

2012 – How To Make It An Event-Filled Year

HURLEY and Billabong have joined forces with *Events NSW* to hold a brand new global event for Sydney, the *Australian Open Surfing*. The event, set to take place at Sydney's iconic Manly Beach 11-19 February 2012 is a global, multifaceted youth and sporting event that will showcase the best in surfing, skate, music, fashion and art with an expected spectator audience of 125,000.

All churches could include these dates in their schedule of events for 2012 and consider how to capitalise on this and other great opportunities.

PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS INCLUDE:

• Special Church Services With Sport Themes.

Create 'sports-theme' services for a Sunday around a major sports event. Include prayer, sports-based sermons and create a sports themed environment celebrating the principles of faith. Suggested Scriptures that can assist in preparing and sharing with the congregation include:

- § 1 Corinthians 9.24-27 *Run To Win.*
- § Ephesians 6.10-20 *The Right Equipment.*
- § Galatians 6.9 *Don't Become Weary.*
- § 1 Timothy 4.7,8 *Training.*
- § 1 Timothy 6.11,12 *Fight the Good Fight.*
- § 2 Timothy 2.5 *The Victory Crown.*
- § 1 Peter 1.7 *More Than Gold.*
- § 1 Peter 1.13-16 *Prepare For Action.*
- § 1 John 5.4b *Victory That Overcomes.*

• Large Screen Events (Hugely Popular).

There are a wide variety of sports DVDs already available from Heritage Films.

www.movieschangepeople.com have a range of surfing dvds which they post free worldwide.

• Cultural Activities.

Add a cultural element to your Large Screen events by showcasing the food, dress, and culture of the two countries competing that you are watching. When pricing your event consider factoring in the cost of including a copy of resources for each person to take home.

• Hire A Movie Theatre And Hold A Festival.

This is another great idea – to hire a movie theatre to enable folks to see TV coverage or a sports DVD on a



Manly Beach, where the Australian Open Surfing event will be held

large screen. One group used the Macquarie Multiplex Ryde in Sydney to show a Grand Final event one year. The telecast on the day provides the focus to bring people together but activities can commence well before the telecast begins or if it is a long program many activities can still continue during the telecast (especially activities for children).

There may be opportunities during the telecast such as hospitality of food, quizzes and for the children face painting, games, colouring competitions, and crèche. While watching the competition it may be appropriate to share a testimony of a well-known player during the break. At the end of the program you could give away ministry resources.

Festival activities before the broadcast such as face painting, wind tunnels, balloon sculpting, feet washing, juggling balls, clowning, stilts, long skis, kids carpentry, craft, giant jigsaws, water dunking machines, free food and drink, afternoon teas, earth (giant) ball, animal farms, giant slides and jumping castles, entertainment from the big stage (including choirs, bands, dancers), badge making, gum boot throwing, Karaoke, Bush Dance, novelty races (eg three legged, tug of war, egg and spoon). A 'Free' Prayer Tent, and Church Information Tent could also be set up.

• Reaching Out.

There could be an opportunity to billet people from other church groups seeking to visit the event and/or beach parties or picnics.

• Contacts For Sports Ministry Opportunities:

The following websites contain valuable information about the availability of sports ministry resources:

www.christiansurfers.com.au

www.sportschaplaincy.com.au

www.biblesciety.com.au (or phone: 1300 BIBLES.)

– Compiled by Rosemaree Knight,
Sports Ministry Networker, Australia Region

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FROM THE EDITOR ...

Back To The Future For Persecuted Christians

CHRISTIANS in many countries could be forgiven for thinking they're living in the 1st, 2nd or 3rd Centuries when the heavy hand of persecution was on the Church, as this small selection from news releases over the past two months shows. Pray for them. Pray for their persecutors. Pray for the stirring up of an indifferent world to demand an end to this barbarism and cowardice, so utterly out of place in the 'enlightened' (!?) 21st Century.

Somali Convert From Islam Whipped In Public – woman left bleeding in front of hundreds of spectators for becoming Christian. The public whipping by al Shabab terrorists was meant to mark her release. She received 40 lashes on 22 December while jeered by spectators. Osman became a Christian four years ago and was a member of the underground church in war-torn Somalia. www.compassdirect.org

Burma's Christian Civilians Attacked During Christmas – Government troops kill 47-year-old Christian, destroy church property in Kachin state. A Baptist church in Loije, Bhamo District, held a funeral on 27 December for 47-year-old Maran Zau Ja, who was shot dead without provocation by the Burmese Army's Light Infantry Battalion No. 321 on Christmas Day. www.compassdirect.org

Lao Christian Families Ordered Out – The heads of the four Christian families in Nattoo village, Palansai District, Savannakhet Province, were summoned to a meeting with the village authorities on 21 December and told that all 47 Christians living in the village must give up their faith in Christ and cease all Sunday worship meetings. www.barnabasfund.org

Carolers Beaten; Violence Growing – Threats and outbreaks of violence against Christians in India don't show signs of stopping. In the state of Orissa, the leader of the RSS, an activist movement of Hindu nationalists, called for a mob of 2,500 to go on strike the week after Christmas. Dave Stravers with Grand Rapids, Michigan-based Mission India says the timing was intentional. 'When there's a general strike, the opportunities for violence are just multiple and it's a time when these extremists get violent against people they don't like, and Christians are usually the targets of that.' Violence did break out in south-west India when members of the RSS brutalized 15 Christians singing Christmas carols in a private home. Police arrested the believers for trying to convert. This goes to show the breakdown in India's justice system. 'Someone comes to beat you up, and then the police come and arrest you and accuse you of inciting that other person to violence.' With these trends, persecution will only increase. 'This is the direct result of the fast growth of the church and the great response to the Gospel.'

Full story: <http://www.MNNOnline.org/article/16643>

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NEW LIFE comes to you as a .PDF file, with many stories and advertisements containing links to other websites and email addresses.

As from this issue, web and email addresses will be printed in *italic type*.

You only have to position your cursor over the link to highlight it,
eg: editor@nlife.com.au ; www.nlife.com.au

then click and you will be taken directly to that site.

When you are finished there, click on the back button to return to *NEW LIFE*.

Remembering North Korea In Its Time Of Crisis

NORTH Korea is an example of how quickly and totally circumstances can change. On 8 January 1907, 960 men registered for a week-long men's winter Bible Study conference in the First Church of Pyongyang. The evening sessions, which were open to the public, attracted up to 2,000 each night.

A worship service was held on Sunday 14 January 1907. After the preaching, the session was opened up for prayer. Missionary Graham Lee had already asked a few men to be prepared to lead, but before they could do anything the entire congregation erupted in spontaneous prayer. Missionary Samuel Moffett noted that though the sound was like 'the falling of many waters' it was not chaotic, but absolutely harmonious.

Even after the meeting ended and everyone was dismissed, multitudes remained on the site confessing their sins to one another in tears and deep repentance. The Great Korean Revival had begun and it swept Korea in much the same way that the Great Awakening had swept America and revivals had swept Wales.

The event, also known as the Korean Pentecost, caused Pyongyang to be known as 'The Jerusalem of the East'.

In 1910 Korea was invaded, occupied and annexed by Japan. The intensive religious persecution suffered at the hand of the Japanese contributed to the forging of a strong Christian Korean nationalism. Whilst World War 2 saw the Japanese expelled, the north of the Korean Peninsula came under Soviet communist control. Hundreds of thousands of Christians fled to the US-controlled South to escape communist repression. After the Korean War (1950-53) ended with a ceasefire and the division of the nation into North and South along the 38th parallel, some 200 Christian congregations with some 300,000 believers subsequently disappeared from the North.

