

Wesley Mission Celebrates 200 Years Of Methodism In Australia

ONE of the earliest meetings of Methodists in New South Wales had its sequel on Sunday 15 July when almost 2,000 supporters, donors, volunteers and staff of Wesley Mission marched through the streets of Sydney and gave thanks to God at the State Theatre for the past 200 years of Methodism in Australia.

Celebrate 200 also drew the participation of key church, political and community leaders.

The Sydney Town Crier, Graham Keating, called the crowd to order at Martin Place following a re-enactment of the first meeting of Methodists in the colony – of Edward Eagar, who had been transported to Australia, Thomas Bowden and John Hosking – who gathered at The Rocks on 6 March, 1812 to seek God's guidance for the future of Methodist leadership and growth in the new colony.

More than 750 Wesley Mission supporters, congregation members and staff then marched to the State Theatre in Market Street to join a large audience already gathered and to give public witness to the legacy of the founding faith of Wesley Mission.

At the State Theatre the audience sang rousing hymns and Christian songs and watched inspiring video presentations of Wesley Mission's contemporary work. Professional drama brought to life the early beginnings of Methodism in Australia which resulted in the Rev Samuel Leigh arriving in Australia in 1815.

The audience also heard from several keynote speakers who addressed the topics of advocacy, innovation, hope and faith – themes which have given impetus to the life of Wesley Mission.

The Superintendent and CEO of Wesley Mission, the Rev Dr Keith Garner, said the day helped to make a clear connection with the history of Wesley Mission.

'We have a strong link with those early Methodists



Photo courtesy Wesley Mission

who helped shape a church that in turn gave birth to what we now know as Wesley Mission,' Dr Garner said. 'The world has seldom seen a more extraordinary group of Christian men and women than those early Methodist preachers.

'Who could have imagined that such a harvest would have been reaped from the prayers of three people? The results have been seen in the Methodist Church throughout Australia and further mission work across our region, but significantly at Wesley Mission.'

Dr Garner also noted that while Wesley Mission celebrated, it had to 'take hold of the challenges of the future', particularly in the areas of mental health, homelessness, poverty and aged care.

He also counselled that advocacy remain a core part of the work of Wesley Mission. Wesley Mission had a heritage that had seen it advocate on key issues such as the use of Sunday and days of Christian observance, the dangers of alcohol and other drugs, the White Australia policy, Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War, the continuing obsession with gambling, and the importance of the family.

'Ours is a distinctive story of faith ... on the cutting edge of delivering services to some of the most marginalised in our community,' he said.

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TO THE POINT ...

Christianity's Strong Role Undergirding The Olympic Games

THE opening ceremony of the Olympics was spectacular! TV highlights are emphasising the history – England's green and pleasant land transformed by the industrial revolution; the humour – James Bond and the Queen apparently parachuting into the stadium, and Mr Bean playing his part in *Chariots Of Fire*; the health service – a feature on the caring side of Britain's character; the horror of the 7/7 bombings in 2005 – the memory of those who died then, and the overcoming of evil (Harry Potter) by good (Mary Poppins) etc.

But I want to emphasise the 5th 'h' – the hymns. Three hymns were sung during the ceremony – *God Save The Queen*, *Guide Me Oh My Great Redeemer*, and *Abide With Me*, and music only of a fourth – *Good Christian Men Rejoice*. Then there was the *Chariots Of Fire* theme tune played by the London Symphony Orchestra, helped (?) by Rowan Atkinson.

To have this Christian component was amazing! The prayer coverage in advance of this event has also been truly amazing. A cascade of prayer and praise has accompanied the Olympic torch on its epic journey – a praise bus travelled the entire route ahead of the torch relay (the Methodists from Cornwall pioneered this), a Prayer Baton was passed with prayers to and from every overnight stopping place for the torch. I attended the Maidstone hand-over at an open air prayer service outside the Town Hall last week, with over 300 Christians. Then finally there was viral 7.14 prayer gathering in most places at 7.14 each evening during the run – and there was prayer across the country as bells were rung throughout the land at 8.12 yesterday morning.

Two of our Interprayer colleagues – Nick & Linda – are chaplains for the athletes. 1,000 Games Pastors have been welcoming people at stations, airport and ports and helping people find their way to wherever they need to go. Christians have been providing home-stay accommodation for athletes families across the UK. And 13 British based drama groups have been rehearsing at YWAM Harpenden with overseas teams for putting on events across the country during the Olympics.

So, greetings from an Olympics-soaked Great Britain. More prayer and witness events across the country, involving more than 3,000 churches, will take place throughout the next few weeks. We are praying for the manifestation of the presence of God across the land and for divine encounters with Him on the streets. Please join us in praying for this.

– Daniel Willis, Executive Director, Global Impact

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WEA Leader Calls For Peace Between Religions

UNFORTUNATELY, violence perpetrated by those who have hijacked their faith occurs on almost a daily basis.

The Islamist terror group Boko Haram has killed hundreds of Christians in northern Nigeria since 2009. The killings have escalated in recent months, and security forces have clearly failed to protect lives, forcing hundreds to flee for safety. In August, al-Shabaab from Somalia attacked two churches in Kenya leaving 17 people dead and scores of people injured, including women and children.

However, attacks are taking place against Muslims as well, with an Islamic Centre in Missouri being torched. Earlier this year a mosque in Queens was firebombed.

Whether deaths occurred or not, all these acts of violence need to be condemned by all faith leaders, specifically by Moslem and Christian leaders.

The world needs peace, and members of the two biggest world religions need to play a major role in defining the future of the world. If we promote war and strife in our lives and teaching, then violence and bloodshed will follow; if we advocate peace and justice, lives will be saved.

Let there be no doubt that as Christians, we want to live in peace with Muslims and with all men and women in this world. This is intrinsic to our religion from its founding, even though we have not and do not always consistently practise what God and our written revelation commands us. We regret the actions of Christians in the past and in the present whose actions have not or do not match the teachings and examples of Jesus.

