

50 Year Reunion For MAF-AIR, Ballarat



ON 18th February former staff and trainees gathered at Ballarat to catch up with colleagues with whom they had served at the MAF-AIR Services training and engineering base at Ballarat Airport. Of the 120 guests who attended, some came from as far afield as New Zealand, West Australia and Queensland, and it was a real talk-fest. Memories were tested as some folk have changed in the last 40 or 50 years!

A handful of former staff still reside in Ballarat, and a small committee made the Reunion arrangements. A collection of photos and memorabilia was gathered, and pages of memories sought from former staff. A DVD was taken of the event which took the form of a Luncheon in the Wendouree Baptist Church, and a copy can be obtained from Roger Young, phone 03-53381164.

It was back in late 1961 that the first four Christian engineers, formerly of Aerial Missions, moved into the hangar and huts that has just been vacated by the R.A.A.F. Missionary Aviation Fellowship Home Council had been looking for a suitable

location to set up an engineering and training base close to the Headquarters in Melbourne, and the facilities at Ballarat were very suitable. Also, just at that time, a farmer and his wife in New Zealand responded to the prompting of the Lord to sell their farm and give the proceeds to M.A.F. for an unknown new project, thus providing the initial capital. The Secretary of M.A.F. in New Zealand, Alex Jardine, accepted a Call from God to move with his family to Ballarat to take up the position of Manager of this fledgling company, MAF-AIR Services Pty. Ltd. All this was evidence of the Divine Tapestry and timing that was being wrought to bring about this vital development.

The basis of operation was for MAF-AIR to take in commercial aircraft maintenance and use the proceeds to be self-supporting and provide training for engineers, and later, pilots, who would qualify for service on a mission field. Many in the aviation industry did not believe this operation could survive.

Story Continued on p.5...

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TO THE POINT ...

Letter From London

'I WAS in the Spirit on the Lord's Day' -- in London. London draws a Protestant into hundreds of years of heritage, climaxing on the Lord's Day in a visit to several churches where that heritage from ages past is still upheld to this day and looks set to continue for years to come.

I've just come 'home' to the recently refurbished Highbury Centre/Foreign-Mission Club from worshipping morning and evening at the Metropolitan (Spurgeon's) Tabernacle and late afternoon in St Helen's, Bishopsgate. And what a spiritually blessed day it has been!

Morning service at the Tabernacle is aimed at building up believers through the preaching of the Word in a thorough, systematic and expository way. Spurgeon's latest successor, Dr Peter Masters, determinedly applies the Scriptures to Christian life and living. Today's message came from 1 Corinthians 1.12. This letter might have been written two thousand years ago to a tiny congregation in a distant corner of the Roman Empire, but under Dr Masters' preaching it seemed to have come hot off the press to his congregation this morning.

Dr Masters showed how the letter applied both universally to the whole Church and particularly to every congregation, drawing a distinction between elements which applied uniquely to the first generation Church and the Church in succeeding generations, and emphasising the need for everyone in every church to exercise ministries which, whether seemingly small or great, are all important and must be blended together in what his great predecessor called 'An All-Round Ministry'. He drew a line from that all-round ministry in Spurgeon's day to the present-day ministry of the Tabernacle, pointing out the concern for welfare which goes hand in hand with outreach evangelism and teaching and pastoral care, and which has been a hallmark of the work of the Tabernacle from that day to this,

Evening services at the Tabernacle are evangelistic. They are preceded by a group of members fanning out around the local area, and in particular to the Elephant and Castle shopping centre and underground train station directly across the road to invite people at random over to the service, where newcomers are quickly spotted and made welcome. The service is traditionally, almost fiercely, Protestant -- simple, reverent, fervent, expectant. Lengthy extempore prayers set a tone of earnest waiting upon the Lord. Traditional hymns are sung to the accompaniment of an organ. Notices and a welcome to visitors are given matter-of-factly by the Church Secretary, with no recourse to either humour or hype. The sermon sticks closely to the Scriptures as read earlier, the minister taking every opportunity to shoot a 'feathered arrow' home.

The auditorium is full, the Spirit is at work, sinners are saved, saints are encouraged. Afterwards the minister and deacons are counselling enquirers well into the night. Here is a church which shows in no uncertain terms that God still honours the work of those who honour Him in the Biblical substance of their teaching and the manner in which they teach it.

-Bob Thomas

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Africa: Christians Targeted From East to West

SECURITY is deteriorating rapidly for Christians along Africa's notorious ethnic-religious fault-line: roughly between the 5 to 10 degree north parallels. Genocidal Islamic jihad has displaced Christians in Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Nigeria, Mali and Ivory Coast.

Multitudes of predominantly Christian, ethnically southern Ivorian refugees feel forgotten. Displaced during the French-backed Islamic coup of April 2011, they remain desperate and vulnerable, unable to return home because their homes and farms have been occupied by pro-Ouattara supporters who are being protected by armed 'dozos' from the north. Appointed by Ouattara's Republican Forces (former 'rebels') to crack down on crime, 'dozos' are a 'brotherhood of initiated traditional hunters renowned for their mystical powers'.

