

## Oxygen 11 – A Breath Of Fresh Air



John Piper in action.



Photo: Adam Humphreys

I'M a big believer in big events, and as these things go for mainline Protestantism in Australia today, they don't get much bigger than *Oxygen 11* – with 2,500 delegates from all states and territories and 12 other nations, representing over 20 denominations, with 28,050 hits to the *Oxygen* website. And all of them being inspired and revived by one of the world's top preacher/theologians in John Piper and leading Christian apologist John Lennox, whose 'day job' is Professor of Mathematics at Oxford University.

'Big' events save us from lapsing into the Elijah Syndrome ('I and I only am left'). Big events help us to think big thoughts about God. And big events provide a demonstration that the Church is alive and well in the world today, contrary to what many

in the world would have us believe.

### The Chief End Of Man

If man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever (and it is), then John Piper 'pushed the envelope' as he expanded his theme: 'That God is most glorified when we are most satisfied in Him by being rooted in right (for which read 'Biblical') thinking and knowing more and more of Him.'

He spoke of God's passion for His glory, God's passion for our joy, thinking Christ, feeling Christ and preaching Christ.

The natural man stumbles over the exaltation of God, but the cross stands at the intersection of man's stumbling over the exaltation of God and God's passion for His glory, says Piper. (To p.8)

### Christians Praying In Libya

AS rebels appear to have successfully ousted a defiant Moammar Gaddafi from power, minority Christians are praying for a nation in transition. Paul Estabrooks with Open Doors says this is good news for Christians. 'The word from our country co-ordinator in Tripoli is that things are very positive and upbeat. Believers get together at noon every day to pray. They pray for their country. They pray for the future of the Church, and they encourage one another.' In a country with few known Christians, believers are excited about new freedoms. However, Estabrooks says, there are concerns, too. 'Their attitude toward democracy is basically that of majority rule. And the concept of protecting minority groups, which is also part of democracy as we know it, is not even on the horizon.' Pray that Christians will be protected in the transition as a new government is established in the weeks and months ahead.

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## FROM THE EDITOR

# Does This Ring A Bell For You?

'...ENGLISHMEN were given to believe that the life of unfettered licentiousness might be indulged in with impunity ... much of the nation threw off restraint and plunged itself heedlessly into a course of godlessness, drunkenness, immorality and gambling ... a teaching known as Deism (which) taught that whatever God there may be is nothing more than the first cause, a force that made the world the way a clockmaker makes a clock, and having set its mechanism to operate according to certain laws, simply winds it up and lets it run ... The Deists carried on a vigorous warfare against supernatural religion (Biblical Christianity) and in doing so made a loud boast about the reasonableness and logic of their views ... They argued that the miracles were unproved and that such dogmas as the Virgin birth and literal resurrection were no more than pious imagination. Jesus, they said, was merely a man, earnest but deluded, and raised to an imaginary saviourhood by the fancies of His disciples ...

'Large numbers of the people, both high and low, believing Christianity to be false, dropped all pretence of religious profession.'

This is the portrayal of the social situation in England in the late Seventeenth and early Eighteenth Centuries given by Dr Arnold Dallimore in the Introduction to his magisterial biography of George Whitefield.

### Joining The Dots

It sounds eerily similar to the situation portrayed in the media over the last few weeks of the riots in England. We feel on safe ground when we join the dots between then and now, as Dallimore did:

'In the decade between 1730 and 1740 the life of England was foul with moral corruption and spiritual decay, yet it was amidst such conditions – conditions remarkably similar to those of the English-speaking world today – that God arose in the mighty exercise of His power which became the Eighteenth Century (Methodist) Revival.'

In the aftermath of the riots, all sorts of causes and solutions of the problem are being put forward: the bad example of MP's rorting their allowances; the inequalities of society; the lack of educational opportunities; the scarcity of jobs; the undermanning of the police force; and so forth and so on. I don't disagree with any of these, but we have to assert that the root cause of the disease is the wholesale departure from, even despising of, Christianity and Christian principles while at the same time giving preferential treatment to rival religions, including secular humanism, which offer nothing of the ennoblement of the human spirit which Biblical Christianity does.

'We shall need to remember that it was among a people broken by gin that Whitefield and the Wesleys went about in the nobility of their ministries,' says Dallimore.

The problem for our rebellious race today is not so much that the situation portrayed by Dallimore rings a bell for us, but that the recent events in England tell us that we are the ones for whom the bell tolls. The situation is so serious that we must turn to our Almighty, Sovereign God in earnest prayer that He will again come down in all His mighty power, raise up a new generation of faith-filled leaders and preachers, revive His Church and draw multitudes to saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Or, as William Cowper put it:

*Lord, we are few, but You are near; Your arm can save, Your ear can hear;  
O rend the heav'ns, come quickly down, and make a thousand hearts Your own.*

– Bob Thomas

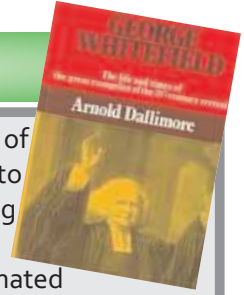
## WELL SAID!

'THIS book (*George Whitefield, Vols 1&2*) is written in the desire – perhaps in a measure of inner certainty – that we shall see the Great Head of the Church once more bring into being His special instrument of revival, that He will again raise up to Himself certain young men whom He may use in this glorious employ.

'And what manner of men will they be? Men mighty in the Scriptures, their lives dominated by a sense of the greatness, the majesty and holiness of God, and their minds and hearts aglow with the great truths of the doctrines of grace. They will be men who know what it is to die to self, to human aims and personal ambitions; men who are willing to be "fools for Christ's sake", who will bear reproach and falsehood, who will labour and suffer, and whose supreme desire will be, not to gain Earth's accolades, but to win the Master's approbation when they appear before His awesome judgment seat.

They will be men who will preach with broken hearts and tear-filled eyes, and upon whose ministries God will grant an extraordinary effusion of the Holy Spirit, and who will witness "signs and wonders following" in the transformation of multitudes of human lives.'

– *Arnold Dallimore, Introduction to George Whitefield, Vol 1, Banner Of Truth, Edinburgh, 1979*



## VIEWPOINT

# Britain's Liberal Intelligentsia Has Smashed Virtually Every Social Value – *Melanie Phillips*

The commentary published below comes from the Newsletter of the *National Alliance of Christian Leaders* on their website: [nacl@netwit.net.au](mailto:nacl@netwit.net.au)

SO now the chickens have well and truly come home terrifyingly to roost. The violent anarchy that has taken hold of British cities is the all-too-predictable outcome of a three-decade liberal experiment which tore up virtually every basic social value.

