical condition, and as expected, his improvements proceed at a slow pace, but his medical team reports that his vital signs are excellent.

Prison Fellowship CEO Jim Liske has reminded all those concerned for Chuck and his family that 'in situations like this, bad things happen fast and

good things happen slowly,' and encouraged them to remain diligent in prayer over the weeks to come.

This was the first time in 34 years that Colson did not spend Resurrection Sunday in prison, sharing about the risen Christ with inmates. In spite of his absence, PF staff and volunteers followed resolutely in his footsteps, celebrating Easter with two days of in-prison outreaches in New York and California under the leadership of Jim Liske and Prison Fellowship President Garland Hunt. Approximately 100 inmates responded to the Gospel presentations by indicating their desire to give their lives to Christ. Nine more were baptized.

Dozens of inmates at Sing Sing Correctional Facility, a maximum security prison in the town of Ossining, New York, are planning to send 'get well' cards to Chuck. If you would also like to pass along your prayers and messages of encouragement to the entire Colson family, you are invited you to post a comment on the Prison Fellowship Facebook page at www.facebook.com/PFMinistries

– Dan Wooding, Founder, ASSIST Ministries



Sermon Outlines In Relation To Atheism

DR John McClean from Presbyterian Theological Centre, Sydney and Dr Michael Jensen from Moore Theological College have kindly put together the resources for a series of four sermons/Bible talks in relation to issues raised by atheism. Each topic lists the appropriate Biblical texts, sets out the rationale for the particular sermon, provides notes, sermon outline, suitable quotes and suggested further reading.

The four topics covered are: *Doubting And Believing; Atheism And The Real (Inconvenient) God; Suffering And God; Can You Be Good Without God?*

They are posted on the New Life web-site. Go to: www.nlife.com.au hit **FREE DOWNLOADS** and select **Preaching On Atheism.pdf**

Sydney Prayer Breakfast

THE Sydney Prayer Breakfast will be held on Friday 1 June at the Dockside Convention Centre at Cockle Bay Wharf, Sydney. About 200 tickets are left for the 2012 Breakfast at \$600 for a table of 12 and \$55 for single tickets. The breakfast will feature leading economist Professor Ian Harper as speaker and Darlene Zschech, one of Australia's best known Christian musicians. Most important will be united

prayer for the City of Sydney. From 6.30am coffee, tea, juice, muffins and pastries will be available, with a hot breakfast served once the program has commenced.

Contact: Sydney Prayer Breakfast Ltd,
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A Muslim-Christian Dialogue With A Difference

TOPIC: Spiritual Role Models To Live By In The 21st Century: Experiences and Insights from a Christian and a Muslim. Speakers: Greg 'Rafiq' Clarkson (Muslim) and Dr Bernie Power (Christian) on Friday 20 April at 7.30 pm in Melbourne City Conference Centre, 333 Swanston St, Melbourne (cnr Little Lonsdale St). Cost: \$2 entry. Enquiries: 0449 768 932.

Reason
for Faith Festival
ASKING THE BIGGER QUESTIONS

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for details of events associated with the Reason For Faith Festival organised by City Bible Forum, Melbourne, in the wake of the Atheists Convention.

Where Atheism Falls Over ...

THE participants of the Global Atheist's Convention will be spouting long and hard that their view of how everything came about is science and the Genesis account of creation is religion. However, both views are religious and the broad theory of evolution is not supported by real (that is experimental) science. In fact science consigns it to the waste paper basket. Let me explain:

Three Main Hypotheses On Which They Place Their Faith:

1. In the beginning there was nothing; not a molecule, not an atom, not even light. It went 'BANG!' and from that explosion came everything; all matter and energy all the laws of science that are present today. They are forced into this position because if it was something that exploded, then the logical question would be: Who created what exploded?

There are many problems with this idea, the first being, it is illogical because we know that nothing remains as nothing—it can't do anything, least of all create everything. The second is that it is not supported by the Cosmological Argument which basically states that for every effect there must have been a cause—if there is an explosion, then something must have caused it. The First Law of Thermodynamics is another problem because it states that the total energy plus matter in a closed system must remain constant. So to go from no energy/matter to all of the energy/matter that there is, is a violation. Also there is a violation of the Second Law of Thermodynamics which in effect states that entropy will increase for a closed system. That is, it will go from order to less order. So the idea of chaos (an explosion) going to cosmos is a violation.