Further to this, terrorist groups such as al-Shabaab in Somalia and Kenya, the Government of Sudan, Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria and eastern Mali and Ansar Dine in Northern Mali are targeting Christians continually. These groups are seeking at the very least the subjugation of Christians and in some places their total eradication. The jihadists receive support from Islamist governments and from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) which gets most of its funds from trafficking drugs, weapons and human beings.

Terror in Kenya

After Kenyan troops crossed into Somalia to fight al-Shabaab in October 2011 the Somalia-based jihadists threatened Kenya with 'a long, protracted war'. On Saturday evening 31 March militants believed to be from al-Shabaab hurled explosives into a prayer meeting in the coastal town of Mtwapa, just 16km from Mombasa. A woman and a nine-year-old boy were killed while around 30 others were wounded. On Sunday 29 April some 50 believers were worshipping in God's House of Miracles International Church in Nairobi when a militant simply walked in and hurled a bomb at the altar. 'I heard a blast and then around me everyone was covered in blood,' said Steven Mulinge, the church pianist. One person was killed while 15 others were treated in hospital for shrapnel wounds. Four victims with critical injuries have been transferred to Kenyatta National Hospital.

Terror In Nigeria

On Sunday 29 April believers worshipping at Bayero

University in the northern city of Kano were targeted by militants from Boko Haram. The jihadists attacked the open-air service outside the faculty of medicine, throwing explosive devices amongst the worshippers then chasing and shooting believers as they fled. They also attacked a worship service being held in the sporting complex, again throwing explosive devices amongst the believers who were then chased and gunned down as they fled. Twenty-one people were killed and more than 20 were treated in hospital for gunshot wounds. In an almost simultaneous attack, six Boko Haram gunmen burst into a Church of Christ in Nigeria chapel the northeast city of Maiduguri, spraying bullets throughout the sanctuary. Whilst the worshippers escaped with wounds but no fatalities, the pastor and three others who were preparing to serve communion were found dead in the sanctuary.

Please Pray Specifically That God Will:

- cut the lines of support that keep these jihadists armed and paid; may he sever relationships, smash networks, destroy trade and smuggling routes and remove key players so that the jihadists will be starved of resources. May the 'horns' [strength] of the wicked be cut off, and the 'horns' [strength] of the righteous be lifted up. (Psalm 75:10)
- intervene for the sake of his imperilled people to infuse wisdom, courage and commitment into fearful, reluctant, equivocating and short-sighted African governments. 'The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will.' (Proverbs 21:1 ESV)
- be a shield and provider for his displaced and frightened people; may he heal their wounds, shelter and protect them, provide their every need and increase their faith. (Psalm 18)

- Elizabeth Kendal, ASSIST News Service

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Human Rights At Forefront For China; Challenges Religious Rights

THE United States and China will hold a new round of talks on human rights. This comes against the backdrop of a diplomatic crisis generated when a Chinese dissident fled to the American embassy in Beijing and eventually asked to leave China for the U.S. Despite the circumstances, the next round of human rights talks is scheduled for this summer in Washington.

Even as it appears there's been headway in the human rights dialogue between the two nations, an earlier report surfaced from the China Aid Association (CAA) that seems to belie the promises.

According to CAA, China's government launched a three-phase campaign to eradicate Protestant house churches. A document released last fall by the State Administration for Religious Affairs showed the strategy was to spy out and document what they were doing, encourage affiliation with the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) and for those who refused to cooperate, and shut them down. That first phase began this year.

Carl Moeller, President and CEO of Open Doors USA, says, 'This is nothing new that the Chinese government finds problems with the house church. The Chinese government desires to have all Christians registered and all church activities controlled because, frankly, the Chinese government wants to control all things in commerce in public life as well as private life.'

The words house church would be banned and changed to house gatherings. This term would be used to identify groups meeting in sites affiliated with the TSPM. That boils down to breaking up the

mega churches into more manageable chunks.

However, Moeller explains, 'The Church in China started as small groups. The reason they got so big is because those small groups became so successful at penetrating all levels of Chinese society, and they were given more access, more freedom, really, to be able to meet and assemble together in larger and larger groups.' Over the next 10-years as this plan is phased in, Moeller expects to see that 'the church is just going to penetrate more layers of society, more parts of the country. It's the very same situation that happened when the Romans persecuted the early church.'

However, Rome's plan went awry. 'When they would break up their assemblies, people would leave different cities, people would move to new places and plant new churches. I really believe that that's another indication that the Chinese government will be facing a brand new wave of Christian revival if it braves this sort of persecution.'

In its statement, CAA asks, 'Humane law enforcement, long-term implementation, and 'united front' style registration: how will this ... impact house churches that are seeking a path to religious freedom?'

Moeller says it won't be easy, but that has never stopped the Gospel. 'We need to pray. We need to let [Chinese believers] know, through our prayers, that they're not alone. We need to use prayer as a catapult for our own action to do whatever it takes to provide whatever they need in these places: Bibles, encouragement, training, or sometimes, safe houses.'