The married two-parent family, educational meritocracy, punishment of criminals, national identity, enforcement of the drugs laws and many more fundamental conventions were all smashed by a liberal intelligentsia hell-bent on a revolutionary transformation of society.

Those of us who warned over the years that they were playing with fire were sneered at and smeared as Right-wing nutters who wanted to turn the clock back to some mythical golden age. But now we can see what they have brought about in the unprecedented and horrific scenes of mob violence, with homes and businesses going up in flames, and epidemic looting.

There has been much bewildered talk about 'feral' children, and desperate calls upon their parents to keep them in at night and to ask them about any stolen goods they are bringing home. As if there were responsible parents in such homes! We are not merely up against feral children, but feral parents! Of course these parents know their children are out on the streets. Of course they see them staggering back with what they have looted. But either they are too drunk or drugged or otherwise out of it to care, or else they are helping themselves to the proceeds, too. As David Cameron observed, there are clearly pockets of society that are not just broken, but sick.

Every problem was instituted or exacerbated by the Labour government under Tony Blair

The causes of this sickness are many and complex. But three things can be said with certainty: every one of them is the fault of the liberal intelligentsia; every one of them was instituted or exacerbated by the Labour government; and at the very heart of these problems lies the breakdown of the family, for most of these children come from lone-mother households. And the single most crucial factor behind all this mayhem is the willed removal of the most important thing that socialises children and turns them from feral savages into civilised citizens: a father who is a fully committed member of the family unit.

Of course there are many lone parents who do a tremendous job. But we're talking here about widespread social collapse. And there are whole areas of Britain, white as well as black, where committed fathers are a wholly unknown phenomenon. In such areas, successive generations are being brought up only by mothers, through whose houses pass transitory males by whom these women have yet more children — and who inevitably repeat the pattern of lone and dysfunctional parenting.

(Continued on p.4)

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## VIEWPOINT

### Smashing Family Values *(Continued from p.3)*

The result is fatherless boys who are consumed by an existential rage and desperate emotional need, and who take out the damage done to them by lashing out from infancy at everyone around them. Such children inhabit what is effectively a different world from the rest of society. It's a world without any boundaries or rules. A world of emotional and physical chaos. A world where a child responds to the slightest setback or disagreement by resorting to violence. A world where the parent is unwilling or incapable of providing the loving and disciplined framework that a child needs in order to thrive.

Yet instead of lone parenthood being regarded as a tragedy for individuals and a catastrophe for society, it has been re-defined as a 'right'.

#### The Riots Have Been Fuelled By Moral Collapse

When Labour came to power in 1997, it set about systematically destroying not just the traditional family but the very idea that married parents were better for children than any other arrangement. Instead, it introduced the sexual free-for-all of 'lifestyle choice'; claimed that the idea of the male breadwinner was a sexist anachronism; and told girls that they could, and should, go it alone as mothers.

This was the outcome of the shattering defeat of Tony Blair, in the two years or so after he came to power, at the hands of the ultra-feminists and apostles of non-judgmentalism in his Cabinet and party who were determined, above all, to destroy the traditional nuclear family.

Blair stood virtually alone against them, and lost.

One of these ultra-feminist wreckers was Harriet Harman. Recently she was on TV preposterously suggesting that cuts in educational allowances or youth workers had something to do with young people torching and looting shops, robbing and leaving people for dead in the streets. But Harman was one of the principal forces in the Labour government behind the promotion of lone parenthood and the marginalisation of fathers. If anyone should be blamed for bringing about the conditions which have led to these appalling scenes in our cities, it is surely Ms Harman.

Britain was once an ordered society that was the envy of the world — the most civilised, the most gentle and law-abiding. Can Broken Britain be put together again? David Cameron is commendably talking tough: but will he have the stomach for tough action?

Will he, for example, remove the incentives to girls and women to have babies outside marriage? Will he dismantle the concept of entitlement from the Welfare State? Will he vigorously enforce the drug laws? Will he end the kid-glove treatment of 'victim groups', and hold them to account for their behaviour in exactly the same way as everyone else?

Repairing this terrible damage also means, dare I say it, a return to the energetic transmission of Biblical morality.

Has anyone heard from the Archbishop of Canterbury about the riots? Would anyone care to guess what he will eventually say about them? Quite. When church leaders stop prattling like soft-headed social workers and start preaching once again the moral concepts that underlie our civilisation, and when our political leaders decide to oppose the culture war that has been waged against that civilisation rather than supinely acquiescing in its destruction, then — and only then — will we start to get to grips with this terrible problem.

Until then, within the smouldering embers of our smashed and burned-out cities, we can only look upon the ruins of the Britain we have so dearly loved; that once led the world towards civilisation, but is now so tragically leading the way out.

— Melanie Phillips

*(In fairness to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, we point out that he made the below speech in the House of Lords upon the recall of the British Parliament, as reported by Anglican Communion News Service on 11 August. — Ed)*

FOLLOWING the recall of the House of Lords in response to the events of recent days, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, expressed sympathy with those affected, paid tribute to police and volunteers, and called for a renewed commitment to the building of strong communities. Reflecting on the loss of confidence in society that many had experienced, Dr Williams said: 'In the events we have seen in recent days, there is nothing to romanticise and there is nothing to condone in the behaviour that has spread across our streets. This is indeed criminality.' Noting the Prime Minister's comment that 'criminality always has a context', Dr Williams called for a careful analysis of all that has taken place and for a commitment to educating our young people to be good citizens: 'Over the last two decades, many would agree that our educational philosophy at every level has been more and more dominated by an instrumentalist model; less and less concerned with a building of virtue, character and citizenship — "civic excellence" as we might say. And a good educational system in a healthy society is one that builds character, that builds virtue.'

The full text of the Archbishop's speech may be found at: <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2152/archbishop-speaks-in-house-of-lords>

**All Sessions Of OXYGEN 11 Were Recorded  
And Are Available For Download  
As MP3 Files From:  
[shop.kcc.org.au](http://shop.kcc.org.au)**

## EYES ON THE PRIZE

### ***Economic Gospel Wins 2011 Christian Book Of The Year Award***

ONE of the nation's leading economists has won the 2011 Christian Book Of The Year Award with a book he regards as one of his most significant contributions to civic life in Australia.

Emeritus Professor Ian Harper of Melbourne Business School, now a partner with Deloitte Access Economics, won the first prize for *Economics For Life*, awarded at the 31st Australian Christian Literature Awards on Thursday 18 August in Melbourne.