Jesus commands us in Matthew 5:9-11: 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.' In Luke 10:5, Jesus commands us: 'When you enter a house, first say, "Peace to this house".' And Jesus' brother James rightly echoes his brother's words when he says: 'Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.' (3:18). **So be assured, that we support any effort that would promote peace in places where Muslims and Christians live together in the same countries throughout the world.**

If we want to live in peace in these countries, we cannot wait until we have solved all our theological

problems. Justice and freedom of religion are a crucial part of the peace that we all desire. No country in the world at any time in history has achieved peace between religions through those religions agreeing on all differences between them and by uniting.

Even within our religious communities, it is obvious that we cannot agree in detail between the different theological schools. The differences between Sunni and Shiite Islam, or Protestant, Orthodox, and Catholic Christianity readily come to mind. Wherever those differing schools are able to live peacefully together in one state, it is not because they have agreed on everything, but because either the state forces them to live in peace (which is rarely a lasting solution) or because they themselves have decided to leave their differences in the realm of theology and conviction.

We must acknowledge that religious freedom is a basic human right for everybody, especially for those that err from our point of view. The true test of religious freedom is not how we treat those who agree with us, but how we treat those with whom we differ. **The World Evangelical Alliance that serves a worldwide family of 650 million Christians, at the last General Assembly unanimously passed a statement on Religious Freedom. The following three statements extracted from the document are particularly relevant:**

- The WEA affirms religious freedom to exercise any or no religion as defined by the relevant declarations of the United Nations. The right to religious freedom is indivisible and cannot be claimed for one particular group only to the exclusion of others.
- The WEA therefore aims to work collaboratively with all who share its goals of supporting religious freedom, be it political powers or representatives of other or no religions. The WEA affirms the intention of Christians to live together peacefully with adherents of other or no religions and to work together for the common good and reconciliation.
- The WEA differentiates between advocating the rights of members of other or no religions and endorsing the truth of their beliefs. Advocating the freedom of others can be done without accepting the truth of what they believe.

Unfortunately, there are some who believe that building bridges between the different faith communities is of no use whatsoever, that it is 'meeting with the enemy and (we) should stay away from them'.

(Continued on page 6)

London's Christian Community Gets Ready For Olympics

LONDON is awash with Christian ministry engagements with numerous Christian groups ministering across the city and throughout the British Isles. This is a rundown of some of the main players:

Lay Witnesses For Christ International

Dr Sam Mings, President of Lay Witnesses for Christ International, and his team of former Olympians known as 'Chaplains to the World's Olympians' have been engaged in Olympic ministry since Los Angeles in 1984. Their *Bridging The Gap 2012 UK Outreach* ministry headquarters in London is at the largest church in London, right in the centre of the Olympic hub, the Kingsway International Christian Centre, a congregation of 12,000 people.

This ministry, whose networking is astonishing, is highly Olympic focused. They have a significant Global media presence and their major engagements are *Evenings With The Stars (Olympians)* throughout London in large church venues.

Each Olympic host city is required to provide a multi faith centre (religious services) and these cover the five major world religions. Protocols are obviously important in such a setting and they are carefully adhered to. Nonetheless the Christian chaplains in each host city are made up of a local component and an international contingent, regulars at each Olympics.

Bible Society

Bible Society says that around 3,000 copies of commemorative English-language Scriptures are available as a welcome gift in the Olympic Village Religious Services Centre. There will also be nearly 1,000 copies of Bibles and New Testaments available in a variety of other languages through partnerships with national Bible Societies around the globe.

More Than Gold

The *More Than Gold* ministry during these London Olympics has a wide range of church and community activities such as sports clinics, and their web site is full of ministry ideas and engagements (www.morethangold.org.uk)



They have people on board their ministry with cups of water for Olympic visitors and what might be referred to as 'street chaplains' to welcome people to London and help visitors find their way around. Should you be in London during these Olympics and you come across *More Than Gold* personnel, make yourself known as a follower of Jesus and you will be certain to get a warm greeting and bountiful responses.

The Olympics Bring The World Together

There is no other international event that brings the world together in such a way as does an Olympic Games. It is a world gala event which encapsulates the nations of the world in sport, politics, economics, culture, benevolency and religion. It provides a platform for evangelism and in this, we are delighted and rejoice in the Lord.

Prayer is the secret ingredient in any evangelism and for Olympic ministry it is particularly important as the world comes together in goodwill. Enjoy London 2012 whether you are there or simply watching it on television, the Internet or wherever.

– Dr Mark Tronson,

author, journalist and retired Baptist minister.

He may be contacted at: mark.tronson@bigpond.com

Special to ASSIST News Service

A Word Of Explanation:

WE have been advised that Youcef Nadarkhani, who has been referred to in *New Life* as suffering persecution at the hands of the Iranian regime, is not an Evangelical. He has been reported in both the secular and Christian media to be under a death sentence for his conversion from Islam to evangelical Christianity. He was arrested on 12 October 2009, in the city of Rasht in the northern part of Iran, where he had been the pastor of the underground church there. He is reported to be the evangelical pastor of 'the Church of Iran'. However, 'Pastor' Nadarkhani is actually one of the leaders of a growing cult in Iran, which is linked with the Oneness Pentecostalism (Jesus Only) cult, which is non-Trinitarian, believes in baptismal regeneration, and is very closely linked to and supported by the United Pentecostal Churches outside of Iran. They greatly admire and follow the teachings of an American preacher, William M. Branham, who claimed to be the last of God's prophets on Earth, that the doctrine of the Trinity is from the devil, and only those who are baptised in Jesus' name are saved.

We are concerned for the safety and welfare of this man, but to our prayers for him and those who despitely use him we must add prayers for his true conversion into the faith in all its fullness.