- *Mission Network News*

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Australia Gears Up For National Day Of Thanksgiving: Sat 26 May

THE National Day of Thanksgiving is being creatively used to bless literally thousands of people by just one single act of saying 'thank you'. Take just these three stories as an illustration of that fact.

One large Christian employer has purchased ribbons and balloons to be used to say thank you to more than 3000 employees at gatherings in a number of offices and workplaces across their numerous locations. The NDOT and the Christian values it represents will be explained to all who receive this small but meaningful token of their employers appreciation.

Combined Churches in a local area are joining together to thank more than 800 workers employed by their local council in areas such as park and road maintenance, rubbish removal and recycling, together with office and other administrative staff employed or contracted by the council. Groups of Christians will distribute cards, ribbons and morning tea to different workplaces in the Council area. They are being encouraged in their endeavours by Council management (who will also be thanked at a special morning tea) who have said it is a great idea "as our staff never get thanked by the general public they seek to serve".

At the personal level we have heard of one lady who is planning to distribute mini thank you cards and a single flower to every household in her street to say thank you for the friendly neighbourhood

they have created which they all enjoy. There is no limit to the ways that NDOT can be used by individuals, through to large employers and Churches, to express the love of Christ and the spirit of goodwill to a needy world. All it takes is a small dose of initiative and a little bit of energy and you too could make a world of difference to lots of other people.

REMINDERS

*To purchase Thanksgiving Cards, ribbons or balloons go to Koorong. See www.thanksgiving.org.au for information about products.

*To order the promotional DVD write to info@thanksgiving.org.au

-National Day of Thanksgiving Newsletter

This Year's NDOT Focus

Local Government

We encourage you to thank not just Mayors and Councillors, but also Council staff and workers contracted by Councils, ie: waste disposal, recycling, parks and gardens, etc.

Chaplains

Chaplains are found in many different organisations like Hospitals, Schools, Industry, Police, Fire, Ambulance, SES, Sporting Bodies, Migrant Support Services.

MAF-AIR, BALLARAT CELEBRATES 50 YEARS (Continued from Page 1...)

Yes, the early years were tough, and Ballarat's climate did not make it any easier, especially for the engineers in the freezing hangar, and facilities were very basic for some time. Much of the equipment was manufactured by the engineers. The unusual mix of Commercial and Mission brought its own pressures on staff. However, for the next 40 years, hundreds of trainees passed through MAF-AIR and onto various M.A.F. Fields around the world, praise God! As the M.A.F. fleet increased, most of the major rebuilds and engine overhauls were done at Ballarat, easing the pressure on engineers on Field bases.

The comradeship of families working and living together at Ballarat Base was a precious part of fellowship, and good preparation for living in a compound in a Field situation. Those times were fondly remembered at the Reunion. Over the years,

families came from all over the world, heeding the Lord's call. In 2002 M.A.F. relocated the Engineering Home Base to Mareeba in North Queensland, and the Head Office to Cairns, in order to be closer to Field operations. Pilot training and some engineering training is now carried out at the Aust. Centre for Mission Aviation at Coldstream.

Staff at Ballarat could have understandably felt they were working 'behind the scenes' to get the pilots and engineers trained and orientated. So it was a special encouragement to hear a Testimony from a missionary whose life was saved by a M.A.F. medical flight, and she acknowledged the fact that because of the faithfulness of MAF-AIR staff and training, Field staff and aircraft were prepared and sent to the front line of missions, to spread the Gospel. The gathering concluded with the heartfelt singing of 'To God be the glory, great things He has done' – and is still continuing to do!

- Earle Greaves, former admin officer at MAF-AIR

Upcoming Event: SMBC To Hold Open Evenings & Mornings

THE Sydney Missionary and Bible College (SMBC) Open times are tailored specifically for people thinking about full or part-time study. You are more than welcome to attend any of the occasions listed below.

Alternatively, if these dates and times are not convenient, you are always welcome at SMBC. It is helpful outside open times if you make an appointment but is not essential. We look forward to meeting you.

OPEN EVENING

7PM, MONDAY 21 MAY 2012

Croydon Campus

43 Badminton Road, Croydon

SMBC IN THE SYDNEY CBD 11AM-2.30PM

WEDNESDAY 13 JUNE 2012,

Work in the city? Thinking about study-full or part-time? Drop in for an informal chat about study or any aspect of SMBC at the Westin Hotel (1 Martin Place Sydney) lobby -eastern end -anytime between 11am and 2.30pm with Stuart Coulton (Interim Vice-Principal), Anthony Brammall (Academic Vice-Principal) or Janet Riley (Dean of Women).

OPEN MORNING - 9.30AM, SATURDAY 4 AUGUST 2012, Croydon Campus

OPEN EVENING - 7PM, MONDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2012, Croydon Campus

OPEN MORNING - 9.30AM, SATURDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2012, Croydon Campus

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Government Breaks Promise To The World's Poor- Micah Challenge

MICAH Challenge is deeply disappointed that the Labor Government has broken its promise to allocate 50 cents in every \$100 of national income to overseas aid by 2015, in order to save \$2.9 billion over the next four years.