Subtitled *An Economist Reflects On The Meaning Of Life, Money And What Really Matters*, Professor Harper proclaims economics a good servant but a bad master. One of three panellists appointed in January 2011 by the Baillieu Government of Victoria to carry out an Independent Review of State Finances, Harper declares that 'economics makes a valuable contribution to clear thinking about important questions that focus on humanity's material condition, yet it is not a philosophy for the whole of life and was never intended to be'.

In 2000, Professor Harper was elected to a Fellowship of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia in recognition of his standing as an academic economist, and more recently to a Fellowship of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

The Awards were judged by an interdenominational panel of judges and presented by Michael Collie, National Director of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge Australia. Australia's first library of 4,000 books was sent with the First Fleet in 1788 as a gift to the new colony from SPCK UK. The organisation was founded in 1698 to distribute books and pamphlets in the 'New World'.



Ian Harper (left) with Michael Collie

### **Cre8 Kingdom Business Conference To Bring Encouragement And Support**

IN recent years around the world the Global Financial Crisis caused extraordinary pain for many people as stock markets fell, large financial institutions collapsed or had to be bailed out, property values dropped and unemployment levels rose. The Cre8 Conference provided encouragement and support to Christian Business Leaders in Melbourne during this time and whilst much has occurred in the last few years, the local and world markets are still unstable.

The Cre8 Kingdom Business Conference, which has been successfully running in Melbourne since 2006, is moving to Sydney Thursday 27 and Friday 28 October at the Hills Centre in Castle Hill with the key theme of *Business As Mission* to help Christians struggling in business and needing to take a few days out to capture God's heart for them individually as well as their business.

Cre8 is run by Australian Marketplace Connections ([www.marketplaceconnections.com](http://www.marketplaceconnections.com)) and CEO Peter Kentley believes every Australian should have at least one opportunity to work alongside someone who is a 'living letter of Jesus Christ' to them (2 Corinthians 3.3).

Cre8 2011 will provide focused teaching that brings together the key elements of success in business along with ongoing support through Australian Marketplace Connections' network of resources and programs. Business leaders will connect with each other and local church leaders to better engage with their purpose in the marketplace. The Sydney event will feature keynote speaker Michael Baer from the USA and 20 leading presenters in six workshop streams, including Professor Graham Clarke (inventor of the bionic ear), Amanda Wells, Karl Faase, Peter Irvine (co-founder of Gloria Jeans) and many others.

For more information about the conference, visit [www.cre8conference.org](http://www.cre8conference.org) or call (02) 8006 9222 or (03) 9816-7114.

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## URGENT NEED FOR PRAYER

### Vietnamese Christians Violently Repressed By State

THE Montagnard / Dega people are the indigenous inhabitants of Vietnam's Central Highlands. After the French left Indochina in 1955, the Vietnamese authorities, who demean the Montagnards as 'Moi' ('savages'), sought to seize, colonise and exploit the Montagnard's resource-rich lands. During the Second Indochina War, the Montagnards fought alongside the Americans in a struggle for human rights and autonomy. Under the Communists, religious freedom has become a major issue. Predominantly Protestant, the Montagnards are resisting government efforts to force them into Communist Party-controlled, state-sanctioned organisations. The Communist authorities, fighting everything they cannot control, accuse the church of being a front for the US Central Intelligence Agency and for 'reactionary', 'evil' and 'separatist' forces.

In March 2011, Human Rights Watch released a most significant report, *Montagnard Christians In Vietnam: A Case Study In Religious Repression*. Repression and violent persecution are escalating, according to HRW. More than 70 Montagnards were detained or arrested in 2010 alone and over 250 are known to be imprisoned on national security charges, while at least 25 Montagnards have died from beatings, torture or illness while in custody.

The HRW report states that mobile police units have been patrolling the Central Highlands, harassing the people and forcing them to renounce 'Dega Protestantism' publicly. In just one of dozens of cases cited by HRW, the provincial Gia Lai government-run newspaper, *Bao Gia Lai*, reported in October 2010 that 567 households affiliated with 'Dega Protestantism' in the Krong Pa district were renouncing the religion. Furthermore, the commune chief was making daily visits to pressure 15 more households to abandon the faith.

The Montagnard Foundation reports that Vietnamese security forces and police surrounded the village of Buon Kret Krot in Gia Lai Province on 7 July while the villagers were attending a Christian evening prayer service. At the appointed time, the authorities charged and violently assaulted the believers. Twelve men and four women were beaten severely, whilst others were detained and tortured. Of those who were beaten, 12 were left unconscious. Ten of them were young men aged 19-29; one was a 53-year-old woman and the other was a 15-year-old girl. Victims of other extreme police brutality included girls and boys aged from 13 to 16. The villagers have been warned that if they continue to worship independently of Communist control they will all go to prison.

Meanwhile, repression and persecution continue to escalate too in the lowland cities, mostly against Vietnamese Catholics who include lawyers, bloggers, human rights activists and priests. Catholics in Vinh City, South Vietnam, recently took to the streets to protest the government's refusal to return confiscated land to Cau Ram Parish. Eight devoutly Catholic university students and young laymen have been arrested recently without cause, their whereabouts unknown. Candlelight vigils for them have been held.

#### **Please Pray That God Will ...**

- ◆ comfort and heal all His people who are suffering physically, materially, emotionally and spiritually due to violent persecution by the Vietnamese Communist authorities;
- ◆ bring to those who persecute His children a revulsion against violence and a conviction of sin, so that the extreme violence and appalling injustices and betrayals might cease, praying especially for Vietnam's new ceremonial president Truong Tan Sang (62), elected by the parliament on 25 July and for the more powerful Prime Minister, Nguyen Tan Dung;
- ◆ bring many Vietnamese Communist officials – police, bureaucrats and ideologues – to faith in Jesus Christ; may the Church in Vietnam be able to rejoice, as did the Churches of Syria and Cilicia, saying, 'He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.' (Galatians 1.23)

– *Written for the Australian Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty Commission by Elizabeth Kendal.*

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## MOVING FORWARD

# Grand Opening Of MAF Australia's Sydney Office

MISSION Aviation Fellowship opened its new national office in Sydney on Saturday 27 August. The new premises will serve as headquarters for MAF Australia's base for recruitment of pilots and engineers as well as for promotional, fundraising and communications activities.

MAF Australia Chief Executive Rob Owen said the new facility would enable the appointment of staff to fill a number of strategic roles and provide MAF Australia with a more effective means of communicating with its national network of 10,000 supporters.

### Bold New Direction

'This is a bold new direction for MAF Australia and a great opportunity for us to engage more effectively with our staff, donors, supporters and volunteer workers,' said Mr Owen. 'It also gives us an expanded base to carry out the administrative work associated with supporting our many pilots, engineers and their families serving in places like Papua New Guinea and Arnhem Land. In addition, it will contribute to a heightening of awareness within the local community of the work we do.'