How We Brought The Good News From A To Z

EACH year the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian – Zambia Synod plans to preach evangelistically in a different village of rural Zambia. They regularly ask John Wilson of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria to join them and help train the team of evangelists. This year's evangelistic crusade was conducted for the Kabwe congregation, halfway between Lusaka, Zambia's capital, and Kitwe in the Copper Belt to the north. John reports:

Kabwe CCAP doesn't have a church building, so we arrived in the dark to find a rickety stage erected on the church plot – a field in a remote village connected with the city of Kabwe. No shelter, no structure ... just a stage with dangling lights and a PA system powered through a 100m electric wire running across the dirt to its source in a neighbour's home. An energetic youth choir from Lusaka sweetened the night air.

Each morning, under the blazing Zambian sun, with wind in the face and dust in the eyes, we met for 3½ hours of team training. On a typical morning, I preached twice and the team kicked-in with hour-long training seminars in between (John and Sue Steendam, Dean and Sandy Carroll). I felt amazing liberty to teach throughout all my messages with constant eye contact and I do believe that we were making a difference to these dedicated church members lives, together with the evangelistic team from Lusaka. They were all fully attentive despite the difficult circumstances of sitting in the full sun.

After a brief respite back at the motel, we gathered each afternoon at the market place to preach to the crowds. Picture in your mind the poorest, dustiest, noisiest market place – where chaos reigns and people's eyes are pleading with you to buy their tomatoes before sunset. And there's chicken cut into pieces, just lying there on a board exposed to heat and flies and dust. How quickly I become vegetarian here! Streets leading nowhere, lean-to shelters for shops, yoked mules for transport. Noisy ... busy ... 1st Century stuff ... chaos!

This is the poorest village attached to this poor, economically damaged and Satanist-stronghold city of Kabwe. But that's where the Presbyterians set up so that's where I preach. No stage, no lectern, nothing familiar – just preach to the crowds and pray for the Holy Spirit to do His wonderful



Sue Steendam brings the Word.

work ('The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.'). Our churches back home were praying. I knew that, and was strengthened for the task.

Though already tired from the morning sessions, I gathered up strength and focused on nothing else at that moment but this one thing – that I might faithfully preach the Gospel so that my Lord and God would be pleased with the presentation and would honour a faithful presentation with effect on souls. It was as if I had an audience of one ('... in Christ we speak before God with sincerity.')

My aim was to preach from the miracle of the loaves and fishes and develop it toward the self-disclosure statement of Jesus 'I AM the bread of life ...' and then call people to repent and believe. I preached for about an hour (translated). It was hard going at first ... I felt the inattention of the market crowd and the noise of the children. I felt my words were like limp fish dropping from my mouth. And the drunk man interrupting didn't help! Thoughts wouldn't flow. Then I introduced a pre-determined drama and had Dean rush up to me as 'the boy in the crowd' who offered to Jesus the loaves and fishes. Well ... Africans love drama. Sensing I had their attention we held the drama as long as we could with very lame ham-acting. Children gathered and were silent. The crowd pushed in to see. From that moment, for the entire message, I felt empowered and focused – and the crowd seemed to hang on every word. Without notes or Bible in front of me (too dark to see) the Holy Spirit gave me words to preach and preach. He even gave me liberty to introduce a completely unscripted role play later on.

(Continued, p.6)

OUT IN THE OPEN ...

(Continued from p.5)

The Holy Spirit cut through the chaos and spoke to people's hearts powerfully through this message and many, many people responded to the call to come forward in repentance and faith. How does God do this? After praying for those who came forward I stepped back and let the local evangelists and church leaders counsel each one in their own language and then they found out their addresses for future follow-up. Yes, Grace really is amazing!

After the market place, now completely dark, the team planned to return to the church plot for more preaching into the night air. I was completely spent, so I engaged Dean Carroll and John Steendam to preach ... which they did to great effect. Again, many people responded in unexpected ways. In the dark we didn't even realise that they were standing there listening.

Everything culminated in a beautiful way on Sunday morning with a 3½ hr worship service in the full sun. Rejoicing all the day! This CCAP congregation has been given a Holy Spirit push to get going now in a powerful way. Praise God for the preaching of the Gospel. There are many such opportunities for the Gospel in Zambia. CCAP in Zambia is keen on the Gospel, but short on resources.

As a closing aside, it's fascinating to see what former US Presidents are doing with their position of influence and their money. A rural town in Malawi called Neno is Bill Clinton's town (locals are proud of this) and it is Clinton's wealth and influence that has renovated the town, built a magnificent re-



John Wilson preaching the Word.

gional hospital and other infrastructure. The CCAP Blantyre Synod benefits from this enterprise as it has a Girls Mission School in Neno that PLC (Melbourne) supports.

Further, when we were in Kabwe (Zambia) and driving along the dirt tracks towards our village, I was noticing police along the 'roads' manning each corner. How odd, I thought, to have police on every corner of this remote village. Not the usual place for police checks. After all, it's impossible to speed on these tracks! As I was preaching that morning I heard the familiar wailing of a 'thousand sirens' that sounded so like an African presidential motorcade. I watched the news briefly that night: George Bush (Jnr) was visiting very nearby to open 'his' hospital.

So, when you come to Africa on mission, you can expect the unexpected.

To God be the glory!

– John P Wilson, Clerk of Assembly, PCV

WEA Leader Calls For Peace Between Religions *(Continued from p.3)*

I really hope this point of view represents a very small minority, because I have seen wonderful examples around the world where those of different faiths, even with a previous history of violence, are now living in a far more harmonious society. In every one of these situations people who profoundly differ in their beliefs got together and figured out how to live in a more peaceful community.

Am I being Pollyannaish? Maybe! But as a follower of Jesus, I have to be a person of peace, reconciliation and hope. It is not an easy journey. But it is a road we must take to create a less violence-filled world. Are you ready to join me on this journey?