Aid contributions will remain at 0.35% GNI in the coming fiscal year, and will reach 0.5% in 2016- 17, a year later than promised.

'We are deeply disappointed that the government has reneged on its commitment to the 0.5% GNI target,' said the Rev Paul Perini, Chairperson for Micah Challenge and Anglican Minister. 'Not only is it a broken promise, but it has real impact on people's lives. Keeping the promise in full and on time would have saved at least 800,000 lives in four years. By breaking the promise, we will be saving 250,000 fewer lives over that time.'

The promise to increase Australia's overseas aid to 0.5% of GNI was made by the Labor Government before the 2007 election and reaffirmed in 2010. The commitment is also supported by the Opposition.

'However, information we received from AusAID officials suggested that cuts would have been much deeper without the sustained campaigning of concerned Australians in the budget lead up,' said Mr Perini.

The government and AusAID have been working hard to make aid more transparent, accountable and effective, particularly through the Independent Aid Review and the newly announced Comprehensive Aid Policy Framework. The Framework will help determine where Australian aid will be spent over the next four years, what results will be achieved

and how they will be measured.

'We know that aid works. Australian aid is on a solid footing to reduce poverty and help achieve the Millennium Development Goals,' said DJ Konz, a member of Micah Challenge's National Steering Committee.

According to the UN, over the past 20 years about 14,000 lives a day have been saved by well-targeted government aid money from the world's wealthiest economies. This is a total of approximately 202 million people who are alive and contributing to their communities and economies. 'We are disappointed that the government has decided not to build on this work in the coming fiscal year to keep its promise to Australia and to the world's poor,' said Mr Konz.

'The Bible says we - authorities and individuals - are to defend the rights of the poor and needy. We believe the government has failed to uphold the cause of those in poverty through this decision; however, we remain hopeful that an increased commitment to the world's poor can be achieved in the coming years.'

Micah Challenge calls upon Tony Abbott to ensure the 0.5% target is met by 2015 if the Coalition forms Government at the next election.

Micah Challenge is a global movement of Christians speaking out against poverty and injustice in support of the Millennium Development Goals. In Australia, more than 50 aid and development agencies, as well as churches, schools, groups and individual Christians endorse the campaign. See www.micahchallenge.org.au.

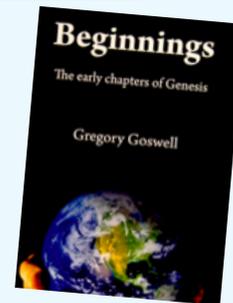
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Event Wrap Up: Will Graham Brings Reality To Orange



WILL Graham, the grandson of world-famous US Evangelist Billy Graham, has just finished the first series of Reality events in the central-west city of Orange in New South Wales. Orange has a population of just

under 40,000.

Organised by a local committee, chaired by Graham McLennan, Reality Orange saw 17 local churches working together. 'It's been a great response. The Christian Life and Witness classes, which were run earlier in the year, were excellent. Five hundred people attended and that was what brought all of us together,' Graham said. 'We were also encouraged to specifically invite people whom we knew to come and hear Will Graham preach under the Operation Andrew program,' he said.

The weekend kicked off with a luncheon at the Orange Ex-Services club last Friday (May 4th) attended by the Mayor of Orange, John Davis and the Member for Orange in the NSW Legislative Assembly, Andrew Gee.

They were joined by 200 guests who heard host Karl Faase interview former radio broadcaster Stephen O'Doherty about coming to faith. Will Graham then spoke about his grandfather and how he was called to preach, before bringing an evangelistic message.

The remainder of the weekend's events were held in the Orange Function Centre. The youth night on Friday night featured well known bands 'Jonnday' and 'Compliments of Gus.'

Families were invited to the Saturday night event which featured children's entertainers 'The Toads' and an interview with Home and Away actor, Lynne McGranger, who spoke about her Christian faith.

At each event, Will Graham spoke about faith in Christ and the importance of making a personal commitment. At the conclusion, Will invited people to come forward as a sign of their willingness to make their decision to follow Jesus.

The weekend ended with a Sunday afternoon meeting which featured an interview with Kate Bracks, winner of the television reality show, MasterChef in 2011. A resident of Orange, Kate spoke

about her search for 'something to believe in' and then how she had committed her life to Christ in her early 20's.

Each of the live events in the Orange Function Centre were webcast via the internet around the world.

A total of 711 places watched the webcasts over the weekend, including in India and Ireland. The Orange Sudanese community met in a local home with ten counseling packs provided by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. The local Korean community were invited to watch the webcast at the Orange Prayer House with the Chinese community hearing Will's message in a local church. (The webcasts can be seen at: <http://reality2012.org/>) Attendance for the three days was 2,200 with 127 people responding to Will's invitation.

Orange Reality committee member Bruce Bennett said the weekend was a great success. 'The numbers who attended, the quality of the artists who performed and the enormous volunteer effort



was nothing short of fantastic. It must also be said that Will Graham himself, both as a speaker and as a person, was a breath of fresh air. He brought a simplicity and transparency to both his message and his manner, that made it hard not to like him,' said Bruce.