Today, MAF operates 135 aircraft in more than 30 countries, serves almost 1,500 churches, mission organisations and aid agencies, and flies to 2,500 destinations across the developing world, often small communities accessible only by aircraft. With an aircraft taking off or landing somewhere in the world every three minutes, MAF is the world's busiest airline.

Among those attending the office opening were members of the MAF Australia Board, NSW State Council and representatives of various Sydney churches which support the work of MAF.

The new MAF office is located at Unit 203, 14-16 Lexington Drive, Bella Vista NSW 2153. For more information, contact MAF Australia NSW Area Rep Tom Teale-Sinclair on (02) 9672 7763 or 0400 405 152.



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11 Sept - "Judgement Day for the Nations" Zeph. 2

18 Sept - James Snare - "Will Man Rob God?" Malachi 3:6-12

25 Sept - James Snare - "The Day is Coming" Malachi 3:13-4:6

2 Oct - M. Pakula - "Salvation for a Remnant" Zeph. 3



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## OXYGEN 11 – A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

(Continued from P.1)

PIPER sees the Cross as being at the centre of the central points of Christian doctrine: Predestination, Creation, Incarnation, *Propitiation*, Sanctification, Consummation. God's summoning us to praise Him is not because He won't be God without ego-stroking but because He is the one Being alone who provides all for His glory. Man should not be offended by God's glory but should rejoice in it.

### The Smiling Assassin Of Atheism

Professor John Lennox radiates the joy of the Lord. He's debated some of the best known atheists in the world, written books against their arguments and more positively defended and upheld the Christian faith against enemies within and without – and all of it with a charming Irish wit and a broad smile on his face.

He began by noting how appropriate was the name of this conference – Oxygen 11 – because in the present day atheists are seeking to suck away the oxygen of the Christian Church. 'Debate them, but don't try to beat them,' he advised. 'Just put reasoned argument into the public arena. When the Church is so heavily under attack, it's best to be ruthlessly honest.'

Within the framework of Acts 1 he analysed how it was that Christianity exploded into the Ancient World in order to show how we might rediscover the oxygen the Apostles and early Christians breathed.

They defined their Christianity against the opposition of pagan religions, Roman politics, much misunderstanding and false accusation by telling who Christ is and what He did.

Things have come full circle. Then and now, Christianity has been dealt with in this way. The world never liked Christianity's exclusivism and Christian ethics have always clashed with the mores of society. But in the Ancient World the Christians proclaimed the Word and as the Word grew, the Church grew.

'The Church won't grow without the Word growing,' he said. 'Genesis begins with Creation – by words; the miracle that launched Christianity into the world was a miracle of language – Babel reversed; Luke the historian is concerned with certainty as he wrote words to tell the story – and so we need to get our evidence out into society in a world that needs to hear, and to teach our young people to think Biblically.'

### Great Encouragement

There were many aspects of Oxygen 11 to give encouragement to the participants, the splendid teaching perhaps foremost, but as a now ageing observer this old scribe was most encouraged to see the youthfulness of the vast majority of those present. The Church is always in good hands because she is in God's hands, but our good Lord is looking upon His Bride with favour in raising up in these days thousands of young workers for His harvest fields; people who have great zeal for the glory of God and a burning desire for the salvation of souls.

– Bob Thomas



*'They also serve ...' who stand and show the way.*

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## WHAT'S ON?

### 2011 Manly Arts Festival With Art Exhibition & UPROCK Concert

THE *Art By Association* Art Exhibition will be held at Manly Village Church, 3-8 September. Opening Night is Saturday 3 September from 6pm-9pm. Check out the art, poetry and live music by Chris Mumford and Skye, Zoe Elliot and local blues duo Daddy Longlegs and the Swamp Donkeys; and hopefully special guest, John McConnell. This will be a laid back, community affair in the lounge area in the back room of Manly Village Church, 4 West Promenade, Manly.

The exhibition will be open: Saturday 10.30am-9pm; Sunday from 10-11.30am (service in the art with artist's theological connection); 11.30-5.30pm meet the artists; Tuesday and Wednesday 11am-3pm; Thursday 12.30-7pm. Details at: [art-HUB.Org](http://art-HUB.Org)

#### UPROCK at Gospel Live

On Saturday 17 September from 7.30-10.45pm, live street art painting will see Australian Hip hop, funk, soul, reggae and gospel music come alive. Featuring Fonke Knomaads, Brethren, Oak Bridge and many more, this will be a fun night. Many of these artists are from Sydney's Urban Gospel Church, The Embassy. See [www.GospelLive.Org](http://www.GospelLive.Org) for details.

#### About Gospel Live

There are very, very few venues in Australia where professional artists can perform their Christian material. Gospel Live is about supporting and building the Christian arts and Christian community. The



music and other art forms have Christian themes and artists have the freedom to use their gifts in ministry. Evenings can include a mix of enjoyable entertainment, something inspiring, encouraging, provocative, reflective.

Gospel Live uses the same venue as The Manly Fig. It has cafe/lounge seating in a heritage listed church with superb acoustics. It's a listening venue, so you get to enjoy music at its best.

Gospel Live is non-profit, volunteer-run (so door proceeds go to the artists), BYO food and drink. Cost is \$10/\$7. Doors open at 7.30pm for 8pm start. Come early to get a good table and settle in with friends. Booking for groups of six or more may be made by emailing [info@GospelLive.Org](mailto:info@GospelLive.Org) with name, date of event and number of seats required. Alternatively, call on (02) 9905 7215.

**Belgrave Heights Women's Convention** will be held at the Convention Centre on Saturday 10 September from 9am to 4.30pm. Guest speaker will be Kathy Jack, Co-ordinator for Community Bible Study International. Contact the Convention Office (03) 9752 6855 to register.

**Word In Song Seminar** will be held at Ormond Anglican Church, 436 North Rd, Ormond on 10 September. The cost is \$65. Register online: [www.mts.com.au/event](http://www.mts.com.au/event)

**Nurses Christian Fellowship** will hold their next professional workshop on Tuesday 27 September from 7-9.30pm at Shalom Centre, 157 Balaclava Rd, Marsfield. Further details available at: [ncfansw.org](http://ncfansw.org)

**The AMC Cre8 2011 Conference** for Christian civic, business and professional leaders will be held at Hills Centre, Castle Hill, Sydney, on 27, 28 October. Enquiries to: [cre8conference.org](http://cre8conference.org) or phone (02) 8006 9222 or (03) 9816 7114.