– Dr Geoff Tunncliffe, Secretary General and CEO, World Evangelical Alliance

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Please Pray For Muslims AND Christians During Ramadan

PAUL Haralan Popov, President of Door Of Hope International, writes: Please join with me in prayer for all the pastors and believers in Muslim lands during their most trying time as they face the Muslim month of Ramadan. For Christians living in Muslim countries the month of Ramadan is a very difficult time. Here in the West we often don't see or understand the needs of believers during this Muslim 'holy month' in the East. A friend of mine, who is a pastor in Morocco, asks for prayer support and that I share the following email with you:

THERE is less than a week before the Muslims begin the month of Ramadan. They believe that the *Quran* was given as a revelation during this month. They believe that the evil spirits are bound in this month. Thus, nearly everyone, including nominal Muslims, become faithful in the Muslim ritual prayers. They fast from dawn until sunset without eating or drinking anything all day. However, in fact they spend more on food during this month than any other time of year since from sunset until just before dawn they eat almost constantly. This year will be very difficult since Ramadan falls during late July through late August when the temperatures in many areas of the country reach 45 degrees Celsius.

The Muslims Believe These 30 Days Are Divided Into 3 Parts:

First 10 Days is the time of forgiveness when God forgives sins.

Second 10 Days is the period of mercy when God shows his mercy to the faithful.

Third 10 Days is the period of escape from hell when God delivers those who do Ramadan well from condemnation in hell. The Muslims try very hard to do the ritual prayers and fasting to obtain these rewards.

The life of the believers in Christ is greatly impacted during this month. For example, many believers like myself live at home with their family who are Muslims. Thus, they cannot eat at home (or any public place). Especially the new believers face many tribulations. For example, our brother 'R' explained that his father told him, 'I know that you are no longer a Muslim. I ask you to leave our home during Ramadan so that you will not cause our family problems during Ramadan.' Although other families may impose this at any time of year, this example is just one of many stories of believers facing greater tribulations during Ramadan than other times of the year. However, I believe in the power of prayer. Please pray for us with your friends, teams and churches.

- Pray for the protection of the new believers who are facing their first Ramadan as a follower of Christ.
- Pray for the local church meetings to continue in the midst of this difficult period.
- Pray for those who are seeking truth – that the evil will not keep them from continuing their search for the truth.
- Pray for the follow-up of seekers and new believers during the difficult conditions of Ramadan.
- Pray for the protection of the believers and the church and the work of the church during the midst of these difficulties.

Thank you for your prayers, Your brother, *(a Pastor in Morocco)*

Can You Help?

I AM a missionary with Wycliffe Bible Translators in the USA and on my own time I am writing a series of booklets on the work of Bible translation in Papua New Guinea. One of the booklets is about three Australian women, Doris, Olive and Elsie McClure, who went to New Guinea in 1958 to work with the Summer Institute of Linguistics in the Eastern Highlands at the mission centre at Ukarumpa. I also worked at Ukarumpa for 15 years from 1985 – 2000 and heard about the three women who have been known as 'the Three Aunties'.

I am now writing a booklet to tell their story. I came across an article from 17 March 1966 *New Life*. However, I don't know who the author of the article is. I have next to nothing about their background in Australia or what happened to them after they left New Guinea. The newspaper article says they owned a baby wear shop in Glenferrie Road, Malvern, where they did extensive needlepoint work

(it would be nice to get a photo of that building and shop. They were also associated with the Southern Evangelical Missions agency, but I have no idea how to find out information about this agency (*SSEM? – Ed.*)

I do know the three sisters originally came to New Guinea in 1958 or 1959. They came to run a boarding home for the Wycliffe Bible Translators missionary children there. A children's boarding home today still bears their names. After running the boarding home for a number of years they left Wycliffe's work and moved to a village and started a Sunday School program that grew into a church that still exists and is growing today. When they left New Guinea is a mystery to me and others – memories fade. I think they may have left New Guinea in the mid-1970s just before independence, but I am not sure.

– Charles Micheals,
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Florida 32792-7229, USA
Email: Chuck_Micheals@wycliffe.org

Stuart Coulton To Head Up SMBC

THE Rev Stuart Coulton, BA, LLB, BTh (Hons), MA (Theol), who has been serving as Interim Principal, has now been appointed Principal of Sydney Missionary and Bible College, succeeding the Rev David Cook.

SMBC has grown significantly over the last 25 years, with its core distinctives and focus remaining unchanged. The college is Bible-centred, interdenominational, mission and cross-culturally focused, and underpinned by an emphasis on theological learning in community.

Stuart brings to the position a clear understanding of and commitment to these values and has been part of the SMBC team since 1987, most recently lecturing in Church History, Spiritual Formation, Pastoral Care and Introduction to Degree Theology. He has served as a Vice-Principal for the last eight years.

He trained as a lawyer, and after practising in both private and government spheres, undertook theological training leading to ordination as a minister of the Presbyterian Church. He served as a pastor in Burwood from 1987 to 1991, then in Blacktown from 1991 to 2002.

Stuart began at SMBC in a part-time capacity in 1987, becoming a full-time lecturer in 2002, teaching Church History as well as Spiritual Formation and Theology. He was appointed a Vice-Principal in 2004, with particular responsibility for student pastoral care. Stuart's book, *Hitting The Holy Road: A Guided Tour Of Christian History From The Early Church To The Reformation* was published by IVP in 2011.

The conviction that shapes Stuart's life and ministry is that only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ can people come into a right relationship

with God, receive forgiveness for their sins and know the hope of eternal life. This undergirds his passion for SMBC to continue training men and women to be effective gospel workers throughout the world. He is unwavering in his commitment to the central place of the Bible in theological and cross-cultural training.

Stuart and his wife, Pauline, have been married for 34 years and have three adult children, two sons-in-law and a three month old grandson. They attend Abbotsford Presbyterian Church.