'It was also hard to miss his simple message about the need to get real about Jesus,' he added.

- Jorge Rodrigues

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Bible League International In Australia Appoints New Chief Executive

THE Australian arm of Bible League International has announced the appointment of Mr Tony McLennan as the new Chief Executive Officer.

Mr McLennan's appointment comes at a time of transition for the Bible League, which is working to develop its outstanding ministry as a Christian Service Organisation.

Tony McLennan comes to the Bible League with extensive business and christian ministry experience, having served 25 years as a senior executive with corporations and non-profit organisations in Australia and overseas.

Most recently, Tony worked as Head of Distribution for a sustainable investments fund run by one of Sydney's leading private equity firms.

Tony graduated from the Royal Military College Duntroon as a commissioned officer. He served 10 years in the Australian Army and a further six years in evangelistic ministry before commencing his business career.

Tony's ministry activities have always included strong evangelistic initiatives, along with the distribution of Bibles.

Whilst maintaining full-time involvement in the corporate world, Tony has helped build the profile of Business Alpha (Alpha at Work) as the Business Alpha National Co-ordinator.

Chairman of the Board of Bible League International in Australia, Mr Dirk Reitsma, says the broad scope of Tony's business and christian ministry positions and projects will be of great benefit to Bible League.

'We are confident Tony will help Bible League In-



ternational to continue to grow within Australia so it can move forward in its vital ministry, distributing Bibles and scripture materials to marginalised people, the poor and persecuted Christians in many countries,' says Mr Reitsma.

'Tony's high energy and versatility are evidenced by his ability to take deliberate action and to achieve results.

'The Board and staff of Bible League are keenly looking forward to working with Tony.'

Tony pays tribute to his predecessor Grahame Smith, who is now assuming the role of Chief Operating Officer, Asia Pacific and Africa, and reporting directly to the global CEO of Bible League International.

'Grahame has left Bible League in Australia in a healthy position with a magnificent team,' he says. "This augurs well for the Bible League's continued growth and service to millions of people worldwide."

- Lindsay Fisher

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A Heart For Mission - Kate Pocklington

KATE, a delightful 39 year old woman and a third generation missionary, is passionate about reaching unsaved people groups for the Lord. There are about 6,000 groups in the world untouched by the gospel; 2,300 of these groups are in India where Kate served with "Pioneers" for over 8 years.

She was born in Melbourne, but at the age of two, her parents, Robin and Jan Pocklington, moved to the Philippines with "Send International". Her primary education was in Manila. At the age of five, she became aware of God's love for her. Aged ten, she felt a distinct call to serve her Lord on the mission field. This calling was reinforced by a photo in her bedroom of her beloved grandmother as a missionary in Ethiopia.



On returning to Melbourne at the age of twelve Kate made a full commitment to the Lord at a Bill Newman Crusade. She studied at Bible College of Victoria in preparation for overseas ministry. After graduating, she had the opportunity for further studies at Asbury Theological Seminary, Kentucky, USA, for three years, receiving MA in Biblical Studies and MA in Inter-cultural Studies.

Nine years ago Kate joined "Pioneers" working with a team of women in New Delhi. Gradually they earned the trust of some women in one of the poorest slums. They visited daily, teaching them to read and write. An "Income Generating Project" was established, teaching the women to make cards and jewellery for sale. This in turn, gave them a small income. As Kate and the other missionaries, worked with these poor Indian women, listened to their problems and prayed for them, the way was open to introduce them to Jesus. The women began to feel safe and loved within the group. This year a church has been planted in that slum.

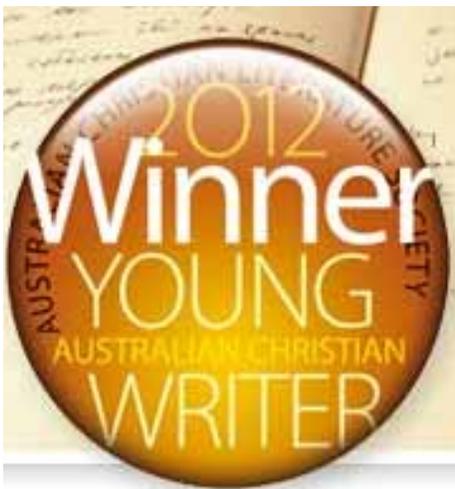
Kate has been back in Melbourne for 12 months. She is still a missionary with "Pioneers". Now she works in the Blackburn office, helping prepare people for inter-cultural ministry and overseas service. Her job involves facilitating learning, growth and development in candidates with "Pioneers"

Kate is also a member of the Belgrave Heights Convention committee. Her friendly and intimate style is always welcome when she leads a meeting at the convention. Kate is available to speak at churches, or small groups, as a representative of "Pioneers". Check the web page for further details.

- Mrs DP

CALLING ALL YOUNG CHRISTIAN WRITERS

Do you know a creative teen or budding young writer? This could be their time to shine!