**Agape Children's Home.** Avis Rideout, Founder and Director of the Agape Children's Home, Chiang Mai, Thailand, will be visiting Sydney, Melbourne and Smithton Tasmania 17 - 27 September. This inspiring lady has a huge heart for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Currently Agape is home to 85 children, employs 45 Thai nannies and accepts volunteers from all over the world. Avis pours her life into people who others turn their back on. The Agape Home

has provided love and care to 254 children over the past 15 years (see [www.nikkisplace.org](http://www.nikkisplace.org)). This home needs sponsorship and financial assistance for the running of a home with 85 children, newborn to 19 year olds. School uniforms, school bags, new shoes, craft materials are a few such needs.

Avis will be sharing in Sydney 17-22, Melbourne 23, and Smithton 24, 25. For details, phone Judith 0432 411 593 or email: [jbondjet@hotmail.com](mailto:jbondjet@hotmail.com)

## PERSECUTION WATCH

### Church Building In North Sudan In Ruins As Hostilities Grow

MORE than seven months after Muslim extremists burned its church building, a Presbyterian Church of the Sudan congregation is still afraid to meet for worship, according to Christian sources. The Rev Maubark Hamad said his church in Wad Madani, 138 kilometres southeast of Khartoum, has not been able to rebuild since the 15 January devastation due to the congregation's meagre resources. 'Nothing has been done for the burned church building; so far it has not been rebuilt,' he told Compass by phone.

Christian sources said they are increasingly fearful as Muslim extremists pose more threats against Christians in an attempt to rid what they call Dar al Islam, the 'Land of Islam,' of Christianity. 'The increased challenges now faced by many Christians in North Sudan are something for which we need to pray very hard for the Lord to intervene,' said another church leader on condition of anonymity.

The PCOS building in Wad Madani was burned after a series of threats against its members by Muslim extremists, sources said. 'These anti-Christian activities continue to be growing these days, aiming to cause fear among the believers in North Sudan,' said the church leader.

When PCOS leaders reported the case to police in Wad Madani, they were surprised to find officers reluctant to investigate. To date the assailants have not been arrested. Property damage to the church building were estimated at 2,000 Sudanese pounds (\$A740); destroyed items included Christian literature, Bibles in local languages, chairs, tables and a pulpit.

'Muslims target our church because they don't want anything that is related to the church,' one church member said. Christians in North Sudan are living beneath a blanket of fear since South Sudan seceded on 9 July. Just one month after the South voted for independence from the predominantly Islamic North, pressures on churches and Christians have increased, with Muslim groups threatening to destroy churches, kill Christians and purge the country of Christianity.

North Sudan's predominantly Arab population has intermingled with several indigenous peoples, leading some other Arab nations to regard it as not 'pure Arab,' according to *Operation World*. Besides striving for an Arab-based ethnic-religious purging in North Sudan, Islamists may also be trying to counter estimated losses among adherents to Islam, with some estimating the Muslim population of the formerly unified Sudan recently dropping from 61% to about 55%.  
— *Compass Direct*

### Over 60 Violent Attacks Against Christians In India This Year

'WITH two-three incidents of violence against the community each week in 2011, Christians in India, continue to face the worst ever persecution in India,' says Rev Dr Richard Howell, General Secretary, Evangelical Fellowship of India. Over 60 violent anti-Christian attacks were recorded in India during the first half of 2011 as Hindu extremists continue to target churches, pastors and Christian families. In one incident in Jharkhand State at the end of May, five Christian families fled their homes in fear after being beaten up by Hindu extremists. One woman was hospitalised, suffering internal injuries, while another woman, a mother of three, was abducted and held for a month until a court ordered her release. Police have failed to make any arrests in connection with this incident. In April, an angry mob of 150 Hindu extremists attacked a Christian worship meeting in Delhi and indiscriminately beat up participants, including women and children. Two Christians required hospital treatment for head injuries. The assailants also destroyed furniture and vehicles.  
— *Barnabas Fund*

### Restrictive Child Religion Law To Be Enacted In Tajikistan After Ramadan

A RESTRICTIVE religious law for children which bans children under the age of 18 from participating in religious activities will go into effect at the end of the month in Tajikistan.

Joel Griffith with Slavic Gospel Association now confirms, 'It looks like indeed this controversial Law of Parental Responsibility has actually entered the force. The President did sign it.' The President signed it on 2 August, but Forum 18 News Service says the law won't go into effect till the end of the month in order to keep peace during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. No one is quite sure how the law will be enforced, but Christian camps, Sunday schools, and more will likely be affected. Still, believers won't stop teaching their kids the Truth. 'This seems to be heading back to the Soviet days where they're just going to have to do things discretely and clandestinely. So it just continues to be a matter of prayer.'

Pray that the Lord would change the heart of the Tajik President, protect believers, and make His Name known.

## GOOD NEWS FROM ABROAD

### A Professor Professes Christ In Libya

AS I've been watching the incredible events in Libya, I've been thinking about an amazing man I met last year.

He was a university professor in Libya. Even more amazing, he was a devout follower of Jesus and a university professor in Libya – amazing because, by his estimate, there are only about 4,500 Christian believers in Libya. Most Christians have been either deported or put in prison.

95% of Libyans will never meet a real follower of Jesus. So as a Christian professor, he was a bit of an oddity among students and faculty.

When the authorities discovered that my new-found friend was a Christian, he was immediately removed from his faculty position and plans were made for his deportation.

His loyal students and faculty friends, knowing he was a Christian, wanted to give him a Christian gift as a going away present. What do you give a Christian? Something American, right? They presented him with a DVD set of the TV series, *Friends*.

We chuckle at the irony, but it's really sad. Much of the world thinks of Christianity as an American

religion. And they associate Christianity with American culture, which is (and this is an understatement) greatly flawed.

So how can we effectively communicate Christ when our image is so tragically associated with Hollywood? We need to present Jesus of Nazareth, a mid-Eastern man who changed, and is changing, the world.

As long as we present Jesus and live our lives in a way that enables Muslims to associate Jesus with American entertainment, or American politics, we create barriers to the real Jesus. Jesus is the God of the nations, the Saviour of the world

Hopefully with the change in government, followers of Jesus will have freedom to live out their lives as Jesus commanded. But whatever happens politically, we know that in the end, Jesus prevails. Every tongue, every tribe, every nation, will worship and confess that He is Lord!

*Wayne Pederson, President, HCJB Global (www.hcjb.org). Special to ASSIST News Service*



### Hope Springs Eternal For Believers In Bhutan

THERE are conflicting reports over what's changing in the spiritual climate in Bhutan.