In line with its policy of Songun (Military First), North Korea's mismanaged and scarce resources are directed first to anyone with links to the military. While the system benefits the military, guaranteeing their loyalty, virtually everyone living outside of Pyongyang struggles to survive, with virtually no food or electricity or anaesthetics and so on.

Today North Korea is regarded as the worst persecutor in the world. There is an 'underground church', but it is gravely imperilled. Possession of a Bible is treated as treason because only the Kim family may be worshipped.

Witnessing Christians are publicly executed while their whole family, to three generations, is purged from society in Auschwitz-type concentration labour camps where starvation and unparalleled cruelty are the norm and life is short. Many tens of thousands of Christians are believed to be suffering in North Korea's 'Hidden Gulag'.

North Korea is so tightly closed to the outside world that very little leaks in and even less leaks out. Radios and TVs are all pre-tuned for North Korean propaganda and brainwashing, and the borders are tightly monitored. Even Western intelligence only learnt about the death of the 'Dear Leader' Kim Jong-il the same way local North Koreans did: via a North Korean news broadcast, two days later.

Some analysts are warning we should expect a period of increased repression, complete with purges, as the regime of the 'Great Successor' Kim Jong-un consolidates.

In the absence of news, it is good to have some special dates in our diaries to help us remember North Korea and focus our prayers. For example: 8 January was the birthday of Kim Jong-un (the 'Great Successor'); 14 January, the anniversary of the Korean Pentecost; 27 July, the anniversary of the ceasefire (known as 'Victory Day' in North Korea) and 9 September, Independence Day.

Please Pray That:

- God, who alone is Sovereign, will use Kim Jong-un for His own divine purpose. 'Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand.' (Proverbs 19.21 ESV).
- the Holy Spirit will again visit North Korea with revival power: may the Spirit reach deep into the halls of power to set free those enslaved to and blinded by sin; may the Spirit reach broadly across the land so that multitudes amongst the destitute, starving, incarcerated, infirm, grief-stricken and hopeless might find a Saviour who not only forgives sins and saves souls, but who answers prayers and for whom nothing is impossible. 'But Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible".' (Matthew 19.26 ESV)

For more information, updates and helpful links see Elizabeth Kendal's blog 'Religious Liberty Monitoring' <<http://elizabethkendal.blogspot.com>>.

– Written for the Australian Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty Commission by Elizabeth Kendal, international religious liberty analyst and advocate, and a member of the AEA RLC team.

New Year/New Vision At Summer Convention

IT'S always good to give thanks for the past year and welcome in the new, and Belgrave Heights Convention is the ideal place to do this, with its beautiful bushland setting, inspiring speakers and the fellowship of the saints.



Murray Capill with his wife Wendy and two of their five children were first timers at the convention. May it be the first of many visits. Murray grew up in a Christian home in New Zealand. He came to know the Lord personally as a teenager. While studying teaching at univer-

sity he met Wendy. They were both involved in the Christian Union. They were married in 1986. For three years Murray trained at the Reformed Theological College in Geelong. He pastored a church in Auckland for 10 years before being called to lecture at RTC in 2001. Four years later he became principal. Murray does not see himself as an academic, but God has used his passion for training young preachers. We were continually blessed at BHC as we journeyed with Murray through the life of Joseph.

The Mess (Genesis 37) Joseph was part of a thoroughly dysfunctional, blended family. Yet that family was God's family on Earth; heirs to the promises made to Abraham, as are we, the Church. There was rivalry between the sons and their mothers, resistance to God's revealed purpose as shown in Joseph's dreams. The Jews' hatred for Jesus, and their rejection of Him, are prefigured in the way the brothers sold Joseph into slavery. But God is the Master of working in a mess, in our lives as well as Joseph's.

The Preparation (Genesis 39-41) God is in no rush as He renovates and prepares a leader, a family, a church. He changes our character first, moulding us into His image of purity, integrity, courage and conviction. Joseph's character was strengthened in the furnace of affliction. Like Joseph, we need to trust the Lord and allow Him complete control of our lives. He knows our destiny. He specialises in the impossible.

The Test (Genesis 42-42) Joseph was now 37, clean-shaven, dressed in a royal Egyptian robe. No wonder his brothers failed to recognise their supposedly dead sibling. God, through Joseph, is testing their

hearts and motives. The tests reveal a growing love, trust, integrity and grace in the brothers' attitude to each other and to God. Don't be envious of the prosperity of others. God in His grace has given us far above and beyond what we deserve.

The Change (Genesis 44) There is one final test; the test of love in the face of self-inflicted trouble.

Would the brothers selfishly abandon Benjamin or would they plead for him? Judah is emerging as the leader. He speaks from the heart with humility and grace. Judah is now a man of his word, prepared to sacrifice himself for his youngest brother. There are hints of Christ's work for us seen in Judah's words and actions. We show Christ's love for us when we sacrifice our needs for the sake of others.

The Reconciliation (Genesis 45) Joseph holds no grudges. All is forgiven. Likewise, God pours His love into our lives so that we might forgive others. The reunion was all perfectly pre-arranged in God's intricate, surprising and unusual plan. Evil was turned to good. There was abundant provision for all Jacob's family in Egypt. God's final purpose is to bring all His people into the abundant blessing of the New Heaven and Earth.

The Provision (Genesis 46-47) Jacob moved with his whole family at the age of 130. He left Canaan, trusting in God's purpose for their provision and preservation. God blessed them so they in turn would be a blessing to others, thus fulfilling the promise to Abraham. Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and the blessing overflowed to the whole nation. So God's people over the centuries have been a blessing to the world. We are saved to serve, so that people will see our good works and glorify our Father in Heaven.

The Future (Genesis 49-50) Aged 147, on his deathbed, Jacob blessed each of his sons. God is unpredictable as to where His blessings flow. Judah, the fourth son of the unloved wife, received the greatest blessing. The Messiah came from the tribe of Judah. Both Jacob and Joseph looked beyond the grave. In faith they planned for their bones to be returned to the Promised Land. Their faith reached beyond that to the Heavenly land (Hebrews 11.13-16, 21-22). God's plan of breaking, shaping and making His people, as shown through Joseph, was powerfully presented to us in these studies.

CDs and DVDs of all sessions are available. Go to www.bhc.org.au to order, phone (03) 9752 6855 or email office@bhc.org.au (Continued p.5)

BELGRAVE HEIGHTS 2011/12 SUMMER CONVENTION ...

(Continued from p.4)

Bruce and Valerie Milne travelled for the fourth time from Vancouver, Canada, to BHC. Bruce was born into a Christian family in Dundee, Scotland, where Robert Murray McCheyne had been instrumental in a revival during the 19th Century. Aged 17, through the influence of a friend and an outreach mission, he committed his life to Christ. Valerie, a nurse, was born in Edinburgh. They have been married 42 years and their children were born in Scotland. After ten years lecturing at Spurgeon's College, London, they were called to Vancouver in 1983 where Bruce pastored First Baptist Church for 17 years. In retirement he enjoys writing, convention speaking and mentoring young pastors. His theme for BHC was *The Church That God Used To Change The World* – as revealed in the first part of Acts.

A Visit To The Launch-Pad (Acts 1.1-11) Acts is the continuing ministry of Christ in the Church, which is still continuing. The conviction that Christ still lives enabled the early believers to face death and torture. They received instruction and were commissioned as they witnessed the Ascension. The secret of the Early Church was to preach only Christ crucified and brought to life again. The mandate was to preach in Jerusalem, Samaria and to the ends of the Earth. The ascended Lord sent the disciples, and He still sends us with the same task.

Suddenly ... From Heaven (Acts 2.1-24, 36-41) Pentecost is described with wind and fire. All are filled with the Spirit, as predicted in Joel 2. It is an observed disposition rather than a proclaimed possession. It is for others to see, and comment on, the Spirit within us. We see the exaltation of the Son of God in Peter's powerful message. Then Pentecost is applied in the call for repentance and baptism.