The Lord's people are asked to be in enthusiastic prayer for Stuart and Pauline as they serve God in this strategic leadership role at SMBC, the oldest interdenominational Bible college in Australia. It was established in April 1916 by Rev C Benson Barnett, a returned missionary of the China Inland Mission (now OMF). His vision was to prepare people for Christian service in Australia and overseas. Without exception, God's provision through the prayers and generosity of His people has enabled the College to send graduates out into gospel work for nearly 100 years.



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An advertisement for SMBC Sydney Missionary & Bible College. At the top is the SMBC logo with the text 'SMBC Sydney Missionary & Bible College'. Below the logo is a photograph of a smiling woman and a smiling man. Underneath the photo, the text reads 'FOR WHATEVER GOD HAS IN STORE FOR YOU...'. To the right of this text is a list of bullet points: 'Bible-centred', 'Interdenominational', 'Missions-focussed', 'Strong Community', and 'Residential or day students'. At the bottom of the advertisement is a row of small photos of diverse people and the website address 'www.smbc.com.au'.

'FAR MORE THAN WE CAN ASK OR IMAGINE' ...

Crowds Far Surpass Expectations For Church-Hosted Events On Games Opening Night

THE numbers attending the hundreds of Olympic opening night events hosted by churches have far exceeded expectations, according to reports from around the UK.

Churches in Buckinghamshire had expected 2,500 people for their Opening Ceremony festival but around 6,500 people turned up.

Meanwhile, people queued around the block to pack into Purley Baptist Church in Surrey to attend the family-oriented Opening Ceremony Festival organised by local churches. Sports events were led by Olympian Donovan Reid, a member of Purley Baptist Church, who represented Great Britain in the 100-metres in Atlanta in 1996.

The Salvation Army church in Sutton expected 50 to 60 but had 160 in attendance.

The inspiration for all this activity has been the agency *More Than Gold*, set up to help churches use the Games to serve their communities. Spokesperson Marty Woods said, 'We had anticipated that about 500,000 would attend across the UK, but the signs are that many more have been involved.'

The largest event hosted by churches was in Dagenham, Essex. It attracted over 10,000 partygoers hosted by 500 volunteers from 20 churches from across Barking and Dagenham. One highlight of the evening was a world record attempt at the 'most number of people wearing party hats in one place'. Although results are still to be confirmed, festival organisers are confident.

In Hartburn in Tyneside, the Vine Church made plans for up to 150 people. Twice that many attended, many of whom wondered why the church offered the free entertainment. Their spokesperson, Kev Clarke explained, 'We wanted the church to be in the forefront of celebrating such a unique event and to be engaged in the community.'

Added Marty Woods, 'The story of greater numbers than expected is a constant theme we are hearing from churches that served their communities by hosting an opening night festival. This bodes well for all that the churches have planned over the coming weeks.'

– *Krishana Kraft, More Than Gold*



Crowds at the UK's largest church-organised festival on the opening night of the 2012 Games – Photo by Nick Reynolds www.nickreynoldsphotography.co.uk

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Olympians Debbie Flood And Bryan Clay Win Prestigious Eric Liddell Award

THE two-time British Olympic silver medalist, rower Debbie Flood, and Bryan Clay, the Olympic Decathlon gold and silver medalist, are the winners of the 2012 *Eric Liddell Award*. The award honours one male and female athlete for outstanding character at home, in the community and on and off the field of competition.

Presentation of the award is the centrepiece of the *More Than Gold Legacy Breakfast*, held during the London 2012 Games to celebrate character and influence in the world of sports.

The Eric Liddell Award is given in memory of Olympian Eric Liddell, who won gold and bronze medals for Great Britain at the 1924 Paris Olympics. Liddell is best known for the portrayal of his Olympic experience in the Oscar-winning film *Chariots Of Fire*. His daughters, Heather Ingham and Patricia Russell, will attend the breakfast to celebrate their father's legacy of character and service.

Debbie Flood is a two-time Olympic silver medalist in rowing and a three-time world champion. She co-founded *Creativity In Sport*, a community inter-

est organization giving at-risk youth opportunities to study positive life skills curriculum and work toward fitness teaching qualification. Motivated by a desire to work with troubled youth, she took a year off from rowing in 2009 to qualify as a prison officer.

'Eric Liddell was a great man of faith and an example of an ambassador of God both in and outside sport. God has given me the gifts and abilities that I have and I have tried to use them to the best of my ability while also sharing my faith through how I play my sport on and off the water,' Debbie said.

Decathlon gold (2008) and silver (2004) medalist, World Indoor and two-time World Outdoor champion, Clay founded the Bryan Clay Foundation in 2005 to help 'build champions and change lives,' offering opportunities for children to discover their gifts and talents and develop their character.

'I watched *Chariots Of Fire* when I was in ninth grade and what stood out most to me was Eric Liddell's unwavering courage to stand up for what he believed to be right. I'm truly humbled and honored to receive an award in his name,' Brian Clay said.

Adoptive-A-Language Partnership With GRN

GRN partners with local churches to encourage and equip their members for outreach in their own communities and overseas. The *Adopt a Language* initiative enables a local church to play a significant role in reaching one of the world's least reached language groups. When a church adopts one of these languages GRN will work with them to put together a program to enable the church to focus prayer on the language group, raise funds for the recording of materials in the language, send a short term mission team from the church to distribute the materials – giving out CDs and mp3 players or playing the recordings in community settings. GRN currently has opportunities in Vanuatu, Bangladesh, Thailand, the Philippines and the Solomon Islands. For more information contact Alex Shaw, Global Recordings Network, 2/6 Gladstone Rd, Castle Hill, 2154.