Although Bhutan's constitution states that Buddhism is the 'spiritual heritage' of the country, Lee DeYoung with Words of Hope says, 'It's one of the few countries in the world where it is said there are no open mosques, Hindu temples, Christian churches or Jewish synagogues.' Still, after 100 years of rule by absolute monarchy, the first elections were held in 2008, and Bhutan emerged as a parliamentary democracy.

Now, the government requires a licence for the construction of religious buildings, which seems to hint that such buildings would be approved. Some religious freedom watchdog groups allege that those licenses are withheld, which gives force to the idea that Christianity would still be on the 'black list.' DeYoung agrees. 'Although it is still technically illegal to be openly operating as a Christian, nevertheless, the number of believers in Bhutan is clearly growing, and they are gathering in house fellowships secretly.'

Even though it seems there has been some movement toward freedom, evangelism is still forbidden in the country.

This is where radio comes in. Radio has played a significant role in making the Christian presence felt in Bhutan, a country that is otherwise closed for Christian activities. Programming in Dzongkha – the official language of Bhutan – occurs three days a week with a 15-minute program which includes health topics, music, and a Christian message. The programming not only encourages the existing believers, but also takes the message of Christ to others who are looking for answers.

They're responding, too, although DeYoung notes that 'for the foreseeable future, the Bhutanese that are coming to Christ newly as believers would probably still tend to maintain a relatively low profile.' What's exciting is that 'people widely believe that the government is well aware of many of those house fellowships and has chosen not to interfere, has not gotten involved in trying to stop their activity,' says DeYoung.

Although the atmosphere feels freer, DeYoung says, 'It's the question of evangelism that would be still a very sensitive one.'

Pray that Christians are treated fairly under the new constitution. Pray that the church continues to expand and flourish despite pressure.

## NIGRIAN CHRISTIANS SUFFER TOO

### Nigerian Army Said To Have Helped In Slaughter Of Christians

WHILE the car-bombing of the United Nations building in Lagos drew massive media attention, attacks on Christians in various parts of Nigeria go relatively unreported. However, Compass Direct News reports that Muslim extremists with the alleged help of Nigerian army personnel killed 24 Christians this month in central Nigeria's Plateau state.

According to CDN, the attacks started on 11 August in Ratsa Foron village, where assaults that day and on 15 August left six Christians dead; also on 15 August in Heipang village, Muslim extremists killed nine members of one Christian family along with another Christian, the sources said.

'I can swear to God Almighty that the attack was carried out with the support of the soldiers; I saw them,' said a tearful Nnaji John, who lost her family in the attack.'

'Attacks on 21 August in Kwi, Loton, and Jwol villages killed six more Christians, said the sources, who added that Nigerian army soldiers participated in the assaults or at least accompanied the assailants,' said the CDN story. 'In the community of Chwelnyp in Jos on 14 August, Muslim extremists killed two and injured one woman, the area sources said. Chollom Gyangof Chwelnyp confirmed that

the 14 August attack on his neighbourhood was carried out with the support or tacit approval of Muslims in the army's Special Task Force,

a unit designed to stop sectarian attacks.

Jonah Jang, added CDN, called for immediate withdrawal of the Nigerian army because, he said, Muslims in the army have taken sides with Islamist assailants. 'I am convinced that the armed forces are being polluted with the religious crisis in the country,' Jang said. 'Before now, the military personnel used to stay in the barracks, but today the armed forces have started taking sides in this religious crisis, and if they are not called to order it will be dangerous for the country.' — Dan Wooding



*A doctor tends to one of the victims of an Islamist attack on Christians in Heipang village, Plateau State. (Photo: Compass Direct)*

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## AID FOR AFRICAN FAMINE

### TEAR And CRWC Working Together To Aid Famine Victims

TEN million people across Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan have been affected by what has been described as the worst drought in 60 years. Worst hit has been Somalia, which has also been caught in an ongoing conflict. It is estimated that there are currently 430,000 Somalis in Internally Displaced People camps in Kenya and Ethiopia (380,000 in Dadaab Camp alone).

The cost of maize, the staple diet for the majority of families, has dramatically increased by 300% over the past six months due to food shortages. At the same time the value of livestock has fallen dramatically as pastoralists have been forced to de-stock because of a lack of fodder for animals to eat.

Many households need to walk as far as 15km to access water because many traditional water sources have dried up. Most families have been forced to reduce their diet to one meal a day.

TEAR Australia are working with partner Christian Reformed World Relief Committee in Kenya on a Food for Work Program, which is a scaling-up of their current drought-relief work. CRWC have been responding to chronic drought and food shortages in east central and coastal Kenya for the past decade, and have vast experience on the ground. The program will see 14,000 households in ten districts benefiting from monthly rations in return for growing animal fodder.

The program will provide a total of 56 x 10,000-litre water storage tanks as well as trucking in 8.4 million litres of water each month for household consumption. It will also include a peace-building component to help communities deal with conflict over grazing patterns for their cattle and access/usage of water within the targeted areas.

To find out more, or donate, visit: [www.tear.org.au](http://www.tear.org.au) or contact Tim Rae or Coby Hallas on (03) 9264 7000.

#### Further Prayer Asked For Elaine Nile

THE Rev Fred Nile has requested ongoing persistent prayer for Elaine Nile, following her major operation on Thursday 11 August.

Unfortunately the operation was not a success as the cancer tumour had grown very large in the last few weeks as well as a new, smaller cancer tumour in the liver. If both tumours had been removed, there would be an insufficient quantity of liver remaining, so Elaine would have suffered liver failure.

Please continue to pray as the specialists consider what are the remaining options for treatment to improve Elaine's quality of life.

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#### 'Glorious Things - A Protestant's Guide To London'

What to look for and how to find places associated with people and events which shaped Protestant Church History, compiled by Rev Bob Thomas.

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#### Ramon A Williams – Worldwide Photos

WANT TO SEE MORE?

'New Life' can only publish a small selection of photos, but you can see more of those attributed to Worldwide Photos by going to:

[http://community.webshots.com/user/ramon\\_williams](http://community.webshots.com/user/ramon_williams)

e-mail: [rlgmedia@ozemail.com.au](mailto:rlgmedia@ozemail.com.au)

## NEWS FROM ALL QUARTERS

### English Teaching Opens Doors For Hope In China

TEACHING English in China is a multi-billion dollar industry. Erik Burklin with China Partner says, 'Many young people, especially teenagers, really want to learn English. One of the motivations for them, of course, is to get wealthy, to get a better job. Many have a dream to some day travel overseas.' English camps are a Gospel opportunity. China Partner is working closely with a pastor in Sichuan Province. 'They are very clear that foreign teachers are not to openly share their faith in a classroom setting. However, that is not so much our purpose. I see our purpose as teaching English well to these teenagers as an opportunity to sow the seed of the Gospel.' Time and again, this approach has proved successful. 'Relationships start to develop and then you have many chances to share about your personal faith. So, you can share the Gospel without being preachy.'