No Chance ... But They Won (Acts 4.1-31) There were two responses to this miracle – the Sadducees were disturbed, yet 5,000 believed. Peter is now a changed man. Previously he had denied his Lord. Now, standing before the Sanhedrin he proclaims 'It is Jesus who healed this man!' The Sanhedrin faced the dilemma of uneducated men standing before them and challenging them. Peter and John should have had no chance, but they won through the power of the risen Lord. A powerful prayer meeting followed. More prayer is needed in today's churches.

Confronting Problems (Acts 5.1-10, 6.17) Times of blessing are usually followed with attacks by the devil. Ananias and Sapphira wanted to imitate

Barnabas' generosity. But they withheld a portion, while stating they were giving all to the cause. Beware of hypocrisy. Our public and private life must be consistent. The second attack was a social one with the Hellenistic group feeling wronged. Great apostolic wisdom was given in the election of seven deacons to solve the problem. All were Greek speaking.

The Cross And The Crown (Acts 6.8-15, 7.51-60)

Two things were holding the believers back: theological and geographical problems. At first it was only the Jews who understood. A great force was needed to drive them out of Jerusalem to start fulfilling the commission. Stephen's death started a great persecution, which scattered the believers, but wherever they went they told others of Christ.

Nobody Is Safe (Acts 8.1-4, 9.1-22) Now the final part of the commission will be put in place with the conversion of Saul. He was the last person one would imagine to carry out God's will, a persecutor and a violent man, yet God broke into Saul's life on the Damascus road. He cries 'Who are you Lord? What am I to do?' These two questions are still relevant today. Saul (Paul) became a new man in Christ. He was ready to obey the Lord he had encountered so miraculously, whatever the cost was to be.

So ... It's For The Whole World Then (Acts 10.1-48) Peter received the vision of a net let down from Heaven. Cornelius, a Roman Centurion, sends his servants to find Peter. Peter now realises the Good News is for everyone, both Jew and Gentile. The Gospel was reaching to the ends of the Earth. Am I available for God's global mission? Am I witnessing in my home, city, country and to the ends of the earth?

Looking Forward The Recreation Hall and surrounds will be completed in the next few months. Two buildings are waiting to be moved to the camp site for a new dining room and kitchen. The Planning Permit for the new accommodation wing should be received in early January.

Mission Meeting John Barclay, Principal of Hebron Christian School in India, talked of the need for prayer in missions. He spoke of his legacy with missionary parents and grandparents who started a prayer meeting in Fitzroy 80 years ago for Nepal.

– Barbara Prout (Mrs DP)



Barbie Prout (left) with Bruce and Valerie Milne.

Trinity Graduates Strengthen The Lord's Work In NW Australia

TWO graduates of Trinity Theological College, Perth, were recently ordained by the Bishop of North West Australia, the largest land diocese by area in the Anglican Communion, covering the top two thirds of Western Australia. The population of 200,000 people is far outnumbered by kangaroos and emus!

Rev Eion Simmons and Frank Nicol were ordained by Bishop David Mulready shortly before his retirement. Frank and Jo Nicol have been appointed to serve in Port Hedland in the Pilbara, while Eion and Claire Simmons have been appointed to assist at Broome in the Kimberley.

Former Bishop of the North West, Tony Nichols, now a lecturer at Trinity, comments that the Diocese has looked to Trinity for people who will teach the Bible faithfully, have a close walk with Christ, and maintain a strong Christian marriage and family life.

Trinity Theological College, with its highly regarded academic staff, trains students for ministry from several denominations. To learn more go to www.ttc.wa.edu.au

HARROLD AND GWENDA STEWARD will be celebrating their 70th wedding anniversary on 21 March. Their daughter, Judith Bond, advises that they are very thankful to God for 70 years of marriage, 7 children, 17 grand children and 9 great grand children. Both are former contributors to *New Life*. Harrold continues to write. His articles are on www.biblestories.stellaris.com.au A family celebration will be held on Monday 12 March. They would appreciate your wishes in cards via the post.

ASIA EVANGELISTIC FELLOWSHIP, founded by Dr G.D. James, has embarked on a special 50th Anniversary Project called *LIFEWORD*. Specific booklets are being written to address issues facing Asians such as *Is Jesus The Son Of God?* (for Muslims), *What Is True Nirvana?* (for Buddhists), *Reincarnation Or Resurrection?* (for Hindus). www.aefi.org.au

JONI ERICKSON-TADA continues her recovery from breast cancer. She says: 'Even though I am always mindful of the way God healed me from breast cancer, the idea of it recurring simply doesn't enter my mind. Which is why Ken and I are always grateful for every six-month checkup that brings a good report. We just received such a report from our doctor. Smiling big, we read those sweet words on my PET scan, "no evidence of disease." One year down, four more to go, and I can be declared cancer free. So rejoice with us! And join us in thanking God for the energy and good health I'm enjoying these days.' www.joniandfriends.org

JIM STALLARD, one of Australia's best-known Christian speakers and disability advocates passed on to be with the Lord on Sunday 15 January. A paraplegic himself, Jim had an amazing vision for an inclusive world for people with disabilities. He

joined the family of Christian Blind Mission (later CBM Australia) as the South Australian Representative from the mid 1980s and served in a variety of roles. However his life took a turn in 1998, when due to a backyard accident which nearly took his life, Jim became a quadriplegic.

Undeterred by his physical limitations and strengthened by his faith in God, Jim wrote a number of books about faith and tragedy and became one of Australia's best-known public speakers sharing his personal experiences to highlight the plight of people with a disability living in the developing world. Most recently he was heavily involved in the *Luke 14* project which sought to work with evangelical churches in all states and all denominations to make them more accepting of, aware of the needs, and open to people with disabilities in their communities.

LYNETTE FAYE WOODWARD, wife of the Rev John Woodward, recently retired minister of Ballarat South Presbyterian Church, was called Home on 11 January 2012, aged 69. She had endured declining health in recent years, during which she was lovingly cared for by John. The Woodwards are well loved throughout the Presbyterian Church for the understanding and caring ministry they exercised among their people in Windsor, St Ives and Young (NSW) and Malvern and Ballarat South (Vic). Lyn not only complemented John's ministry, she also exercised a wonderful ministry of her own in hospital chaplaincy. In recognition of this, a large congregation gathered in Ebenezer Church, South Ballarat, on 19 January for her memorial service in which glowing tributes were paid by many.

'The same Jesus who wept at the tomb of Lazarus is the One who in Heaven will wipe away every tear from our eyes.'
- Rev Ian Hutton at Lyn Woodward's funeral.

HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE ...

80th Birthday Tribute To Les Nixon Of Outback Patrol

THE whole Nixon clan gathered with friends and supporters of Outback Patrol in the Ballroom at Bankstown Sports Centre in Sydney on 17 January to rejoice with Rev Les Nixon and Martha, his wife of 56 years, in his many years of ministry, and celebrate Les's 80th birthday.

Dave Nixon, their eldest son, compered the evening, introducing several well-known evangelists who reminisced about their meetings with Les and Martha in the 1950's. Brian Willersdorf and Garry Coleman spoke of the influence and help the Nixons had been in their early years. George and Rita Galieh spoke of their friendship and support in later years. Graham Harriott, a life-long friend of Les, remembered their teenage years.

Dave and Daniel, the only Sydney-based son, had combined some old film clips, including Les playing the piano-accordion and Martha's beautiful voice, with recent interviews to produce an amazing DVD of the Nixons' Tent Crusades and the early years of Outback Patrol. Dave compared his parents' tent missions with his own ministry in making Christian movies. Dave worked with Sherwood Baptist Church, USA, in the films *Facing The Giants* and *Fireproof*. Now he has his own company, which made *Letters To God*. Make sure you see his latest movie *Renee*, due for release later in 2012.

