



THERE was a record attendance at *Network 2014*, the annual conference of SAT-7, the Middle East Christian satellite TV broadcaster. Held for the first time in Turkey, from 26-28 March, SAT-7's annual *Network* conference attracted 250 people from 25 countries, an indication of the growing concern among many people around the world for the troubled Middle East region.

The theme of this year's conference was *Broadcasting HOPE In An Era Of Hopelessness*. In his keynote address on the opening day of the conference SAT-7 CEO Dr Terence Ascott outlined SAT-7's plan of action to counter the seemingly hopeless situation in the Middle East and North Africa (see extended article on pp4,5).

Despite apparently desperate circumstances, SAT-7's Arabic, Farsi and Turkish language channels are reaching 15 million viewers across the Middle East and North Africa, and Dr Ascott described how SAT-7 brings hope to the region: with the Gospel – a message of hope and truth for everyone. Dr Ascott reminded his audience of SAT-7's dual goals: making the Gospel available to all in the Middle East and North Africa, and especially to children, women, people who are unable to read or write, and people living in homes which have been traditionally 'closed' to the message of the Gospel; and encouraging the church in the Middle East and North Africa in its life, work and witness for Christ.

The conference was attended by a wide variety of delegates, including TV producers, supporters, church leaders and staff. Representatives of partner organizations from North America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia spoke about the reasons why they support and work together with SAT-7. Kuan Kim Seng, Dean of Saint Andrew's Cathedral in Singapore said: 'It is reasonable to see SAT-7 being as significant as Christian shortwave radio broadcasts were to China 50 years ago. In fact the impact of SAT-7 could well be even more considerable. It has a great platform with satellite TV, and it has the potential to impact millions of people. God is doing a mighty work in SAT-7. Nearly ten million children regularly watch SAT-7's programs and, in ten years' time, those children will be adults, having heard through SAT-7 about Christ. Imagine what God can do in their lives! Pray for the children of the Middle East, that they will change their societies. God is using SAT-7 to bring blessing to the Middle East and North Africa.'

EASTER – A Time For Reflection And Hope

THE popular reception of the film *Noah* and the TV series *Resurrection* show that classic biblical themes are very much alive in the hearts and minds of ordinary Australians. The message of Easter is one of overcoming evil, finding hope in the midst of crisis, and a new day to experience and enjoy. So much in our world threatens to rob us of this new day – corruption in politics and business, sexual abuse, violence and addiction, lack of fairness. Australians understand that our political and community leaders are human and make mistakes. What we struggle with is a failure to come together to renew our community for the human dignity of all. But with a sense of God's hope we can look forward with confidence.

Easter is the most significant celebration in the Christian calendar, a reminder of the depth of God's love for us and the extent to which God was willing to go to demonstrate His love for us through the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Son of God.

Surveys continually show that Easter is the most recognised Christian event and that over 50% of Australians believe or are open to the message of the empty tomb. In this spirit, let us together confess our own personal and societal sins and look for personal and societal transformation.

Easter is a time for all of us to reflect on being who God has called us to be.

– NSW Council Of Churches

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AUSTRALIA'S CHRISTIAN NEWSPAPER

'I Have Set Before You An Open Door'



SO! What do we see in this picture? That's right – satellite dishes. The picture was taken somewhere in the MiddleEast, but it could have been taken virtually anywhere there, where satellite dishes are everywhere, installed by people thirsting for knowledge and entertainment. And if they don't have a satellite dish, there's always the internet.

Myriads of TV channels literally bring a world of knowledge and entertainment right into the living room, one way or the other. And the Church is right in there through satellite television ministries such as SAT-7. It was my privilege to attend their recent annual conference, *Network 2014*, near Izmir, Turkey, followed by a whirlwind tour of the towns where the *Seven Churches Of Asia Minor* (see Revelation 2 and 3) were situated.

We received comprehensive reports of a mission combining perceptive analysis of the current situation in the region with clear goals as to how to provide ministry through the medium of television by a gifted and dedicated team. In brief, TV programs in three languages presently go out 24/7 via seven satellite channels and the internet, targetting children, youth, adults, women, and pitched at various levels from pre-evangelism to semi-nary-of-the-air (for house church pastors). Go to: www.sat7.org/ to find out more.