2. They then propose that a group of molecules, which came from nothing, joined together and formed themselves into living, replicating cells of incomprehensible complexity. This is known as

Chemical Evolution and defies all known laws of chemical combination. I know as someone holding a PhD in synthetic organic chemistry how difficult it is to get a chemical reaction to proceed to the desired result; if everything is not exactly right the result is a tarry mess. Molecules simply do not lie around waiting for other molecules to come along and join to them—they breakdown to smaller molecules.

3. Darwin's theory is that all life came from living single cell species. He seemingly did not worry about where the living cells came from, and diversity came about by a process of natural selection and later, people added mutations as a cause of diversity.

However, both processes can be shown to reduce functional genetic information, while evolution requires a huge increase. For example, a single cell bacterium has about 500,000 nucleotides joined together to form its DNA, whereas humans have in excess of 3 billion. It is the order of the nucleotides in the DNA (there are four types) which provide the information for the species to construct itself. Atheists, evolutionists and fellow travellers are unable to propose viable mechanisms for this enormous increase.

I give many more examples of the impossibility of life coming from non-life in my book, *A Defence Of The Bible*. However I will leave the last word on the subject to George Wald, a 1967 Nobel Prize winner and an evolutionist who states:

'When it comes to the origin of life there are only two possibilities—creation or spontaneous generation. There is no third way. Spontaneous generation was disproved 100 years ago, but that leads us to only one other conclusion, that of supernatural creation. We cannot accept that on philosophical grounds; therefore, we choose to believe the impossible: that life arose spontaneously by chance!

— Gary J Baxter

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John Edmondstone Retires From Radio

RADIO 2CH in Sydney has announced the retirement of leading Baptist minister Rev John Edmondstone after a broadcasting career lasting 40 years. During that time John has been the key figure in the radio ministry of the NSW Council of Churches through 2CH.

The original licence for 2CH was issued to the NSW Council of Churches 80 years ago. For many years 2CH was operated on behalf of the Council by AWA, then by a separate company, Broadcasting Station 2CH Pty Ltd. 2CH is now owned and operated by the Macquarie Radio Network. The licence was handed over to the operating company with an agreement allowing the Council to continue with its Christian programs.

John Edmondstone served as chairman of the Council's broadcasting committee, and for many years was the 2CH Religious Program Director. John's voice became well known and well loved by 2CH listeners as the host of his daily one minute

spot *Have A Good Day* and the Sunday night program *Night Song*.

In announcing John Edmondstone's retirement the Program Manager of 2CH, Ian Holland, said, 'John has worked with many General Managers and CEOs representing AWA, John Singleton and Macquarie Radio. He has worked with countless 2CH Program Directors. He has seen the station go from last in the market to, for a number of years, Sydney's top rated station and everywhere in between. Through all this, John has been passionate about 2CH and given the station and the management team complete and absolute support. John has made a significant and extremely positive contribution to the success of 2CH over a great many years.' Ian wished John good health and happiness in his retirement.



– Kel Richards

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Richard has travelled extensively in the Middle East for the past
21 years and is an adjunct lecturer in Early Church History
at Melbourne School of Theology



ACT Slavery Conviction Highlights Broader Problems With Prostitution Industry

THE Australian Christian Lobby says the conviction of a woman in the ACT for slavery shows broader problems with the prostitution industry. Managing Director Jim Wallace welcomed the force of law that convicted the woman who required her victim to work off a \$43,000 'debt' over an 11-month period by becoming a prostituted woman.

'This sad story shows that even here in Australia human trafficking is alive and active, and also that there is a link between prostitution and human trafficking,' Mr Wallace said. 'What is also concerning about this story is that the court heard that during a three and a half month period the victim serviced 720 men. So why don't we hold these men also accountable for contributing to the victim's slavery?'

'Could the men who purchased sex honestly say they did not suspect the woman's situation? Why aren't these men culpable for their actions? This is

why we need a different approach to prostitution policy to eliminate potential for human trafficking and exploitation of women. If men were penalised for purchasing sex – a model that is currently used in Sweden, Norway, Iceland and South Korea – the demand for trafficked and prostituted women would diminish as it has in Sweden,' Mr Wallace said. In the same way that the law didn't excuse former Tasmanian MP Terry Martin's actions for having underage sex with a 12-year-old girl – so the law should also hold men accountable for exploiting women.