THE Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge Australia Inc. (SPCKA) loves to discover and encourage new writers of all ages and the Young Australian Christian Writer and Christian Teen Writer Awards are a great opportunity to unearth new talent.

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Important information

Entry Forms can be found at: www.spcka.org.au. Entries for this year's awards close on 31 May!

You can also follow the Australian Christian Literature Awards on Facebook

Burma Reforms Offer No Respite For Ethnic Christians

COMPASS Direct News (CDN) is reporting that amid global euphoria over reforms in the Burman-majority parts of Burma, life has changed little for more than 3 million Christians and other minorities left to suffer from one of the world's longest running civil wars.

CDN says that headlines around the world hailed the induction on Wednesday (May 2) of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi into parliament as the beginning of a new era in Burma, officially known as Myanmar.

But for the 150,000 Internally Displaced People (IDP) living in eastern Karen state's 4,000 IDP camps, life is still about landmine blasts, gun and mortar attacks, and the possibility of a final war between armed insurgents and the Burma army. 'As part of its reform initiatives, the Burmese government is trying to ink ceasefire agreements with armed ethnic groups,' the CDN story continues. 'Karen rebels, however, believe the talks are a government strategy to buy time and prepare for a showdown.

'Saw Htee Ler, a rebel leader with the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), the armed wing of the Karen National Union (KNU), said the government strategy is to engage the KNU in peace talks so that the military can bring supplies - arms, ammunition and food - into KNU-controlled areas without clashes.'

Ler said military personnel target civilians be-

cause they are seen as the strength of the KNU. 'And Christians are targeted simply because their [government troops'] religion is Buddhist,' he said. Aw John Nay Moo, a commando from the KNLA's Special Force, agreed that Christian civilians were attacked more than Buddhist civilians.

He cited a 2007 incident in Pekey Der village in Papu District under the KNLA Brigade 5 area, where troops burned down a church and 'defecated on the Bible.'

Note from Dan Wooding

Some years ago, along with a colleague, I crossed illegally into Burma from Thailand to meet with Karen soldiers and Christians. It was a strange situation, as the soldiers all had New Testaments tucked in their uniforms and were holding rifles. Their leader, a man called Gideon, said that we could not interview him and some of the soldiers until we proved that we were Bible-believing Christians. So both of us gave our testimonies and once they were satisfied that we were indeed Christians, they talked with us and took us to meet with some of the persecuted believers of Karen State. The ongoing armed conflict in Burma, which began in 1949, constitutes the longest-running civil war in the world with the Karen people still fighting to retain their unique way of life, which includes a practicing their faith as Baptists and other Christians. For more information, please go to: www.compassdirect.org.

- Dan Wooding

SUDAN: Escalating Conflict Leaves Christians In Peril

Christians in Sudan and South Sudan are facing increasing danger as the threat of war mounts. Fierce clashes during April were described as the worst fighting since South Sudan gained independence in July 2011. The UN Security Council has expressed its 'deep and growing alarm' over the 'escalating conflict' and has called for an end to aerial bombardments by Sudanese forces.

On 22 April, the African Union (AU) called on Sudan and South Sudan to abide by a plan that requires both parties to pull their forces out of the disputed border region. The hostility between the two nations has left thousands of people of Southern origin, who are mainly Christian, in a state of limbo (see April Prayer Focus Update).

Pray for all those who have been left in a state of limbo without official citizenship of either country,

and pray that the Lord will protect His people in both Sudan and South Sudan from violent attack.

SYRIA: Christians Suffer As Violence Continues

Despite a UN-brokered ceasefire, the Christian community is still suffering enormous distress as the conflict rages on between supporters and opponents of President Bashar Assad. The churches have not come out publicly for either side, but the opposition thinks that they support Assad and so is hostile towards them. A strongly Islamist element is prepared to attack them simply for being Christians. Parallels are being drawn with Iraq, where the descent into violence and chaos in the last decade has virtually wiped out its churches. The same destructive process seems to be beginning in Syria. A church leader said, 'I am not very optimistic that our Christian community will survive.' Please pray for protection of Christians and Church leaders.

- Barnabas Fund

Obstacles Won't Stop The Gospel From Reaching Hearts In Manipur, India

A new opportunity is opening up in Northeast India. The Meitei are a unique people with one language, but two religions. The majority are Hindu, but there are also Muslims, according to the Joshua Project.

It's also a people known for their resistance to change, particularly in the area of religion. Traditional forms of evangelism don't do well because outsiders are distrusted, and the fear of isolation prevents others from hearing the Gospel.

However, that's slowly changing. In 2007, Bibles For the World shared that they helped place a Meitei-speaking pastor and an evangelist in the community. A number of small churches have been successfully planted among the Meitei by the indigenous church leaders.

There's also a new audience opening the doors for the hope of Christ...behind bars. Mawii Pudaite with Bibles For the World says, 'Dr. Pudaite and I received a letter from one of our national workers in India, telling us that his wife, who is a nurse, is in urgent need of at least 200 Meitei Bibles or New Testaments for the inmates of the prison in which she is working.'