We saw a very young Les when he returned to Sydney from Bible College training in USA, with his

KAREN Danes has been appointed to the role of General Manager of Chaplaincy and Well-being Services of ACCESS Ministries, the provider of SRE teachers and chaplains to Victorian state schools.

Since 1 September 2004, Karen has been employed with ACCESS ministries as a Chaplain at Weeroona College Bendigo and at Camp Hill and Strathfieldsaye Primary Schools. Karen has also been a Field/Regional Support Manager and Operations Manager/Deputy Director of Chaplaincy.

Karen has business, pastoral and organisational skills. She also has previous experience in marketing and training adults. Karen has a Bachelor of Ministry degree majoring in Youth and Counselling, a Graduate Diploma of Psychological Studies and is completing a Masters of Business Administration. She also has certificates in Vocational Studies, Parenting Training, Understanding Poverty and Choice.

KENNETH Eugene Crowell, born on 1 June 1932, was called Home on 25 January 2012. Tom Tress-



wife and baby son. We heard the story of some Sydney businessmen who owned a circus tent and were prepared to sponsor the Nixon Crusades along the east coast of Australia. We saw his first efforts in flying a small single-engined Piper Cub aeroplane in Pennsylvania when a pilot presented him with the challenge of the vast Outback as a mission field.

In 1961 a missionary friend from Tibooburra asked them to help in that small town. Thus began a ministry that has spanned over 50 years and touched thousands of lives in the remote areas of NSW and Queensland. www.outbackpatrol.com.au

In conclusion Les said, 'I never ask God to bless me in the things I do, but pray ... "God help me find the things to do that You can bless".'

May the Lord continue to bless and expand the work of Outback Patrol as the pilots still fly teams to towns too small for a church, but too big to overlook.
— Barbara Prout, (Mrs DP)

eder, founder of the Megavoice Project, says of him, 'In 1988 the Lord led me to find Ken on the other side of the world in Tiberias, Israel. He caught the vision for MegaVoice Bibles for the whole world and we have enjoyed the Lord's good hand upon us over these 24 years. Ken saw that through this God-given gift called MegaVoice, all men and women, boys and girls, could for the first time in their lives, "hear the sound of His words".'

Ken battled the different stages of myelofibrosis for the past five years and spent the last six months in the hospital or full time nursing care. Ken was a man of great vision, faith and obedience. His faithful and selfless obedience to the Lord over the last 30+ years resulted in the establishment of Peniel Congregation, Galtronics, Galcom, MegaVoice, The Galilee Experience, Galilee of the Nations Music and Galadon.

Donations in memory of Ken towards the ministry of MegaVoice can be made to www.megavoiceinternational.org

... TO WHOM HONOUR IS DUE ...

Among Christians Receiving Order Of Australia Awards In The Australia Day 2012 Honours List Are The Following:

Mr Malcolm Bruce and Mrs Sally Linda BEGBIE, Hong Kong, for distinguished service to the international community in the provision of humanitarian relief, particularly through the Crossroads Foundation.

Mr Stephen Hibbert NEWTON, Glen Iris Vic, for distinguished service to education in the independent schools sector, through executive roles with professional organisations and advisory bodies, and to development of educational development opportunities with China.

Ms Debra Louise (Debbie) BRENNOCKS, Zimbabwe, for service to the international community, particularly through roles supporting children and young people. Co-Founder and Director of the Sandra Jones Centre in Zimbabwe and National Director, Youth for Christ Zimbabwe, 2000-2011.

Mr William Barrett CAPP, South Yarra Vic, for service to business, and to the community through a range of philanthropic, social welfare and educational organisations.

Professor Wai Fong CHUA, Roseville NSW, for service to tertiary education as an administrator, through research and leadership in the discipline of accounting and as a mentor.

Ms Frances Mary (Fran) KILGARIFF, Alice Springs NT, for service to local government in the Northern Territory, to the economic and social advancement of the community of the Alice Springs region, and through contributions to Indigenous, tourism and community health organisations.

Professor Sandra Chérie LEGG, Toorak Vic, for service to nursing as a clinician, educator and through executive roles, to the development of health care management systems nationally and internationally, and the community.

Mr Simon David MORDANT, Darling Point NSW, for service to the arts and to the cultural environment of Australia through philanthropic and executive roles in the community.

Mr Donald Geoffrey PHILLIPS, Cundletown NSW, for service to business through roles with Regional Development Australia, to vocational training organisations, and the community of Taree.

Dr Kenneth Vernon BAILEY, Ainslie ACT, for service to the community of the Australian Capital Territory.

The Rev Dr Warren Keith BARTLETT, Glen Waverley Vic, for service to the Uniting Church in Australia, and the community.

Mr David Ernest BLACKWELL, St Ives NSW, for service to the accountancy profession and the community.

Mr Warren Sydney BLEE, Maroochydhore Qld, for service to the pharmaceutical industry, and the Australian Naval Cadets events and programs.

Mrs Eve CHAPPELL, Glen Innes NSW, for service to the preservation of local history through the Glen Innes and District Historical Society.

Dr Hamilton Russell COWIE, Auchenflower Qld, for service to the community as an historian and advocate for restoration, and as an educator and academic.

Emeritus Professor Brian Hinton FLETCHER, Eastwood NSW, for service to education as an academic, researcher and author in the discipline of Australian history.

Mrs Joan Alison GRACE, Warrnambool Vic, for service to mental health care through the Francis Foundation.

Mrs Shirley Edith GREEN, Yeppoon Qld, for service to music through the Yeppoon Choral Society.

Alice May (Pix) HALLORAN, Galston NSW, for service to aged welfare in New South Wales.

Mr Neil HAMILTON, Cheltenham Vic, for service to local government and the community of Moorabbin.

Mrs Joan May HAUSFELD, South Tamworth NSW, for service to the community of Tamworth through a range of voluntary roles.

Mr Clayton William JONES, Bendigo Vic, for service to education as Headmaster of Girton Grammar School and the community of Bendigo.

Ms Mary Lorna LINN, Torrensville SA, for service to the community of Thebarton and local government.

Mr Brian McDONALD, Majors Creek NSW, for service to the community of Majors Creek.

Mr James William MALLICE, Engadine NSW, for service to the community through roles with social welfare organisations.

Mr Trevor Lindsay MANNING, Birdwood SA, for service to the community of Birdwood, and through executive roles with health care providers.

Ms Deborah Ruth NICHOLLS, Balmain NSW, for service to the community, particularly as a refugee advocate.

Mr Micheal John O'SULLIVAN, MM, Palmyra WA, for service to youth, particularly through the Christ Church Grammar School Army Cadet Unit.

Mrs Lynette PENGILLY, Parkes NSW, for service to the community of Parkes.

Miss Dorothy PHIPPS, Richmond NSW, for service to the community of the Hawkesbury region, and to theatre through the Richmond Players.

The Rev Lucille Evelyn (Lu) PIPER, Alotau, Milne Bay Province, Papua New Guinea, for service to the international community through educational, health and pastoral roles.

Mrs Ann Margaret PRUNTY, ACT, for service to international relations through Operation Christmas Child and Samaritan's Purse Australia.

Mr Brian Charles RANDALL, Toorak Vic, for service to the sport of athletics, and to the community.

Mr Thomas Victor ROBERTS, Ballarat Vic, for service to the community of Ballarat, particularly through the Royal Australian Air Force Association, and to medicine.

Mr Anthony Brooke (Tony) ROBINS, Heathpool SA, for service to the the community of Adelaide, particularly through the Phoenix Society.