Second question: Where was this picture taken? Friends, this picture was taken in the main street of Alesehir, Turkey, once known as 'Philadelphia' and once targeted in a letter from our risen Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 3.7-13). Philadelphia's position in the Ancient World made it *The Doorway To Asia* and it had originally been set up to be a Greek missionary city for the spread of Greek language and culture into the Barbarian world beyond. It was to the church in this city that the Risen Lord said: 'I know your deeds. See I have set before you an open door that no-one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept My Word and have not denied My Name' (Revelation 3.8).

Fast forward to 2014 and Christ's words take on a new significance as His servants keep His Word and confess His Name through the open door of television.

– Bob Thomas

Footnote: When I visited Alesehir (Philadelphia) a few years ago, we arrived at night and the gate to the ancient site was chained shut. But our guide rustled up the gatekeeper, who came under protest and opened it, setting before us 'an open door' so that we could view the ruins of the Basilica of St John. The thing of greatest note was the sight of four enormous pillars, central to a once-great church building, and reminiscent of Christ's promise: 'The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the Temple of My God' (Revelation 3.12).

MATTERS FOR PRAYER

CHINA: The Chinese Communist Party And The Cross

WITH a population of some 10 million, Wenzhou, in China's eastern Zhejiang Province, is one of China's great coastal megacities. A 480km drive south of Shanghai on the East China Sea, Wenzhou is often referred to as 'China's Jerusalem' as it is believed to have the largest Christian population of any city in China – possibly as high as 30%. Wenzhou is a business hub known for its many successful Christian entrepreneurs who actively promote Christianity in their workplaces. Whilst the Christian entrepreneurs do strive to maintain good relations with local authorities, that they hold considerable economic power in Wenzhou is doubtless one reason why the churches seem able to be quite active.

According to China expert Dr Kurt Selles, Wenzhou has some 1800 churches which operate openly despite most not being registered with the government. For more than a decade, the success of Wenzhou's Christianity-infused businesses has aroused government interest in the link between Protestant Christianity and successful capitalism. This demonstrable link has created a dilemma for the Chinese Communist Party, which is keen to exploit any business model that generates wealth, yet believes it must rein in and control Christianity lest it undermine Communist Party authority.

On 8 January 2014 Zhejiang's Communist Party Secretary, Xia Baolong, was conducting an inspection in Zhoushan (north-east Zhejiang) and was shocked by the proliferation of large churches. While passing a church in Baiquan town, Xia reportedly objected that the cross atop the church was 'too conspicuous', and demanded that the local Religious Affairs Bureau 'rectify' the problem by removing it. The CCP might want to reap the benefits of Christianity, but it certainly does not want the Church to grow! And so began a campaign to de-Christianise the landscapes and skylines of Zhejiang.

On 27 February officials from the Zhoushan Religious Affairs Bureau demanded that believers at the government-sanctioned church in Baiquan, Zhoushan, help tear down the cross on top of their building. The Christians refused and a stand-off ensued. The cross on a government-sanctioned church in the Yuhang District of Hangzhou (Zhejiang's provincial capital) was forcibly removed on the same day after the authorities deemed it 'too conspicuous'. Two other local churches reportedly had their crosses forcibly removed also that day. Believers told ChinaAid that forced cross removals were also taking place in neighbouring Anhui Province as well.

Sanjiang Church in Wenzhou's Ou Bei township at eight storeys tall and covering 1000 square metres is large by any standards. It has spaces for worship, teaching and accommodating the elderly. The church is registered with the authorities and is part of the government-controlled Three-Self Patriotic Movement. The members, along with many relatives working overseas, raised the US\$4.8 million for the construction. Everything was approved by the Wenzhou municipal government, which designated the church a 'model project' in September 2013. When the Christians refused to remove the cross and several spires from the rooftop, the authorities responded by threatening to demolish the entire building, falsely accusing the church of adding illegal structures in violation of building codes that rendered it structurally unsound. Meanwhile, demolition notices were reportedly also sent to churches in Taishun, Wencheng and Ruian townships. A church in Yongjia County also is understood to have been ordered to remove its cross and the top floor of the church.