'The ACT Government was far too hasty in its dismissal of the successful Swedish policy model. If it was serious about addressing sex slavery it would investigate this further and look to the lead of other countries which are pursuing this,' Mr Wallace said.

Former Atheist Becomes 'Regular Worshipper' After Researching Scientific Proof Of Healing Prayer

'THE proof of the power of prayer is overwhelming. What I discovered astonished me. Over the past 30 years a growing, and largely unnoticed, body of scientific work shows religious belief is medically, socially, and psychologically beneficial. Atheists can sneer at faith all they like, but they can't assume science is on their side.' – Tom Knox

Newsmax reports that an 'exhaustive analysis of more than 1,500 reputable medical studies' supports Dr Harold G. Koenig's belief that people who are 'more religious and pray more have better mental and physical health.'

Koenig, director of Duke University's Centre for Spirituality, Theology and Health, was quoted as saying a study last year showed prayer had a remarkable effect on patients with hearing and visual deficiencies.

Said Koenig: 'The benefits of devout religious practice, particularly involvement in a faith commu-

nity and religious commitment, are that people cope better. In general, they cope with stress better, they experience greater well-being because they have more hope, they're more optimistic, they experience less depression, less anxiety, and they commit suicide less often. They have stronger immune systems, lower blood pressure, and probably better cardiovascular functioning.'

Researcher Tom Knox, a one-time atheist who became a 'regular worshipper' after doing in-depth study of the medical benefits of faith, notes: 'The proof of the power of prayer is overwhelming. What I discovered astonished me. Over the past 30 years a growing, and largely unnoticed, body of scientific work shows religious belief is medically, socially, and psychologically beneficial.'

Concludes Knox: 'Atheists can sneer at faith all they like, but they can't assume science is on their side.' – *Teresa Neumann, Breaking Christian News*

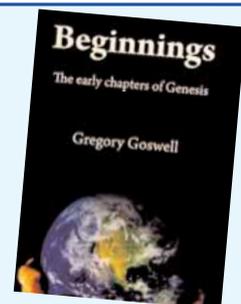
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HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE ...

Give Poverty the Flush Campaign Launched

MICAH Challenge's Give Poverty the Flush campaign seeks to focus greater public and political attention on the potential for improved water, sanitation and basic hygiene (WaSH) to save millions of lives in the developing world.

'We want to highlight the staggering reality that one-third of our planet, an estimated 2.5 billion people, do not have access to an adequate toilet,' said National Co-ordinator of Micah Challenge in Australia, John Beckett.

Diarrhoea currently kills more children every year than AIDS, malaria and measles combined. Approximately 3,000 children every day die from diseases related to water and sanitation. The World Health Organisation estimates that by addressing WASH we could prevent 28% of all child deaths, saving two million children's lives each year.

On current rates of progress, the Millennium Development Goal target to halve the number of people without access to adequate sanitation will not be reached until 2026. By contrast, the target for access to clean water was reached in 2010, five years ahead of schedule.

'Rates of progress on sanitation are simply not acceptable when we have both the knowledge and the means to change this situation,' said Mr Beck-

ett. 'We take toilets and clean water for granted but so many in our world don't have that luxury.

Every human being is made in the image of God, with inherent dignity. In 2012, no child should miss out on school, get sick, or even die because of lack of access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene. We all have a part to play in fixing this tragic situation.'

Micah Challenge is calling on the Australian Government to increase its contribution to fixing the global WaSH crisis to \$500M per year by 2015. This could provide an extra 8.8 million people with access to WaSH.

The Give Poverty the Flush campaign encourages churches, schools and community groups to run community events with fun and creative action ideas to help communicate this important message to our nation's political leaders. Micah Challenge has all the resources you need to take action. Visit www.micahchallenge.org.au/give-poverty-the-flush for information, resources and to register your Give Poverty the Flush event.



Giant toilet seat symbolises WaSH Campaign.

WITH CHRIST:

THE Rev John Mallison AOM was called Home suddenly on 29 March 2012. John was a beloved Christian pastor, mentor, author and teacher, having taught in 29 countries. He was a trusted counsellor and mentor, and firm friend of many.

For 17 years John Mallison was a parish minister, first with the Methodist Church of Australasia and then with the Uniting Church in Australia. He was

ordained on 6 May 1958. For 23 years, he directed John Mallison Ministries, equipping Christian leadership. John played a major role in maximising the impact of Christian small groups. He was the 7th Moderator of the Uniting Church in NSW and was the original Director of Mentoring for the Australian Arrow Leadership Program. He wrote 23 books including *Mentoring To Develop Disciples And Leaders* and *Postcards On A Journey*.