Mr William RYAN, Alstonville NSW, for service to the community through the United Protestants Association of NSW.

Mr Lindsay Walter SMITH and Mrs Marion Joyce SMITH, Horsham Vic, for service to conservation and the environment, and to the community.

Mr Noel Edward TARBOTTON, Gowrie ACT, for service to youth through Scouts Australia.

Mrs Sheila Hamilton THOMPSON, Hughes ACT, for service to the community of Canberra as a church organist and musical director at St John the Baptist Anglican Church since 1988.

Dr John William TIERNEY, East Maitland NSW, for service to the Parliament of Australia, to education, and to the community.

Mrs Frances Dawn WALLACE, Quirindi NSW, for service to the community of Quirindi.

Mrs Doreen WIDDISON, West Albury NSW, for service to the community of Albury, particularly through Woodstock Support.

Mr August (Gus) WOHLSCHLAGER, Port Pirie SA, for service to the community of Port Pirie.

– Compiled by Ramon Williams, Worldwide Photos

PASTORAL LEADER WANTED

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.

MCBC is currently seeking a Full-time Pastoral Leader.

Essential requirements include: a genuine commitment to the Evangelical Faith, a minimum tertiary degree in Theology or Ministry, with fluency in both Cantonese and English. Experience in counselling, training and Mandarin speaking would be advantageous.

For Job Descriptions & our church profile, please email

Charlie Huynh, Pastoral Search Co-ordinator,

ckvhuynh@optusnet.com.au

Application closes at the end of April, 2012.

HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE ...

A STONE Cries Out ...

A gravestone of rough-hewn Welsh slate now marks the spot in the tiny village cemetery of Dale, Pembrokeshire, Wales, where John Stott's ashes lie buried. Like the man himself – slender, upright, rooted in the earth but pointing to the heavens – it is inscribed with his own words:



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John R. W. Stott
who resolved both as
the ground of his salvation
and as the subject of his ministry
to know nothing except
Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*

– John Stott Ministries via ASSIST News Service

DR BRIAN Rosner has been appointed Principal of Ridley Theological College, Melbourne. Dr Rosner will take up the role at the beginning of second semester, July 2012. He will continue Ridley's tradition of strong theological leadership, bringing expertise in Biblical scholarship, academic publication and Christian ethics.

Dr Rosner is currently Senior Lecturer in New Testament and Ethics and Faculty Research Co-ordina-

tor at Moore Theological College. He came to Moore from Macquarie University and the University of Aberdeen having completed his PhD in the Faculty of Divinity at the University of Cambridge in 1991 and his ThM at Dallas Theological Seminary with a double major in Semitics and OT Studies and NT Literature and Exegesis in 1988.

Board Chair Claire Rogers said the Board was excited by Dr Rosner's extraordinary academic achievements and his enthusiasm for the faculty to develop research and publication activities at all levels. 'Brian has a collaborative style, and he recognises the pivotal role Ridley Melbourne has to develop future Christian leaders for a broad range of strategic ministries globally and in Australia,' Ms Rogers said. 'He will serve Ridley and our communities well, and he recognises the pivotal role Ridley Melbourne has to develop future Christian leaders for a broad range of strategic ministries globally and in Australia. He will serve Ridley and our communities well.'

'Dr Rosner is an insightful and innovative communicator, who is keen for students to be "respectful of the history of scholarship and confident in their growing convictions".'



Dr Brian Rosner



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The new El Kanah – rising from the ashes.

Answering Islam

BERNIE Power will teach two courses on *Answering Islam* in 2012, the first in Melbourne CBD and the second at Melbourne School of Theology, Wantirna.

Answering Islam is aimed at helping Christians who have Muslim friends, neighbours or colleagues to answer their questions about Christianity, questions such as:

- Does the Trinity make sense?
- Why do we say that Jesus is the Son of God?
- Has the Bible been changed?
- What about the Crusades?
- What about the wars in the Old Testament?
- If the West is Christian, why is it so immoral?

The course also aims to answer Christians' questions about Islam:

- Is Islam a peaceful religion?
- Should the burka be banned?
- Is Islam really a threat to Australia?
- Why can't Muslims and Christians just be friends?
- Do we worship the same God?
- How reliable is the Qur'an?
- Is Muhammad really prophesied in the Bible?
- Is he really the best model for humanity?

The course will be held on Wednesday nights from 22 Feb to 30 May, 7.15 – 9.30pm at Swanston St Church of Christ, near Melbourne Central. The cost is \$300. To do this as part of a theology course, contact MST for cost schedule. Register for this course with Kathryn Simon, email KSimon@MST.edu.au or phone (03) 9881 7800.

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Ramon A Williams – Worldwide Photos –

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PERSECUTION WATCH ...

Iran: Ten Converts Arrested During Raid On House Church

PLAIN clothes security authorities have raided an Iranian house church gathering and arrested ten members of this Christian group who were gathered for a prayer service in Shiraz, Fars Province, which is 580 miles south of the capital. All ten detainees were transferred to an unknown location.

According to Mohabat News, an Iranian Christian news agency, www.mohabatnews.com following the continued arrests of Iranian Christians, security authorities invaded a residential building used as a house church on Wednesday 8 February 8 and arrested ten Christian converts who were gathered there to worship.

'These believers who had gathered in a home to hold a worship service were arrested and transferred to an unknown location using a police vehicle,' said a spokesperson for Mohabat News. 'The location of the detainees is still unknown despite their family's efforts. The authorities refuse to give any information in this regard.'

Although precise details are still not available in this respect, the report from Mohabat News indicates that a man called Mojtaba Hosseini is among those arrested. He was also arrested on 11 May 2008, together with eight other Christian converts on charges of 'having a Christian faith.' Security officials had asked the then 21-year-old, Mojtaba Hosseini to renounce his faith and collaborate with the

Intelligence of-
fice.

'It is also noteworthy that last month reports were published regarding the arrest of a number of Christians in

the AOG church of Ahwaz including the pastor of the church and two other church members,' said the spokesperson.

'Today, the pressures and security measures implemented by the Islamic Republic against churches in Iran have resulted in the closure of churches in which services were being held in Farsi. The other churches, which are allowed to remain open, are obliged by order of the Intelligence Ministry to prevent Farsi speakers from entering into their churches.'

The spokesperson added, 'In spite of all these circumstances, when people from other religious backgrounds embrace Christianity, they feel the need to gather in small groups in their homes and dedicate their own personal houses for worship services. The Islamic Republic of Iran considers such groups security and spying tools for the West.'

– Dan Wooding, Founder, ASSIST Ministries



Mojtaba Hosseini, Christian convert among those arrested

Urgent Plea From Syrian Christians

PASTOR Serop Megerditchian's writes: 'To God's people everywhere:

'The armed Islamist Opposition in Syria have murdered more than 200 Christians in the city of Homs, including entire families with young children. These Islamic gangs also kidnapped Christians demanding high ransoms. In two cases, after the ransoms were paid, the men's bodies were found.

'Christians are being forced to flee the city to the safety of government controlled areas. Muslim rebel fighters and their families are taking over their homes. We need your prayers and we need them urgently.'

– MERF News

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Christians Poised To Help Revive Egypt

WHILE marches and strikes were called on the anniversary of President Hosni Mubarak's ouster from power, Christians believe this is the time they need to be strong. SAT-7, Christian satellite television in the Middle East and North Africa, is there providing hope. Director of SAT-7 Egypt Farid Garas says it has been a difficult year for everyone, but especially Christians. However, Garas says Christians have been praying for 30 years for what has happened in the church: 'Freedom of religion, revivals for Christians in churches, the growing church – all that was just a dream for many, but it's taking place now.' According to Garas, much of the information coming out of Egypt is violence and radicalism, but he says that's not all that's going on. 'You don't really see what God is doing because the secular media (doesn't) show that. I believe God is going to do more, and SAT-7 has to be there at the front to transfer the other part of the story.'