### High Court Challenge To Chaplaincy Case

PASTOR Peter Stevens, Victorian officer of Family Voice Australia, reports that in the High Court challenge to Federal Government funding of Chaplaincy in State Schools, not a single state agrees with the plaintiff, Mr Williams, that federal funding for chaplaincy is unconstitutional. Two states and the commonwealth support the current school chaplaincy funding model. Four states argue that federal money should be given to the states for them to distribute to chaplains. 70,000 statements of support have been received from the public.

### Springtime 'Songs Of Praise'

A delightful, pleasant Sunday afternoon program, *Springtime 'Songs Of Praise'*, has been arranged for Sunday, 11 September from 2pm to 4.45pm and everyone's welcome at this special event. There is no charge and a delicious afternoon tea will be served following the program at Diamond Valley Baptist Mud Brick Complex, 309 Diamond Creek Road, Plenty. (Melway 11 D7)

## WITH CHRIST

**BISHOP Sir Paul Reeves** died in Auckland on 15 August aged 78.

Born in Wellington, Sir Paul began his ministry as a deacon in Tokoroa and later spent five years in England. In 1964 as Vicar of Okato, a coastal Taranaki town, Sir Paul lived for the first time amongst his whanaunga.

He was appointed Bishop of Waiapu in 1971. In 1979 he became Bishop of Auckland, and then Primate and Archbishop of New Zealand the following year. In 1985 Sir Paul was appointed Governor General, the first Maori to hold that position.

After completing his term as Governor General, Sir Paul became the Anglican Observer at the United Nations, where he served from 1991 to 1993.

– Lloyd Ashton, Anglican Taonga

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## A BOOK WORTH READING

### JOHN CALVIN: MAN OF GOD'S WORD, WRITTEN AND PREACHED, Peter Barnes, Edinburgh, Banner of Truth, 2011.

IF you are wondering why another book has been written about John Calvin, and why this focus (the man of God's Word), as Peter Barnes states on the opening page of this helpful little book (just 129 pages), 'No man did more in the Reformation period to point the Church back to God's inerrant Word than John Calvin'.

The book has two main parts: the first outlines Calvin's doctrine of the Word, and the second describes his practice of preaching. Modern scholarship has often obscured rather than thrown light upon Calvin's view of Scripture, but it is clear that the great reformer viewed the Bible as divinely inspired and free from error. On the other hand, his humanist training leads him to treat the Bible as a truly human document (which it is), so that in his study of Scripture, he found fault, for example, with the Apostle Paul's literary style.

As Barnes brings out, Calvin's handling of Scripture is refreshingly honest, thoughtful and humble. He always seeks to keep strictly to the plain meaning of any Bible passage. He is, however, no pedant, nor does he try to explain away difficulties or oddities in the biblical text. He does not fall into the typical trap of the modern Bible zealot, whose 'defence' of the Bible sometimes brings the Bible into disrepute by arguing for the most implausible explanations of a particular Bible 'difficulty'.

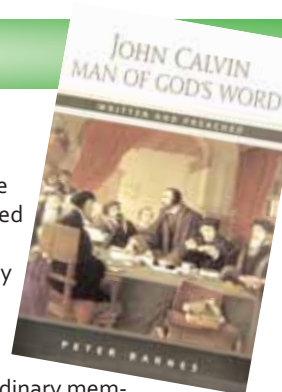
Calvin was also an indefatigable preacher, who sometimes preached every day of the week and often had to get into the pulpit with only minimum time for preparation. However, his general and wide study of Scripture shows in every sermon as he relies on his extraordinary memory (which sometimes lets him down, and Barnes points out a few of his blunders).

Calvin was restrained in his exegesis of the Old Testament, not forcing every text to point to Christ, when there was no clear and convincing reason to think that it was a prophecy or pointer to our Saviour. In other words, there will be those who are foolish enough to think that they know better than Calvin how to preach!

Barnes shows clearly how Calvin used homely illustrations, word-pictures drawn from daily life, rhetorical questions, dialogue and subtle humour, all reflecting his determination to make God's Word clear and relevant to his hearers.

Here, then, is a valuable addition to the growing library of books about John Calvin, one of the greatest Bible commentators and preachers of Christian history.

– Greg Goswell



## TEN TIPS FOR TEACHING YOUNG CHILDREN ABOUT GOD

MATTHIAS Media, publishers of *The Briefing* and many helpful Christians books and other aids, presents this item for the help of parents and teachers. Go to their website ( [www.matthiasmedia.com](http://www.matthiasmedia.com) ) to see their full range of publications and activities.

**Teach All The Time:** Young children live in the moment. Help them to learn in the moment by making the most of opportunities as they arise. Talk about God in the day-to-day things you are doing.

**Teach At A Special Time:** Try to set aside a special time to read about God. Prepare for this time. If you are going to read the Bible, think about what you will read and how to simplify and explain it.

**Use Q&A:** Listen to your children's questions, and give quality time to answering them. But also ask them questions about what you've been trying to teach, to check they have understood.

**Teach Through Your Life:** You are a living example (or visual aid) of someone who loves God. Set a faithful example of dependence on God and let them see you reading the Bible for yourself.

**Be Prayerful:** Like adults, children need God's help to grow in Christ and learn to pray. So pray for them and pray simple prayers with them (eg 'Sorry God that we ...', 'Thank You God for ...', 'God, please help ...').

**Be Simple:** Young children are not abstract thinkers, so be literal and concrete. Use real examples where possible (eg 'God made this flower'). Use simple vocabulary that they can understand. Avoid jargon.

**Be Specific:** Move from the specific ('God loves Ben') to the general ('God loves everyone'). Use lots of familiar examples so that they can understand.

**Repeat And Repeat And Repeat:** You might get tired of saying it, but remember young children thrive on repetition.

**Be Thankful:** Approach God with thankfulness. Model to your children how we can thank God in various situations and what we can thank God for.

**Be Visual:** Young children learn through their eyes as well as their ears. Use pictures, visual aids, picture books etc.