Vocational Training Key To The Hearts Of Young People In Ukraine and India

Human trafficking, prostitution, drugs, and organized crime are all issues facing young people around the world. For the countries of India and Ukraine, God is using one ministry to make a difference in the lives of young people.

In part three of our five-part series on the ministry of Global Action, we're focusing on their vocational training for young people in India and Ukraine.

President of Global Action Phil Long says the program came about after observing at-risk young people in Ukraine. 'We saw thousands of young people--especially young women--going into prostitution, or being sold into prostitution, or being trafficked into sexual trade. So we began to look into that and asked, 'Why is that happening?' It came down to economics.'

That's why Global Action started The Dream Project. Long says, 'If we can keep them from getting started in that in the first place by providing something else for them to do to bring in an income, we wouldn't have thousands of people going into those dark areas.' Long says, 'We have a training center in the Ukraine, in Eastern Europe. And we have sev-

eral training centers in Northern India.'

It all started with an inmate who read the Bible and turned his life over to Christ two years ago. Since then, he's become a different person and has been sharing his hope with other inmates who are asking for Bibles.

According to Pudaite, the husband and wife searched for Meitei Bibles or New Testaments, but they ran into trouble. Although Scripture resources exist in the Meitei language, the couple could not find them in their city.

They turned to Bibles For the World for help. Ordinarily, that's a great request, except another obstacle came up, says Pudaite. 'A few years back, we printed the N.T. in the Meitei language and had given out all of them. Our urgent need is to print as quickly as possible at least 10,000 copies of the New Testament.'

A reprint costs \$22,500. Someone gave seed money for the project, but the ministry needs to raise \$21,000 more to go to press as soon as possible.

Pray that God will cause seeds of the Gospel to grow and provide resources to reprint the New Testament in Meitei.

-Mission Network News Online

eral training centers in Northern India.'

Long says The Dream Project not only teaches them a vacation, it also teaches them about Christ. Are they committing their hearts to Christ? 'We have seen a large percentage of these girls come to know Christ because they've gone through this program. It's not necessarily by what we teach them in the program, but by the lives of the people that they work with from our organization.'

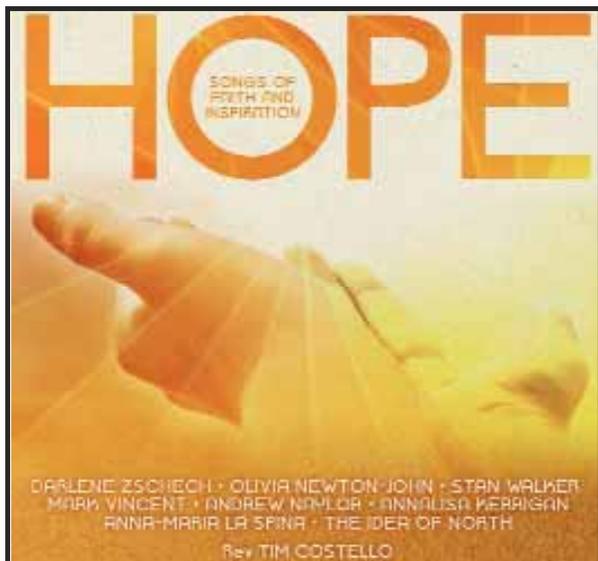
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You're welcome at 'The Faith Factory' – a Friendly, Caring, Bible-Believing Christian Fellowship

Aussie Singers Band Together To Bring Hope



IT'S all about Hope. Songs that inspire us to have it.

Hope: Songs Of Faith And Inspiration is an uplifting album of 12 songs from some of the country's biggest names in music – Olivia Newton-John, Stan Walker, Mark Vincent, Darlene Zschech, Annalisa Kerrigan, The Idea Of North, Anna-Maria La Spina and Andrew Naylor. Most of them are Christian.

Rev Tim Costello bookends the project with reflections on hope.

The album debuted at number 46 on the ARIA top 50 best selling albums chart last month and is a partnership of ABC Music, Universal Music and World Vision. Part proceeds from the sale of the album go to the international aid organisation.

Co-producer, Andrew Hagger says that each of the artists involved in the project has known trials and difficulties, but each one has found hope either through

faith in God or their desire for things to get better.

'For this reason,' he says, 'the album reflects a diverse range of musical styles from easy listening pop hits - Ever Lifted, Isn't It Amazing, and Angel; to gospel tunes - People Get Ready and My Help; modern worship songs - My Hope and Glory To God; and traditional hymns – Be Thou My Vision, When I Survey the Wondrous Cross, Holy Holy Holy, Love Divine, and The Lord Is My Shepherd.

'Each of the songs - personally chosen by the artists - reflects their own journey finding hope. Hope is for everybody, and we're already finding people from all walks of life are loving this album,' Hagger adds.

Hope: Songs Of Faith And Inspiration is available at Christian and mainstream record retailers, as well as online.

-Wes Jay, Woodlands Media

Walk With Us: Where Will Your Feet Take You?

IMAGINE you are deaf and are hearing the good news for the first time, what an awesome thing! One in seven people living in the town where R* serves in Eurasia are deaf. What's exciting is that R and people at her church are reaching the local deaf community in a big way.