Christians have taken a neutral role in the political realm, which has positioned them to be even more effective. Garas says because of the uncertainty throughout the region, SAT-7 is making an impact. And it's growing. 'One year ago, we had one live program from Egypt. This year, in the midst of all of this, we now have eight.' They also air a very popular children's program. Go to www.sat7.org for more info.

China Frees Underground Church Leader

THE deputy chief of an underground network of Protestant Churches who was arrested in China last year and sent to a labour camp has been 'unexpectedly' released, Christian rights organisations said on 24 January. Pastor Shi Enhao was released on 20 January after serving about six months of the two-year sentence imposed on him in July 2011, China-Aid Association, a non-profit body monitoring the state of the Church in communist China, said. Shi, Vice-President of the Chinese House Church Alliance, a network of Protestant churches, had been accused of 'holding illegal meetings and organising illegal venues for religious meetings.' – *ENInews*

WEA Plans Egyptian Summit, Calls For Worldwide Prayer

JUST one year ago, Egypt experienced the start of a revolution that resulted in the ousting of its former President Hosni Mubarak and changed the nation's political landscape permanently. Today Egyptians all across the country are remembering the revolution's first anniversary which brought about an opportunity for democracy although overall feelings are tinged by fear of uncertainty over the future.

The World Evangelical Alliance, representing the global family of evangelical Christians has been carefully monitoring the situation. Senior WEA leaders have visited Egypt on several occasions and spent time interacting with key national leaders to help determine how the global church might best respond to this dynamic quickly changing situation.

At the request of Christian leaders in Egypt, the WEA agreed to facilitate an Egypt Summit in Washington DC on 7,8 February for Egyptian Christian leaders to provide an analysis of their current reality and work out a framework of how best organisations/churches/foundations could partner with the

Church in Egypt at this critical time of transition.

WEA Secretary General Dr Geoff Tunnicliffe said, 'The WEA is calling on our global community to stand in united prayer with our sisters and brothers in Egypt at this crucial time in Egypt's history.'

The WEA asks Christians to pray with Christians in Egypt for a peaceful transition within the country and for co-operation among all other parties in order to achieve equality, freedom and justice in the nation.

Evangelical Churches On The Rise In France, Attracting Youth

THE atmosphere is like a pop concert: in a darkened theatre in the lively Montparnasse area of Paris, hundreds of young people sing catchy songs and wave their arms in the air, while a group plays booming music on stage.

This is Hillsong Church. The Australian-born Pentecostal Church set up a branch in Paris in 2005 and has seen its congregation grow from a few dozen people at its first meetings to around 900 now at each of its two weekend services, conducted in French and English.

The youthful, enthusiastic, multi-ethnic crowd is in sharp contrast to the diminishing gatherings in French Catholic churches, and it represents the rise not only of Hillsong, but of the evangelical movement as a whole in a country that is officially secular, observers say. – *ENI News*

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GOOD NEWS ...

George Beverly Shea – Still Growing In Grace

TURNING 103 on 1 February, George Beverly Shea's heart is as joyful as that of a child. 'I've had moments where I've felt as if I weren't effective enough, and I've known discouragement. But I go to the Lord, and He extends His grace,' Bev Shea says. 'Karlene and I rejoice in the Lord's overwhelming grace to give me 103 years of life!'

He says he is especially thankful for the dear people with whom he has ministered and traveled the world since the day he met Billy Graham in 1943.

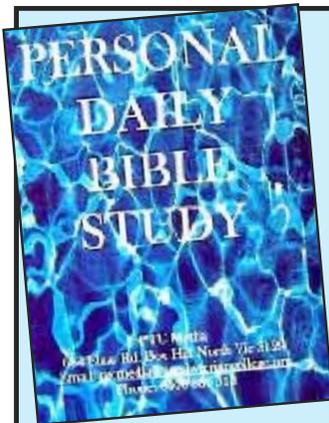
Born in 1909 in Winchester, Ontario, his father was pastor of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. His mother was a church organist who instilled in her

children a love for the old hymns.

'I've always loved those hymns,' he says. 'All eight of us remember the times when we took our Lord Jesus as Saviour. In our home we had prayer three times a day around the table. Dad would read from the Bible in the evening – just a couple of verses, and the prayer was brief, because he knew that children became restless.'

Asked what advice he has for other Christians, as someone who has walked with the Lord for quite some time, he says: 'Keep your devotions, study the Word, enjoy His presence, and learn from Him daily!'

– BGEA News



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Ordination Reflects 'New Sydney'

ONE of the most diverse groups of candidates in many years, from IT specialists to a concert pianist, have been ordained for ministry in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney. Thirty six candidates were presented at St Andrew's Cathedral on Saturday 4 February to be ordained as deacons by the Archbishop of Sydney, Dr Peter Jensen. From a range of ethnic and employment backgrounds, the 32 men and four women will go to positions in parishes, church plants and school and hospital chaplaincies.

Among the ordinands was Sri Lankan born Rev Priya Atputharaj, who ministers in a university and in the congregation of St John's Cathedral, Parramatta, where a third of the members come from the subcontinent. Other ordinands included Rev Armen Nalbandian, who will minister at the Multi-cultural Bible Ministry at Rooty Hill, Rev Thayyil John at Figtree and Rev Joshua Guo at Cabramatta.

Archbishop Jensen says he's pleased that the ordination groups are starting to reflect 'New Sydney'. Dr Jensen said: 'To be Australian we must have people from all sorts of backgrounds. We're beginning to get them and I was delighted to see people from those different backgrounds here today.'

The candidates also came from different work backgrounds, including one area not seen before. Rev Bruce Pass trained as a concert pianist. After the Conservatorium in Sydney, Mr Pass studied in Weimar, Germany, where he first considered swapping the keyboard for the lectern. 'Certainly my experience in Germany was instrumental in my

decision (to go into ministry full-time). We saw immense needs in that country, which was surprising because you don't usually think of European countries as needy for the Gospel, and many conversions.' Mr Pass is heading up a church plant at Warrawee on Sydney's North Shore.



Abp Jensen ordains Rev Bruce Pass

The full list of ordinands is: Benjamin Anthony Adamo, Blacktown; Stuart Ian Adamson, Anglicare Chap, Prince of Wales Hosp; Priyanthi Esther Atputharaj, Parramatta; Chun Pong Au Yeung, CrossWay; Daniel Christopher Bidwell, Miranda; Claire Joanna Boyd, St Catherine's; James Robert Brooks, Emu Plains; Sarah Jing Yin Cheng, St Andrew's Cathedral; Andrew Michael Clemens, Lane Cove and Mowbray; Matthew Philip Davies, Avalon with Palm Beach; Nathan Luke Dean, Smithfield Road; Garry John Dibley, Panania; Mark Edward Earngey, Toongabbie; Andrew Ross Errington, Newtown with Erskineville; Adrian Graham Foxcroft, Naremburn/Cammeray; Stephen Michael Gardner, West Pymble; Joshua Sihua Guo, Cabramatta; Katrina Rae Haggart, Neutral Bay; Christopher Michael Holding, Rouse Hill; Thayyil John, Figtree; Daniel Nathan Lee, Rooty Hill; Samuel David Low, Chatswood; Anton Eduardo Marquez, St Ives; Craig Matthew McCorkindale, Glenhaven; David Norman Miers, Narrabeen; Armen Nalbandian, Rooty Hill; Christopher Stanley Nicholls, Beecroft; Gavin Robert Oram, South Creek; Christopher Joseph Overhall, Cranebrook with Castlereagh; Bruce Robertson Pass, Turramurra; Wayne Stephen Pickford, Evangelism & New Churches (Berkeley); Nicholas David Russell, St Clement's Mosman; Samuel James Russell, CrossWay; Scott Gordon Taylor, Ryde; Elliot Michael Temple, South Carlton; Hung Kai Wong, West Pennant Hills.