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Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani Spends 35th Birthday Behind Bars

THIRTY five years ago, on the 23rd day of the Fardivin month of the Persian Calendar (11 April 1977), Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani was born in Iran.

Tiffany Barrans, writing for the American Centre For Law And Justice website (<http://aclj.org>), said, 'This is the third birthday that Pastor Youcef has been forced to celebrate behind bars, condemned to death in Iran for apostasy – becoming a Christian in a regime governed by Shariah (Islamic law).

'It is exactly two and a half years of imprisonment – 913 days illegally held in prison for his faith.'

She went on to say that both the Iranian Constitution and the International Declaration of Human Rights, of which Iran is a signatory, not only forbid executing someone for their faith but expressly protect religious freedom. Despite these assurances of religious freedom, Iran continues to imprison Pastor Youcef indefinitely for charges related solely to the exercise of his faith.

Al-Shabaab Is Headed North After Detonating Two Bombs

Al-Shabaab is headed to northern Somalia. Some say they're moving because they're weak. But others say it's actually to strengthen al-Qaeda ties and to grow. The terror group has already detonated two bombs in April, killing some 20 people. 'The security situation remains very difficult, so there are still thousands and thousands of people living in temporary shelters along the border of Kenya,' says Medical Teams International president Bas Vanderzalm. For the last year, Medical Teams has been sending volunteer teams of doctors and nurses to help these refugees. 'Really, it's the only resource available to most people who are sick.' As frightened Somalis continue to flood into Kenya, they're able to have needs finally met. They also catch a glimpse of hope. 'It's been a witness and testimony to the love of God, too, in this very difficult place where many people may not know Christ. When we come, that's our mission: demonstrating the love of Christ to those who are suffering.'

Ministry Faces Challenges In India's Madhya Pradesh State

THE US Commission on International Religious Freedom placed India on a 'Watch List' for 2012. The report says justice in religious violence cases is slow and ineffective, especially in states with anti-conversion laws. Don Edwards with Grand Rapids, Michigan-based Mission India, agrees. Two of their teams were attacked within the last couple of

'Today, Christians and supporters of Pastor Youcef all around the world are holding a fasting and prayer vigil for the persecuted pastor to



Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani
(Photo via ACLJ website)

bring attention to his plight. Just last week, hundreds of Christians and supporters of religious liberty attended a vigil and march for Pastor Youcef's release in Hamburg, Germany,' said Ms Barrans.

'These are just a few examples of the increasing international pressure being placed on Iran to release Pastor Youcef. Nations like the United Kingdom, Brazil, and many others are directly demanding that Iran immediately and unconditionally release Pastor Youcef.'

– Dan Wooding, Founder, ASSIST Ministries

weeks. First, a Children's Bible Club worker, then a church pastor. '[The pastor] was conducting a worship service, and a group of RSS activists (Hindu fundamentalists) came in and beat the pastor and told him that if he returns to that place, they will harm everybody in the village and kill his family.' Does the violence stop the Gospel? 'The pastor moved to the neighbouring state of Rajasthan. After about a month, he came back to the same village and was conducting a worship service.'

South Sudan's Christians Caught In Limbo

APRIL 8 held the kind of finality of a death sentence for many Christians in Sudan. It was the deadline for Christians from South Sudan to either leave or be stripped of their rights. Since the South seceded from the North last July, the Khartoum government began registering Southern Sudanese as foreigners. Carl Moeller with Open Doors USA says many believers are in limbo. 'There's been no process, no clarity, so it has put Christians in an extremely precarious place because at any moment, the government could begin to act in very aggressive ways towards this group and claim this deadline as a pretext.' What does the future hold for the Church of Sudan and South Sudan? Chaos means it's hard to lay down plans for any kind of ministry. Moeller says while that won't stop the Gospel, prayer is needed for believers trapped in the situation. 'This is the Church that has endured great suffering and has come through that suffering with a profound faith.'

Some Afghan Parliament Members Embrace Christianity

AFGHANISTAN, a country long suffering from civil wars, has not experienced peace for many years. Ongoing bombings by fundamentalist Muslims have stolen peace from the lives of Afghans.