– Tips provided by Stephanie Carmichael

**Read *Can The Theory Of Evolution Survive The Attack Of Science?*  
at [www.defenceofthefaith.org](http://www.defenceofthefaith.org)**

## PRAISE HIM! PRAISE HIM!

### Comprehensive Psalms Recording To Help Psalm Singing And Learning

PROJECT PSALMS is undertaking the first comprehensive *Psalms* recording project in high-definition recording in English, using the Scottish Psalter of 1650 with the aim of producing the most memorable way to learn the Psalms. Anyone who has desired to join with the Psalmist in expressing the awe, majesty, grace and forgiveness of God, or anyone already familiar with the Psalms will find the recordings of *Project Psalms* to be the ideal tool.

#### Four Key Features:

- ❖ Solo voice (tenor) – This enables the recordings to act as an 'electronic precentor' and not just to be entertainment. It also lessens distractions which can be caused by four part harmonies etc.
- ❖ One tune per Psalm – This is quite unique as it helps with keeping the internal consistency of the words in the Psalms and aids in remembering a Psalm by associating a single tune with it. In total there will be 184 tunes (150 + 21 for the additional parts in Psalm 119 + 13 for the Psalms with two versions in the 1650 Scottish Psalter).
- ❖ High-definition recordings – This further allows for clarity in the tone of the voice and will also enable people to hear the words clearly.
- ❖ Comprehensive – These recordings will cover every verse of the Psalms, and will include both versions of the 13 Psalms which have two versions in the Scottish Psalter of 1650.

While some of the words and syntax used in the 1650 version may initially be hard to understand, we have found that after some meditation on the words, most people start to understand it easily, even for people whose first language is not English.

To contribute towards finishing this project or place an order, visit [www.projectpsalms.com](http://www.projectpsalms.com)

By pre-ordering or donating you will be helping to produce a rare and powerful resource for generations to come.

– Joel Scot

## Q & A – WITH DR CLIFFORD WILSON

### What do you think Isaiah was referring to when he said concerning the Earth, 'He created it not in vain' (Isaiah 45.18)?

Those who hold to the 'gap theory' believe that this implies that the Earth was not originally waste and void – that God did not create it 'in vain'. However, Isaiah was saying that when God created the Heavens and the Earth there was a purpose. God is not limited in time as we are, and when we read the story of creation in Genesis Chapters 1 and 2 it is obvious that the crown of creation is man himself – the last recorded activity for the sixth day.

The Earth was created for man to live upon, and the time that elapsed before man occupied it is in a sense virtually irrelevant in the great plan of the Eternal God. God's plan was that ultimately man would be placed on the Earth and so, as Isaiah says, 'He created it not in vain.'

#### So Isaiah was writing about the purpose of creation?

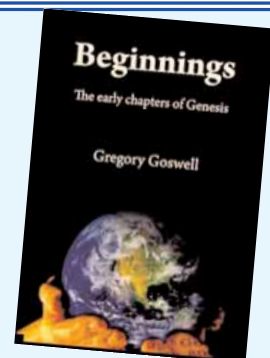
Yes. Let's go on in that verse – it should be considered in full rather than selecting just part of it. It actually states, 'He created it not in vain but for the habitation of man'. So that points to a major purpose for the creation of the Earth.

### 'Beginnings' – A Commentary And 24 Studies On Genesis 1-11

Written by Greg Goswell, Old Testament Lecturer,  
Presbyterian Theological College, Melbourne

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## A Rich, But Simple Model For Sharing The Gospel

IT IS no easy task to share the Gospel briefly and do justice to its glory and majesty at the same time.

In our morning devotions we are enamoured with the infinite depth of the Gospel. Only a few hours later we stutter as we try to share it over a cup of coffee, during a break at work, or at the end of a sermon.

But what if we can do both? What if we can share the Gospel in a few minutes and maintain at least some level of its depth and richness?

If we can do that, Gospel renewal will spread through our churches and neighbourhoods. This will happen because people will hear a message about Jesus that is different (but more biblical!) than the one they rejected years ago. They will hear a message with power.

Where do we go for this rich but simple model for sharing the Gospel? We need look no further than Ephesians 1.3-14.

### Paul's Trinitarian Gospel Presentation

In the opening verses of his letter to the Ephesians, Paul summarises the Gospel. But he does so in a unique way. Paul presents the Gospel so as to show how each Person of the Trinity contributes to the accomplishment of salvation.

**1. The Father Adopts (1.3-6).** The fact that we need to be adopted implies that we are orphans. We have all 'run away from home.' Just as Adam and Eve hid from God after eating from the tree so also, in sin, we have all hidden from God. As spiritual runaways we have no way to return to our Father. We are locked up in the orphanage of sin. But our Father still loves us. He hasn't forgotten about us. He has planned from eternity to adopt us back into His family.

**2. The Son Redeems (1.7-12).** As with all adoptions, there are costs and fees involved. God had to purchase our adoption. Jesus, God's true Son – the only one who didn't run away – gave His life to pay the cost of our adoption. Our sins are forgiven on the basis of Jesus' blood.

**3. The Spirit Seals (1.13-14).** How do we know we won't run away again? The Holy Spirit seals us as God's own children. By giving us the Spirit, our Father guarantees that we will be His forever. This is not much different from the parents who immediately bestow their last name on the child they have just adopted. That's the proof that the child has a family forever. The sealing of the Spirit is the proof that we are in God's family forever.

### Paul's Model Is As Timely Today As It Was 2,000 Years Ago.

Besides providing a framework for sharing the Gospel, Ephesians 1 contains two themes that address common unbiblical beliefs held by those without faith in Jesus.

**1. Sin Is The Problem.** When we share the Gospel, how often does the conversation turn to politics, social injustice, or natural disasters? Ephesians 1 locates the problem inside us, not 'out there.' We ran away, and that sin condemns us forever.

**2. Jesus Is At The Centre.** Postmodernism may be dead, but pluralism is alive and well. We will continue to hear claims that all roads lead to God somehow. All of the 'in Christ' and 'in him' statements refute this notion (only verses 8 and 14 have no such reference!). Salvation lies only in Jesus and through Jesus.

This model is enriched by the mysterious workings of the Triune God. He is one God, in three Persons, with each Person fulfilling a unique role in the single work of salvation. This is incomprehensible stuff. Yet it is also simple. It's a three-point presentation, so you can remember it. It follows the analogy of adoption, so the person you share it with can identify with it.

This model doesn't hit everything. But the point isn't to hit everything. That will paralyse us from sharing the Gospel. We need something that is rich and simple. Paul provides that for us.

*– This is a guest post on [gospelcoalition.com](http://gospelcoalition.com) by Eric McKiddie.*

*Eric blogs at [pastoralized.com](http://pastoralized.com) about doing pastoral work with theological rigour and practical efficiency.*

*He serves as the Junior High Pastor at College Church in Wheaton, Illinois, USA.*