Photo: Ramon Williams, Worldwide Photos

Story: Russell Power, Anglican Media, Sydney

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A Biblical Response To Homosexuality

PASTOR Murray Campbell of Mentone Baptist Church led a seminar at the Belgrave Heights 2011/12 Summer Convention on *A Biblical Response To Homosexuality*. As an introduction he mentioned Martin Luther nailing his 95 Theses to the church door in Wittenburg. Then, the problem was not Indulgences, but the authority of the Bible; today the real issue is not so much homosexuality but God's Word.

Murray made three points:

1. The authority of the Bible
2. Reading the Bible
3. Applying the Bible.

We should not allow experience to change our interpretation of Scripture. Five times the subject is referred to in Scripture – and each time it is negative. We need to accept the person, but refute the action. We are created to live a holy life. Homosexuality is one of many sins. A society that calls sin good is rejecting God and the Gospel.

Many interesting questions were discussed during this hour. The BHC committee plans to hold more issues-based seminars at future conventions to help Christians think Biblically about current issues.

– Barbara Prout

Creation – An Antidote For Depression

A MAN with dishevelled hair and unkempt beard said to me one evening, 'Now I realise why I've been depressed for so long.' He explained that he had always accepted evolution as a fact but during the lecture he realised that this evolutionary belief was the reason for his despair.

He went on, 'After tonight I feel like there is hope, that there is light at the end of the tunnel.'

Atheist Richard Dawkins said in his book *River Out Of Eden* that we live in a universe that has 'no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind pitiless indifference.' He thinks like that because he believes evolution is scientific.

That's why creation is important at the personal level. Our understanding of where we have come from impacts the way we live now, and that affects our destiny.

Contrary to what is widely believed, evolution over millions of years is not scientific fact. Many highly qualified scientists believe that God created this universe as the Bible describes.

Also, the scientific evidence supports creation. Design in the world has always pointed to the reality of God as Romans 1.20 says.

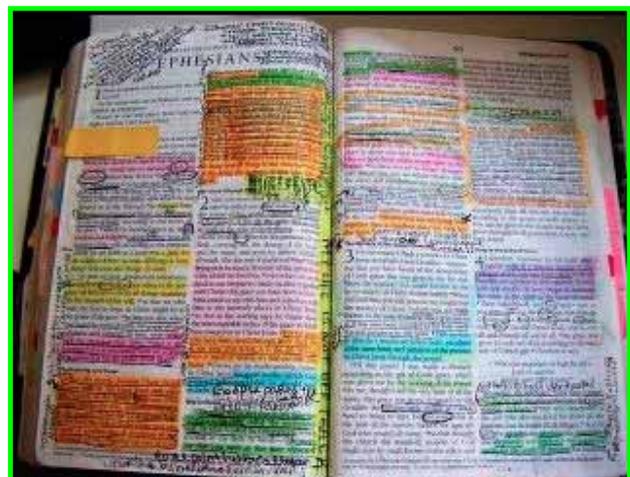
Examples of design are too many to count: the mantis shrimp, the monarch butterfly and marsupial pouches. All testify to the hand of a supreme intelligent designer.

Once, a young lady, Brooke, told me how she struggled in her first year as a Christian. 'I would be a passionate Christian on Sundays, but when I

started thinking about creation against evolution it was hard to believe in God during the week. It was like a yo-yo between believing and not believing.' It was all very depressing.

For Brook, as with the man I met after the lecture, things changed when she understood the scientific evidence for creation. When she realised she could trust the Bible, Brooke said it helped her find her feet — and her wings. Creation was indeed the antidote for depression.

– Tas Walker, scientist, researcher, writer and speaker with Creation Ministries International in Brisbane (www.creation.com)



A Bible that's falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn't.

– Charles Spurgeon

BOOKS WORTH READING ...

SIGNED SEALED DELIVERED, Rita Stella Galieh, Ark House Press, Sydney, available at Koorong and Word Bookstores, \$20

RITA GALIEH is a well-known Australian author, artist and singer, who travels extensively with her evangelist husband, George. *Signed Sealed Delivered* is Rita's second historical novel; eagerly awaited by those readers who enjoyed *Fire In The Rock*. It is the first in the *Watermark Women Trilogy*.

The scene is deftly set for the strong Christian heroine, who is wrongly accused of a terrible crime, and transported for life to the penal colony of NSW. As the plot skillfully unfolds, the reader finds it hard not to read the next chapter ... then the next ... to see what further problems Megan Trevallyn encounters. New South Wales in the 1850s is accurately portrayed, as are the cruel hardships experienced by many whose minor crimes were scarcely worthy of their harsh treatment.

As a true story-teller, Rita turns each crisis around, and draws us on to the next episode. Throughout the story Megan's faith shines forth and gives us pride in remembering that many convicts sent to Australia believed in God and

trusted His sovereign will despite their devastating circumstances. Intrigue, betrayal, adventure, romance and real history are all contained in this inspirational book. I can't wait for *The Tie That Binds* (the second in the series) to be published.

If *Signed Sealed Delivered* is purchased from the author, all proceeds go to assisting mission work in South-East Asia. Rita would love to hear from you at ritagal@optusnet.com.au or write to: Rita Galieh, PO Box 101, Moorebank, NSW, 1875.

— Barbara Prout ('Mrs DP')



Rita (seated) signing copies of her book for some very happy customers at Koorong.

THE WORD BECAME FRESH – HOW TO PREACH FROM OLD TESTAMENT NARRATIVE TEXTS, Dale Ralph Davis, Mentor, Christian Focus Publications, Fearn, Scotland.

WHO says Academic = Dull + Boring? Not Dale Ralph Davis! This renowned pastor/academic has brought the fruit of his scholarship to bear on the more mundane task of regularly preaching the Old Testament in an expository way to a typical congregation. In this book he demonstrates in an exemplary fashion how the ordinary little minister can wring out and apply the real meaning of an Old Testament text or passage for the enlightenment of his congregation.

To be precise (and our author shows himself to be a man of precision) this is not, as he says, a book about preaching so much as a book about the proper interpretation of Old Testament narratives in preparation for preaching. To do this he goes back to basics. When we take an Old Testament narrative we should begin by applying the mental tin openers to it: Where? (Context). How? (Structure). What? (Content). So what? (Appropriation/application).

Subsequent chapters draw us in with their captivating headings: *Approach, Quirks, Theology, Packaging, Nasties, Macroscope, Appropriation, Centre, Synthesis*, to a thorough technique of fleshing out our sermon and presenting it in a way that will strike home.

In paragraph after paragraph Davis delivers striking insight as he indeed makes the Word become fresh. Consider this take on the Healing of Naaman: 'Naaman, the strutting Syrian, lost his rage along with his leprosy when he took a bath in the Jordan and found that "Wash and be clean" was a sure promise not religious propaganda (vv.13,14). The fingerprints of transforming grace are all over Naaman – in his attitude (note his "Your servant" five times in vv.15-18), his confession (v.15b), his resolution (v.17) and his sensitivity (v.18) Naaman left both his leprosy and his paganism at the Jordan.'

If you're one of those preachers who reads a book about preaching every year (and aren't we all?) you could do worse than make this the book for 2012. www.christianfocus.com

— Bob Thomas

HEAVEN IS FOR REAL – A LITTLE BOY'S ASTOUNDING STORY OF HIS TRIP TO HEAVEN AND BACK, Todd Burpo and Lynn Vincent, Thomas Nelson.