Mukti Girl Killed On Way Home From School

GLEND A de Jager, National Director of MUKTI Australia writes: Lorraine Francis informs us that one of the year 12 girls at Mukti, Pallavi Kharat, was killed coming home from school. The whole Mukti family is devastated, and the accident was witnessed by four or five other girls who were with her. Please pray for the Mukti community at this time and particularly for the girls who witnessed the accident. Pallavi was sponsored by an Australian fam-

ily. Some may recall Sandhya's wedding last year to Andrew in South Africa. Sandhya is Pallavi's sister, and there are also two other sisters at Mukti.

Upcoming Transforming Sydney Events

1. **Training On Prayer And Intercession**, 18 August 2012 at City West Church, 7a/71-73 Lords Rd, Leichhardt, NSW 2040.
2. **Transforming Sydney Consultation Meeting** on 25 August at The Word Christian Fellowship, 10 Redfern Road, Minto NSW 2564. This meeting is for all Churches and Christian Organizations in Sydney to discuss the strategy of *Transforming Sydney*.
3. **Transforming Sydney Annual Conference** on 5,6 October 2012. For more information about the conference go to www.transformingsydney.org



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Christian Surgeon's Heart Op Centre Under Threat From Muslims In Egypt



Sir Magdi Yacoub

A CHARITABLE medical centre that performs free heart operations on children in Egypt is under threat from radical Muslims who want it closed down because it was founded by a Christian surgeon, Sir Magdi Yacoub, a world-renowned cardiothoracic surgeon.

The centre in Aswan city was established by Sir Magdi Habib Yacoub, an Egyptian Christian who emigrated to Britain in 1962. His charitable organisation covers all the centre's costs, and operations are performed on Christian and Muslim children alike free of charge.

The centre's Muslim director was interviewed on Egyptian television about the protests by radical elements in Aswan. She said that closing down the centre, which is licensed and has a government permit to practise, would be a big loss for Egypt.

Sir Magdi, who specialises in surgery on children with congenital heart defects, goes to the centre in Aswan himself to perform operations on needy youngsters. His charity sends teams of medics to various parts of the developing world to treat for

free children suffering from heart disease.

The protests against his medical centre follow the election last month of an Islamist President, Mohammed Morsi, in Egypt, which heightened concerns for the future of Christians in the country. Although Mr Morsi has made encouraging noises about being a 'President for all Egyptians', and even vowed to appoint a Christian Vice-President, it seems that Islamists have been further emboldened by his election to push for their agenda.

Sir Magdi, who was knighted in 1992, qualified as a doctor in Cairo in 1957 with excellent marks, but soon experienced discrimination, which prompted him to emigrate. He became a consultant cardiothoracic surgeon at Harefield Hospital in 1973, and under his leadership it became the UK's leading transplant centre. Sir Magdi was involved in the first UK heart transplant, and his pioneering research has led to great advancements in heart and lung surgery. He is Professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery at Imperial College London.

– Barnabas Fund www.barnabasfund.org

Imprisoned Pastor In Critical Condition

REGULAR beatings and prison conditions have an Iranian pastor in critical condition. According to Voice of the Martyrs, Canada, 41-year-old Christian Behnam Irani recently regained consciousness after blacking out in gaol several days ago. He's being held in Iran's largest prison known for cramped conditions and violence. Behnam was imprisoned last year for crimes against national security. His crime? Leading people to Christ. Please pray for his health and for the witness of the Gospel.



Mission Team Visits Church Facing Closure

ROMANIAN churches are facing a threat of persecution at the hands of the government. Romania may not be communist anymore, but that isn't stopping the government from trying to control church activity. Patrick Klein with Vision Beyond Borders says new legislation being considered threatens smaller churches. 'The government is clamping down. They're making it more and more difficult for the churches. There's talk of even closing down churches that are under the number of 200 people.' Vision Beyond Borders sent out a mission team last week to work with one of the Romanian churches under threat of being closed.

Despite this, the church is doing amazing work for the name of Christ. 'One of the elders in the church really has a heart for the gypsy people, so he's encouraged our teams to go out and minister to the gypsies.' And the Word of God does not return void. 'We were able to go there and minister the Gospel to them, give them clothes and vegetable seeds, and then about five people came to Christ.' Pray for the Romanian church and the spread of the Gospel.

Murder Of Nigerian Christian Senator, Physician Sends Shockwave Through Community

GYANG Dantong was killed while attending a funeral. He was among a handful of elected members of the Nigerian Government attempting to bury the more than 100 Christians killed just the day before, when Muslim gunmen had rampaged through several villages in Nigeria's Central Plateau state. The sheer scale of the 7 July violence convulsed a country where attacks upon Christians are commonplace. Then the attackers returned the next day, killing scores more, including Datong, 53, and another elected government official, who had gathered to bury their dead. The two days of brutality have pushed Nigeria beyond shock into a debate about whether it can even survive as a nation.

– Open Doors News

Mass Bible Distribution Project In Greece

TOURISM in Greece may be way down because of the uncertain economic future and the highly publicized anti-austerity demonstrations. But this has not prevented 320 volunteers from around the globe descending on Alexandroupolis in the north-eastern corner of Greece as part of *Operation Joshua*, a Hellenic Ministries project to distribute *Modern Greek New Testaments*, both audio and printed, to 125,000 households between 17 and 25 July. Teams of people from young teens to senior citizens are participating in this special effort to bring the hope of the Gospel to a beleaguered nation.

Not only are they bringing the message of hope to the Greeks but also 17,000 *Turkish Bible Packs* will be distributed to the Islamic villages on the Turkish border.

This project has not been without its challenges. The area bishop of the Greek Orthodox Church was originally sympathetic and had offered his help and co-operation. However the central leadership of the church was totally opposed to this and issued a press release discouraging any association and branding the mission and project as heretical. The problem is compounded as several high-ranking Greek bishops had previously endorsed the copy of the *New Testament* produced by the Greek Bible Society. And Hellenic Ministries are the Society's biggest single customer accounting for more than 30% of their annual income.