However, according to a story by *Mohabat Christian News Agency*, the country has recently seen signs of change. *Mohabat News* said, 'Informed Afghan authorities acknowledge that Christianity has obtained a special place not only among youth, but also among various layers in society. (In addition), house churches are growing tremendously.'

Mohabat News said an independent Shi'ite website in Iran has quoted a knowledgeable Afghan official as saying, 'There is evidence of widespread Christian propaganda in Afghanistan, and the existence of more than ten churches that operate secretly in residential houses has been proven.'

Mohabat News said negative media reports have been published about American soldiers and organizations providing humanitarian aid in Afghanistan. The objective, *Mohabat News* says, has been an attempt to persuade Afghan rulers and politicians that the objective of the aid is really to spread the Christian Gospel.

At the same time, *Mohabat News* said, human rights advocacy groups are concerned that reducing the power of the US in Afghanistan will result in the growth of religious based violations and Islamic persecution of religious minorities, especially Christians. On the other hand, new reports indicate that the Christian faith is spreading among Afghanistan's movers and shakers. Some members of the country's parliament have embraced Christianity. *Mohabat News* said, 'This clearly indicates that a reform is taking place in Afghans' zealous and traditional beliefs.'

Mohabat News said, '*Farsi News Service of AghanTelex*, also published a report on the conversion of some members of the Afghani Parliament to Christianity and wrote, "Evangelism and Christian propaganda is taking place in the country at a high level, but this is the first time that those who call themselves representatives of the Afghani people not only have become 'apostates,' but have joined Christian ministries to evangelise. This time they want to present their Christian services to Muslim people through parliament".'

— *Jeremy Reynolds, ASSIST News Service*

Cyprus Christian Radio Station Gets OK To Expand

AFTER years of trying, Kanali-7, 98.4 FM can finally broadcast the hope of Christ across all of Cyprus. The radio station is part of AMG International's outreach. AMG's Paul Jenks says the expansion was a hard-won fight involving the Cypriot Supreme Court. Now they can focus on the future. 'We're very excited about that as we've changed our antennae and transmitters and already are starting to have new responses from listeners every day. The plan is to take those transmitters and the antennae to an even higher elevation in the central part and eventually to reach 95% of the island.' Jenks says, 'Cyprus is strategic. It's a hub nation with Russians, Turks, Arabs and Israelis. The Gospel has had a huge impact already. The message that goes out is the message of hope and redemption and renewal. These are things that are resonating very well with people in a secular country in a part of the world that has had a lot of turmoil.'

Community-Led Water Projects Transform Ugandan Communities

LIVING Water International has always felt that clean water is the basis for better health, economy, and education. But in a new campaign, they point

out water is just the beginning. The campaign focuses on Uganda, where Living Water isn't just digging wells. Paul Darilek says: 'The way you carry out this work is as important as doing the work at all.' Living Water involves the whole community. They train leaders who involve the church, leaders from civil society, and local school systems in teaching hygiene and sanitation courses, and incorporating that into the social fabric of a community.' Communities invest their own time and money to partner with Living Water. They're transforming, and with the church as the central focus, 'This transformation in health, economy, and education that results from water becomes the face of the local church.'

Faith Comes By Hearing Offers Free Easter Story Download

EASTER sometimes gets overshadowed by other holidays like Christmas. But the truth is: the first Easter Sunday was the most significant day in human history. This year, Faith Comes By Hearing wants to help you celebrate the Good News of the resurrection – and share it with others. Faith Comes By Hearing is offering a free download of *The Easter Story*. It's a full dramatized reading of Mark 15 and 16. Listen with your family. Follow this link:

<http://www.MNNonline.org/article/17014>

Seminars On Social Issues

FIVE one-hour long, well attended seminars were held over the week-end of the Belgrave Heights Easter Convention, addressing challenges and issues relevant to Christians in today's society:

A Biblical Response To Homosexuality – Murray Campbell

This was a repeat of the summer seminar due to popular demand. There was standing room only at this meeting because of the current controversy in society.

Dealing With Dawkins – Understanding And Responding To Modern Atheism – Robert Martin

Robert completed his honours thesis at Moore Theological College on the New Atheists, so was well-placed to present the seminar and answer questions. He is also the Director of City Bible Forum which is leading a coalition of Christian organizations in the *Reason For Faith Festival*, 16-18 April. Robert defined the New Atheism as being modern, popular and militant in its attack on Christianity. The New Atheists claim that religion is irrational, immoral and obscurantist. Indoctrinating children in religion is a form of child abuse! There should be no Christian voice in politics and public policy. They believe the world would be a better place without religion. They are dogmatic in their beliefs, refusing to allow their views to be challenged and show little evidence of scholarship concerning the Bible.