THIS is a very readable and credible story, despite the subtitle. I must admit I was quite skeptical about the subject. However, Thomas Nelson is a reliable publisher and Wesleyan pastors are not prone to exaggerated views of Heaven ... so I started to read. I read the gripping story of a small town Wesleyan pastor and family who, after a wrong hospital diagnosis, almost lost their four year old son, Colton.

Gradually, over the following months and years, Colton told his family of his out-of-body experience in Heaven, whilst on the hospital operating table. A beautiful, captivating and encouraging picture of the after-life emerges.

Who knows the truth of it all? But Pastor Todd, Colton's father, supports each scene Colton relates, with Bible references (pp 159,160). None of us will really know all of Heaven's wonders until we experience them for ourselves – and this book encourages us to live in the anticipation of a glorious eternity with our Lord.

Before compiling all Colton's word pictures into a manuscript, his parents tested his descriptions in many ways. He

never wavered from his original thoughts as a four year old child who had visited Heaven. His answers to their questions were invariably verified by portions of Scripture rarely understood by pre-schoolers. Despite Colton's vivid descriptions, I kept thinking of John 20.29, which is quoted on page 141 ... 'Blessed are those who have not seen yet have believed.'

God has revealed to us in His Word all we need to know of life in Heaven. I rejoice with this little boy in his amazing adventure. Even so God, in His wisdom, has left much of the after-life as a mystery to us.

The theme of the book, emphasised by Colton, is 'I want people to know that Heaven is for real' (page 154). His story certainly achieves its purpose. — Barbara Prout ('Mrs D.P.')

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BOOKS WORTH READING ...

THE FAITH EFFECT, N.T. Wright, Tim Costello, John Dickson, Joel Edwards. World Vision. 2012.

WORLD-renowned theologian Bishop NT Wright has joined with the likes of Rev Tim Costello, Rev Dr John Dickson and Rev Dr Joel Edwards to help Australian church-goers think through what the Bible says about caring for those who are poor; what church-goers have done in the past and today; and how we can put faith into action locally and globally.

The Faith Effect is a five-part interactive Bible study series that will encourage Christian small groups and churches to tackle global poverty and help change the world. The faith Effect is available at Koorong stores nationally. The Leader's Guide and DVD are available for \$29.95 and participants' booklets for \$4.95 each.

For more information and to register study groups visit www.thefaitheffect.com.au



MORE THAN FOOD AND CLOTHES, Compiled by Jennifer Eve, Ark House Press & Media Inc, Sydney, Australia 2011.

THE final note of *More Than Food And Clothes* tells us Jennifer Eve is the pen name for a group of Australian women who have collected stories and experiences from other women keen to share the influence of God in their lives.

There are poems, anecdotes and personal reflections. Some tell of painful experiences, others of discovering beauty in the world around them and still others give their personal testimony of coming to faith in Jesus and serving Him with their lives. Forty women are listed in the acknowledgements but we are not told the author of any individual piece. Each page features beautiful Australian images, mostly original photos. Each contribution is accompanied by an appropriate Bible verse. We respond warmly to the beauty and truth contained on these pages.

STRAINED RELATIONS: THE CHALLENGE OF HOMOSEXUALITY, Bill Muehlenberg, Freedom Publishing Company, 2011.

EARLY this year the Australian Parliament will vote on re-defining marriage to include homosexuals. If and when successful, the implications will be far reaching (if poorly understood) for children, Christians, and churches.

With homosexual marriage comes cultural acceptance and normalisation. Indeed, federal legislation is being currently drafted to classify 'homosexuality' and 'gender identity' as 'protected attributes' under proposed anti-discrimination laws. Once homosexual marriage becomes a right there will be corresponding duties insisted on that may yet end up with the criminalisation of opposition.

With that in mind Bill Muehlenberg's new book, *Strained Relations*, is recommended reading on the issue of homosexuality. The 266-page book contains over 700 endnotes. In that sense it is scholarly and well documented whilst being readable and persuasive. The book is divided into two parts. The

Have you been awed by the ocean? Have you marveled at the colours of the sky? Have you exulted in the love of family and friends? Have you lived with the devastation of human loss? These are but some of the springboard experiences for these pieces. Here, then, is a lovely gift for a Christian woman, or for one who may be on the fringe of church life, or for one who needs to be reminded of the God who touches each person as an individual.

This book shows us that there are emotions and experiences common to womanhood and we can benefit from what others have learnt in their walk with God. Books can be ordered from the website: www.morethanfoodandclothes.com for \$25 per copy plus \$9.95 postage and handling to anywhere within Australia. See separate ad in this edition of *New Life*, p.14. – Mignon Goswell



first systematically deals with the issue of homosexuality from a medical, behavioural, social, and political perspective – making a comprehensive and cogent argument against the normalisation of homosexuality.

The author points to the higher rates of partners, drug, and domestic abuse in homosexual relationships whilst discussing the politics of orientation vs behaviour as well as the vexed topic of rights and discrimination, among other issues.

Finally, part two of the book adeptly deals with the biblical data on homosexuality.

Despite the personal stories of two people who have left the homosexual lifestyle, my only criticism (apart from my dislike of endnotes) is that the book is not particularly pastoral. A section on how a Christian can and ought to love their homosexual neighbour, family or struggling church member would have been most helpful in what is otherwise a comprehensive and faithful book on the important and vexed issue of homosexuality. – Darren Middleton

LATE NEWS ...

Ross Clifford Elected President, NSW Council Of Churches

THE NSW Council of Churches has elected the Rev Dr Ross Clifford President of the Council. Dr Clifford was President from 1995 to 1997 during which time the Council was very active on social and moral issues, notably in opposition to proposed euthanasia laws and in support of Aboriginal reconciliation.

A former lawyer and pastor, Dr Clifford has served as Principal of Morling College, the NSW Baptist Theological College, since 1997. He is a former President of the Baptist Union of Australia, and is currently a Vice President of the Baptist World Alliance. In 2011 Dr Clifford was admitted as a Member of the Order of Australia.

Dr Clifford said the Council had an important role to play in NSW public life and the prophetic voice of the churches was needed more than ever before. He said he looked forward to continuing the Council's advocacy of social and moral issues with a focus on the sanctity of marriage, alcohol-related violence, and gambling reform. The NSW Council of Churches believes that marriage laws should not be extended to include same sex couples.

Council supports measures to reduce alcohol-related violence and encourages stronger regulation of the sale and consumption of alcohol in licensed premises. Council supports mandatory precommitment technology and a \$1 bet limit for poker machines.

CLUB SOLO

(A singles ministry of the Wesleyan Methodist Church)

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30TH ANNIVERSARY GOLD COAST HOLIDAY!!



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Were you here
in 1993?



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Will you be here
in 2013?

Where:

Mermaid Waters Resort, Mermaid Waters Resort, Markeri St, Mermaid Waters

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Saturday 5 to Saturday 12 January 2013.

Cost:

\$1070 for a triple room (if booked before 20/11/12)
\$80 extra for a twin room
\$460 extra for a single room.

Speaker:

Rev Graeme Carnell. Graeme was one of the original speakers and helpers at Solo when it was started in 1983. Graeme has also been worship leader and counselor as well.

See if you can recognise yourself in the above photos, or better still, come along and be in the blank one for 2013. We are waiting for you to return and let us know what you have been up to over the years. It will be a blessing to see as many of you as we can again on the 30th Anniversary Camp/Holiday. We are so confident that you will come Solo has booked extra rooms at the in anticipation of a lot of you coming.

Contact Steve Mitchell at Club Solo Ministries 2 Karen Crt, Mill Park VIC 3082. Phone/Fax: 03-9407-1240 or email solo@sctelco.net.au for further details and a brochure