Subsequently five evangelical pastors (which are possibly the only evangelical pastors in this vast area) withdrew their support as they feared upsetting relationships with the national church. But this has not deterred the group of warriors from going into the highways and byways to spread the Word of God. Jonathan Macris, President of Hellenic Ministries, is upbeat about the fruitfulness of the project, saying, 'We are like Gideon's army – small in number, inadequate in and of ourselves but we have powerful ammunition in that the Word of God is alive and powerful. We are trusting that this region of Greece will never be the same again.'

Around 60 cars fanned out into the area covering several hundred miles. The volunteers had to cope with extreme heat and energy-sapping climbs up steep roads. This is no tourism holiday. It is not a mission for the mildly interested but for the totally committed. Apart from the historic indifference of the Greeks to the evangelical Gospel, attention has to be given to the substantial Islamic population. The area is right on the Turkish border and there are estimated to be 17,000 Turkish speaking people.

For more information check out: www.hellenicministries.com

– Nico Bougas, ASSIST

Latin American Youth Take On The World Of The Great Commission

OVER 3,000 young church leaders across Latin America came together recently to learn how to be BIG. Jonathon Shibley with *Global Advance* says with the help of the outreach called *Youth Solutions*, 'Young leaders sold out their lives to the Gospel, to the fulfilling of the Great Commission. At *Global Advance*, we don't look at Latin America just as a mission field, but literally, we see them as a mission force to the rest of the world.' Believers between the ages of 18 and 30 came from Peru, Chile, Brazil, Venezuela and Colombia.



Together, they could change the world. 'God has just gifted them with wonderful warmth of personality and wonderful work ethic. They fit in, culturally, pretty easily in other parts of the world outside of Latin America.' Their greatest ministry challenge will be neutralizing distracting messages from their society. 'These young people have to fight to stay pure before the Lord and to stay true to Scripture.'

Full story: <http://www.MNNonline.org/article/17462>

Faith-Based Groups Can Help Stem AIDS In Africa – UN Officials

RELIGION and faith-based groups play a very important role in many poor countries – especially in sub-Saharan Africa – in the fight to stem the global HIV/AIDS epidemic, senior United Nations health officials said on 18 July. In countries such as Zambia, Malawi, Kenya, and Tanzania, they provide up to 40% of health services, said Paul De Lay, deputy executive director of the Joint UN Program on HIV/AIDS. – ENI

Evangelical Church In Brazil Celebrates Centennial

THE centennial of the evangelical presence among the indigenous peoples of Brazil is being celebrated at the 7th National Council Of Evangelical Indigenous Pastors And Leaders, according to a news release from the Latin America and Caribbean Communication Agency. The event took place from 18-22 July in Chapada dos Guimaraes, 65 km from Cuiaba, the capital city of the state of Mato Grosso in Brazil. – ENI

YOU'VE GOT TO ADMIRE THEM ...

Swooping Magpies

Tis the Season Of Swooping Magpies – the flying kind, that is!

Quite a few of us at this time of the year are about to become the victims of some impressive aerial attacks – as broody magpies come swooping out of the sky to protect their chicks from suspected enemies.

I respect the magpie for its courage, determination and focus in the defence of its nest. You can see that the eyes of the magpie in the photo are fixed very firmly on the target – me! The magpie is determined to provide protection for its young family – firstly as eggs in the nest and then it becomes even more protective and focussed when the eggs hatch.

I respect the magpie for its tenacity and courage in defending its young against creatures much bigger than itself. But on a far higher level I respect and admire a group of people I met in the Philippines recently. People who leave their home country and go and live in a different cultural group for 15 to 20 years and with determination, love, patience, courage, faith and focus give their lives to learning a completely new language and culture, and then translate the message of the Bible into that language so that, for the first time, these people hear about the message of Jesus Christ.

Especially in earlier days, these people lived in very remote areas where walking often provided the final access. They were far away from medical and educational facilities, they lived with the local people and in some cases raised their own families there.

Jean Loeffers puts it like this: 'I had the privilege of living awhile in the house of Lil Underwood, a literacy consultant who was on the team that translated the Tboli Scriptures. Before the translators went to live among them in the 1950's the Tboli believed this life was connected to eternity by a bridge. On this bridge was an evil spirit whose purpose was to prevent anyone from making it across the bridge safely. The only way to overcome this spirit was to have light.

The way to get light was to be burned. Bits of cotton dipped in kerosene were lighted and placed on little boy's arms to produce scars. The more scars, the brighter the light. This practice continued while the translators worked until finally the people were able to read John's Gospel where Jesus said, 'I AM the light of the world'.



I visited the place the translators had lived and worked, and I saw little boys playing happily – unscarred. When I asked a mother why she didn't burn her little boy, she said 'Jesus is our light. Jesus bears the scars. Jesus will get my little boy safely across the bridge'.

Many of the Tboli people have become followers of Jesus now, so the good features of the Tboli culture have been retained and enhanced but fear of and bondage to evil spirits has been removed.

In Christ we can have victory too – if we follow and obey Him. Every one of the 6,900+ language/cultural groups in the world needs to hear of Jesus Christ and respond to Him. There are still 2000+ language groups in the world who have not yet heard of Jesus – there is still a big task yet to be done to reach out to these people. But it will be done if we have a single-minded determination to bring the Gospel to people who need that light of Christ and protect them from all the assaults of the Evil One. Check out: www.thezoowalk.com

– Bruce Stewart

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Melville	(08) 9417 1976
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'...We...know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.' (Galatians 2.16)

Amazing Grace, John Newton And 4 August

ON 1 January 1773, John Newton, a former slave trader, introduced the world to what we now know and love as the hymn *Amazing Grace*. Its lasting legacy is deeply rooted in its message of living hope: 'You can now live guilt free!'