Christians need to respond with grace, with patience, and live the Christian life that cannot be disputed. It is better to debate them on moral issues rather than science versus faith. The best place to engage them is on the grounds of the historical proof of the resurrection, 1 Corinthians 15.

Responding To Islam – What Would Jesus Do? – Bernie Power

Bernie served for 21 years in four Middle Eastern countries with Interserve. He is currently MST's missiologist. He regularly attends mosques, debates with Islamic leaders, evangelizes Muslims and nurtures new believers. He has seen more Muslims come to faith in the last five years in Melbourne than in his 21 years overseas. There are 340,000 Muslims in Australia – 1.7% of the population, concentrated in Sydney and Melbourne. But only one third are practising their religion. One third have been born in Australia and half are under the age of 14. Worldwide, 80% of refugees are from Islamic countries. More Muslims have come to faith in

Christ worldwide in the last 40 years than in the previous 1000. The Federation of Islam in Australia has a political agenda, but most Muslims have come to Australia for a better life. Many find this hard to achieve because of the high levels of illiteracy amongst them as well as unemployment.

Christians can concede, compromise, contextualise or confront Muslims but Jesus was not afraid of people threatening Him with death. He talked about them publicly and exposed them (John 2.24,25, Luke 13.31,32). We need to be willing to suffer for the Kingdom. Like Jesus, we need to be able to deal with ideological opposition. He expected it, faced it, challenged those who opposed Him and spoke out against injustice.

Jesus responded with love to those in need (Matthew 25.35-36). We need to show them the love of Jesus. Muslims are much more open to spiritual discussion than the average Australian. The Bible says 'Love your enemies' but the Koran teaches: 'Kill your enemies'. Do we demonstrate this love?

Building A Caring Community – Ruth Coffey

Ruth teaches pastoral care at Moorlands College and was pastoral co-ordinator in the International Church in Geneva. Jesus is our example. Through His very nature and work He displayed His love for mankind, dealing with them in a practical way. But not everyone was healed or helped by the Lord. We must be aware that we cannot respond to everyone in need. However, as part of the body of Christ, we are commanded: 'Go and do likewise' (Luke 6.35,36).

After you love and care for a person, the way opens to tell them of God's love. All believers have pastoral responsibility. Some have specific gifts, and a few are responsible to oversee the whole.

Pastoral care is listening, praying, encouraging, sharing practical help, pointing to Jesus, guiding, teaching, sustaining, reconciling. All people are different, with different needs. We should look for the lonely and needy ones after our meetings. Some people just need a friendly word or visit. Others need particular care after a crisis. Others may need long-term help.

The whole church needs to be involved. We must maintain our relationship with God to be able to help others. Only then will we truly help them by leading them in the way of the Lord.

– 'Mrs D.P.' (Barbara Prout)

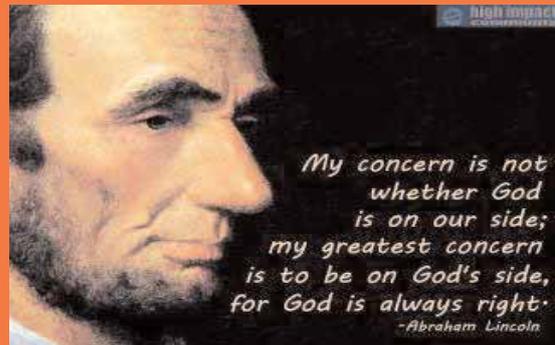
An Evangelist's Last Convert (or: A Story You Won't Find In The Secular Press)



THE *Titanic* was the greatest ship of its day weighing 46,000 tons. It was considered unsinkable. But on its maiden voyage, on the night of 14 April 1912 while coursing through the ocean at 22 knots it struck an iceberg. Because it carried only half as many life jackets as passengers when it sank, 1,513 people drowned. One passenger, John Harper, was on his way to preach at Moody Church in Chicago. Trying to stay afloat in the ocean he drifted towards a young man holding onto a plank. Harper asked, 'Young man are you saved?' The man said 'No'. A wave separated them. After a few minutes they drifted within speaking distance of each other and again Harper called to him, 'Have you made your peace with God?' The young man said 'Not yet.'