It started with one woman, Eva*, learning sign language. Eva struggled to learn the language and nearly gave up – until a deaf boy named Max helped her. A year later, Max became a believer. He was the first deaf person at the church. Then he told all his classmates.

'He was spreading the Word of God and through him the deaf started coming along to church. I am so thankful to Max, through whom it all began,' says Andrei*, one of Max's classmates.

R has served at Eva's church through CMS since 2008. She disciples many deaf young people, a lot from Muslim backgrounds. Many deaf people now attend the church, and numbers are growing.

How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news! Be inspired to support mission through CMS Beautiful Feet Sunday on 3 June 2012 or a Sunday near this that suits. To discover how you and your church can be involved contact Betty Benn on bbenn@cms.org.au or telephone 07 3112 6530.

*Eva and Andrei's names have been changed to protect identity.

- Sharon Tidswell, CMS QLD with Northern NSW

“How will they hear?”

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Something to think about...

'A major task of the Church is to make disciples, which means she guides us in the pursuit of holiness, the central call of every serious Christian...Of late, the Church has not done a good job of demonstrating holiness...The hard truth is that too many see Christianity in terms of self-improvement or as a guide to successful living; the command to holiness, the impetus for such change, is too often ignored.'

-Chuck Colson, The Faith

GOSPEL CLARITY: CHALLENGING THE NEW PERSPECTIVE ON PAUL, William B. Barclay with Ligon Duncan (Darlington: EP, 2010)

YOU may well have heard about the 'New Perspective on Paul' (NPP) and are wondering what it is all about and whether the debate over Paul's theology matters. Well, yes, it does matter, and Drs Barclay and Duncan as skilled pastor-scholars are adept at explaining this key issue in a way that ordinary Christians can understand and come to a sensible judgment. Of course, a book of this size (only 190 pages) cannot be a definitive refutation of the NPP, nor does it claim to be that, rather what it does set out to do (and I believe achieves) is a popular-level explanation and critical evaluation of the NPP.

Proponents of the NPP argue that Luther and the other Reformers misread Paul, because they read him as being involved in the same kind of struggle against works-righteousness and legalism as they were in their critique of Medieval Roman Catholicism. In the process, the NPP ends up redefining the gospel, grace and justification in ways incompatible with traditional Evangelical Christianity. As pointed out by Barclay and Duncan, the NPP provides a very different answer to the cry of the Philippian gaoler, 'What must I do to be saved?'

The authors start by giving a clear and even-handed survey of the views of the NPP that represents a formidable challenge to the traditional Protestant understanding of Paul and his gospel. How can the NPP edifice of error be dismantled? The place to begin is by showing that the Damascus Road encounter with the risen Christ did result in Paul's conversion, not just his commission as apostle to the Gentiles. Indeed, he was both converted and commissioned by Jesus. Promoters of the NPP are incorrect when they only allow the second, making Paul's encounter with Christ less significant than it really was for him and for the message he preached.

Contrary to the NPP (that depends on the analysis of first-century Judaism by E. P. Sanders), the authors show that Paul was battling against Jewish legalism, as did Jesus before him (e.g. his strong criticisms of the Pharisees in Matthew 23). So too, we must part company with the NPP over Paul's view of the Old Testament law, insisting that the law points forward to Christ (the so-called 'second use' of the law), so that the Old Testament sacrifices were not atoning, but instead pointed forward to the sacrifice of Christ that alone takes away sin.

Barclay and Duncan specifically address and find fault with James Dunn's understanding of the Pauline phrase 'the works of the law'. They correct Tom Wright's aberrant doctrine of justification, with Wright viewing this doctrine as about the

church (who is the people of God) rather than about salvation (how to be right with God). The real problem is the dichotomy in Wright's thinking (his either-or), whereas the biblical doctrine of justification concerns both our restoration to right relationship with God and (because of this) the gathering of the one people of God.

Wright's narrative approach oversimplifies the Bible storyline and results in a reductionist view of the biblical covenants, most notably his fails to properly assess the Mosaic (Sinai) covenant. If the doctrine of justification lies at the heart of the gospel (and it does if you read Paul's Letter to the Galatians), then Wright's redefinition of justification can be said to threaten the clarity of the gospel, and even the gospel itself, for he reduces God's righteousness to covenant faithfulness (denying its moral dimension) and he rejects the imputation of Christ's righteousness to be believer, and says that final justification is according to works. All this comes close to the Semi-Pelagianism of traditional Roman Catholic teaching. Barclay and Duncan are right to urge their readers to be on their guard, for nothing is more important than that the clarity and truth of the gospel be preserved.

The other vital matter, of course, is Christian charity, and Barclay and Duncan do not right off their opponents, giving credit where credit is due, for example expressing approval of the strong NPP emphasis on covenant theology, their concern to relate the Old Testament and New Testament, their many fine exegetical insights, and their defense of the bodily resurrection of Jesus. Here, then, is a book that will assist its readers to be crystal clear about the faith once delivered to the saints

-Greg Goswell