Amazing Grace is hummed and heard on every continent in the world. It transcends race, religion and even record categories. It takes in its stride all nations, regardless of colour, creed or culture. Whether presented in churches, performed in concerts or played in clubs, this song of songs touches the hearts of those who listen to its tune and learn its truth. This hymn of hymns transforms the souls of those who hear its message and heed its meaning.

2012 marks the 240th anniversary of Newton's writing – *Amazing Grace*. Also Saturday 4 August 2012 marks the the 254th anniversary of Newton's beginning to preach the Gospel.

2012 also marks:

1. The 205th anniversary of Newton's death (21 December).
2. The 209th anniversary of Newton's Last Will and Testament (13 June).
3. The 226th anniversary of Newton's invitation to Rev Richard Johnson to be the chaplain and missionary on the First Fleet to the Land Down Under (23 September).
4. The 264th anniversary of Newton's Conversion (21 March).

You can read the full inspiring story of John Newton in my Gospel book *The Man And The Story Behind Amazing Grace*. For a free download about Newton and his great hymn *Amazing Grace*, go to:

<http://amazinggrace.org.au/media/Amazing%20Grace.pdf>

– Pastor Peter Rahme

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Ramon A Williams

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Found On FaceBook (See NL 2012-07-15 P.14)

Many people who speak my language don't want to hear God's talk. One day I visited a *nakamal* (men's meeting place) to talk with the men of the village.

We were talking about the importance of God's Word when the chief of the village said he didn't like the Bible because it didn't relate to his life at all. I took out a MegaVoice* player, and we listened to the Scriptures in his language for a long time.

Then the chief said to me, "I have gone to many different churches. They read the Bible in English, and I just don't understand it. I never went to school. But now, when I hear the MegaVoice, I really understand! I am so glad that God's Word in my language is on this machine. I don't know how to read but I want to know more about God's talk. Now I have a partner for when I am walking to the garden or here and there. I can listen to this machine and hear and understand God's talk."

— Jerry Nassey, Southwest Tanna Bible translator, Yanemilen village, Vanuatu

Read *The Hindu, The Muslim And The Christian* by David Holden

Free at: www.defenceofthefait.org

A LIGHT TO THE NATIONS: THE MISSIONAL CHURCH AND THE BIBLICAL STORY, Michael W. Goheen, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011

THE stated aim of this book is to explain the missional identity of the Church revealed in the story of the Bible. It acknowledges a debt to the thinking and writing of Lesslie Newbiggin, building on his legacy of reading the Bible as a book about mission. Unlike other books that outline the mission theology of the Bible, Goheen says he will give ample space to the Old Testament, not just focus on the New, and provide sustained exegetical justification for the views promoted. However, only two out of the nine chapters concern the Old Testament, so that Goheen like many others, in my opinion, rushes too quickly to the New Testament.

His main point is that the church should embody (albeit imperfectly) the goal that God has for creation, namely the Church as the exemplary community of the endtime should be a preview of the new world. To be that, of course, the Church cannot simply reflect current cultural mores, but must be counter-cultural. It must reflect the life and priorities of the world to come.

According to Goheen, the Church (post-enlightenment) has shrunk its mandate to become a voluntary society for the spiritually-minded. It is the biblical story, not the modern myth of progress, that must shape our self-understanding. It is biblical images, not the consumerist shopping mall, that must form our self-identity.

Goheen follows the agenda set by Chris Wright and others and uses mission as the key to unlock the grand narrative of Scripture from creation to consummation. He shows how the election of Abraham was for the sake of the world (Genesis 12). While recognising the programmatic character of Exodus 19.3-6, he unfortunately has an inadequate exposition of its meaning, for, ignoring the important study by John A. Davies, he finds a missional theme in these verses where there is none. The passage does not refer to Israel's mediatorial role to the nations. Goheen is eager to find missional themes in as many Old Testament texts as he can, and we commend him for that, but here he 'discovers' them where they are not present.

His use of Deuteronomy 4.6-8 is more convincing, with the nations being the intended audience of Israel as a model nation living according to God's instruction. Goheen shows the missional dimensions of Davidic kingship (the House of David is destined to rule the world), the Temple (the centre of

the future worship of God by the nations of the world), and the prophets (with their vision of the universal Kingdom of God). In the inter-testamental period, anti-Gentile feeling resulted in a loss of any vision

of Israel as a light to the nations. Jesus' ministry involved the regathering of the true Israel (with the 12 disciples as its core), and He taught that the gathering of God's redeemed people will ultimately involve an invitation to all nations.

Goheen warns of the trap of limiting the effect of the cross to individual salvation. He does not, of course, deny the individual aspect. He wants to stress the communal and cosmic dimensions of the cross (the future transformation of the whole world), but the individual aspect must take priority, for as the Church grows, the world is progressively changed, individual by individual, conversion by conversion. Goheen does not say this, and I am not at all sure that he sees it that way.

In the *Book of Acts*, Gentiles as Gentiles are incorporated into the people of God, but that is not the same as saying (as Goheen does) that they become part of 'Israel'.

The boundaries of the Church are redefined, and the Church incorporates both believing Israelites and believing Gentiles, united by a common faith in Christ. Like Israel, while without simply equating the Church as a 'New Israel', the New Testament says that the Church is to be 'an attractive contrast community', but Goheen errs in saying that mission is the whole reason for the church's existence. Such a view, though commonly espoused today, puts the cart before the horse, for it would be more accurate to say that the Bible teaches that the Church is the goal of mission.

The final chapter answers the questions: what might a missional Church look like today? How will it affect the way we worship, what we preach, and our corporate prayer?

This book is free from unrealistic idealism. Instead Goheen shares from his own experience in several places how a church over time can become missional. Despite its blemishes, this is an extremely worthwhile book. It will help us to re-examine everything we do in church and in our daily lives.

– Greg Goswell