A wave overwhelmed Harper, but the words 'are you saved?' kept ringing in the young man's ears. Two weeks later a youth stood up in a Christian Endeavour meeting in New York, told his story and said, 'I am John Harper's last convert.' At the time of the sinking of the *Titanic*, John Harper was minister of what is now The Harper Memorial Baptist Church in Glasgow, Scotland.

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The **Melbourne Chinese Bible Church (MCBC)** is located in the West of Melbourne. It is an independent church with over 100 Cantonese & English-speaking members.

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BOOKS WORTH READING ...

SERVING GOD'S WORDS: WINDOWS ON PREACHING AND MINISTRY

Ed Paul A. Barker, Richard J. Condie and Andrew S. Malone, Nottingham: IVP, 2011

THIS is a Festschrift written to honour Dr Peter Adam, recently retired Principal of Ridley College, Melbourne, on the occasion of his 65th birthday. It is highly appropriate that the essays included focus on the themes of God's Word and the preaching of the Word, the twin passions of Peter's long and fruitful ministry in England and Australia.

Richard Condie, Peter's successor as Vicar of St Jude's Carlton, makes a case for bringing the Ten Commandments back into the life of the church, together with many helpful suggestions about how they may be preached today. Paul Barker writes on Moses as a preacher. Moses set the pattern for all later preaching by the prophets. According to Barker, Moses' use of earlier Pentateuchal texts and his sermonic rhetoric provide the contemporary preacher with an example of effective preaching. David Peterson looks at prophetic preaching in Acts as a model of pertinent application of Old Testament texts to the situation of different hearers. A lack of application is a weakness in much contemporary expository preaching, which too often sounds like a lecture or Bible study.

David Jackman uses 1 Corinthians as a window into the pastoral methods of Paul, who sought to train believers in godliness. Jackman argues that we are not to be content to just train them how to give a Gospel presentation, for why should unbelievers listen if the lives of Christians are little different from their own? Along the same lines, Allan Chapple mines Paul's First Letter To The Thessalonians for what it tells of the apostle's ministry of the Word, and both Jackman and Chapple show the continuing relevance of the Gospel to ethics, for it is not just the unbelieving world that needs to hear and respond to the Gospel! From 1 Timothy, William Taylor demonstrates that Paul's aim was to produce a congregation mature and fit for ministry ('how you ought to behave in the household of God'), with the result that its corporate life is proof of the truth and power of the Gospel.

Don Carson gives helpful advice to ministers about reading, studying and enjoying the Bible, not just using it to prepare this week's sermon or Bible

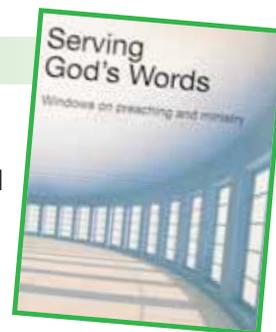
study. He also stresses that all reading should engage one's critical faculties and one's heart. Graham Cole explores the nexus between what God has done (Gospel) and what we in response are to do (ethics), with his point being that 'the evangelical and the ethical need each other' (p.141). Archbishop Peter Jensen handles the hot potato of whether natural disasters (like the 'Black Saturday' bushfires in Victoria) are judgments of God, showing what can and should not be said in a truly biblical response to such a situation. In doing so, he provides a model for ministers who have to preach on the Sunday following a notable tragedy involving heavy loss of life.

Mike Raiter explores the concept of 'preaching with unction', or what he calls 'the holy hush'. While he by no means denies the experience (he has had one himself), he properly warns against formulas that are supposed to produce it and against making what is an unusual experience the expected and demanded norm for preaching. To do that will only lead to frustration, recriminations and a false sense of guilt by faithful preachers who see little fruit for their efforts.

Gerald Bray shows the continued usefulness of the Anglican homilies for the modern preacher, for they expound the doctrines at the heart of the Reformation and apply them to the lives of believers. They also remind us of the need for discipline in the Christian life. Lastly, Vaughan Roberts reveals what we can learn from the example of Charles Simeon, a minister with whom Peter Adam shares a number of characteristics, being an Anglican bachelor devoted to preaching expository sermons and one who has had a great influence on a younger generation of preachers.

The volume closes with a short biography of Peter, written by Richard Condie, and a bibliography of Peter's major publications. Here, then, is a collection of essays that are sure to encourage and assist others to live a life serving God's Word.

– Greg Goswell



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