On 25 March members of Sanjiang Church commenced a protest and on 3 April the pastors were notified that the church would be demolished by 18 April (Good Friday). Since then some 5000 local Christians have been participating in round-the-clock prayer vigils and sit-ins, praying that the church might be saved from demolition. He Hongying (81) said she would stay in the church day and night for as long as necessary. 'We feel at peace,' she said, 'and fearless when we are with our God'.

The struggle for Sanjiang Church has come to represent the struggle between Chinese Christians who are unashamed of the transformative power of the Gospel and abusive CCP officials who love money and despise the Cross. – Elizabeth Kendal, international religious liberty analyst and advocate. This Bulletin is issued as a ministry of the Evangelical Alliance.

PLEASE PRAY THAT:

- God will use the crisis at the Sanjiang Church to open the eyes and ears of multitudes of Chinese, locally, nationally and inside the CCP; may they believe what the Church has been showing – that Christianity is good, not only for business, but for families and all of society, because Jesus cleanses from sin, the Holy Spirit enables righteousness, and God's wisdom is truth!
- raise up voices for justice across Wenzhou and throughout Zhejiang, so that CCP officials will be forced to relent and stop abusing their power to attack the churches.
- protect and bless all those believers who are risking their security and liberty to stand for their right to lift up the Cross of Christ as the hope of the nation; may the Lord hear their prayers and bring revival to Zhejiang.

'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, declares the Lord. For as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.'
(Isaiah 55.8,9 ESV)

THE WORD GOES OUT ...

Broadcasting Hope In An Era Of Hopelessness

– Opening Address to SAT-7 Network 2014, Turkey, by CEO Dr Terence Ascott

It is clear to the world that there's a massive loss of hope in the Middle East, otherwise why would so many minorities and moderate Muslims be fleeing from the area – and seeking sanctuary in the West. So why have people lost hope in this part of the world?



Dr Terence Ascott addresses Network 2014

Here Are Some Of The Reasons:

- The failure of political uprisings. • Continued instability and insecurity. • Failure in leadership.
- Lack of economic opportunity. • Lack of real democracy. • Lack of educational opportunities.
- Disillusionment with religion. • Illness and disability. • Lack of ability to reconcile. • Unresolved political conflicts.
- Hopelessness as a consequence of being misunderstood. • A visible lack of ethical and moral behaviour.
- The status of women. • Loss of trust in the media. • Division in the church. • The diminution of the church.

How Does SAT-7 Bring HOPE To The Peoples Of The Middle East?

The Gospel is a message of hope – for everyone! Depression is the emotional result of hopelessness, but joy is the emotional result of hope, and peace is the emotional result of faith in Christ. Many people have done terrible things – or even nothing – but have guilt. They need the forgiveness of Jesus and to have this explained to them often on our screens. They need to hear the Good News of the Gospel and obtain forgiveness for what they have done, or failed to do. The Good News for them is that they can know that their sins are forgiven and removed forever, that they can have a personal and vital relationship with God, and that they have an assured place in Heaven. In this regard, the programs on SAT-7, even simple teaching programs aimed at Christian viewers, will often bring an inexplicable sense of peace to all viewers.

• SAT-7 programs bring hope to isolated believers.

A woman from Turkey wrote: 'It has been two years since I was able to visit any church, because of the pressure from my family. But I am able to watch your channel on my mobile, and that has become my only source of encouragement for now. God bless you.' Also in countries like Iran, where the house church movement has been suppressed; Syria and Iraq, where people are afraid to go out of their homes at certain times; North Africa, and even places in Upper Egypt, SAT-7 provides important support to those hidden believers who would not otherwise have any kind of Christian fellowship.

• SAT-7 programs, especially church services, bring hope.

They bring a sense of community and spiritual encouragement to people. They also provide important Christian teaching that they would not otherwise get.

• SAT-7 helps those who cannot explain their faith to others.

It explains it on their behalf. Apologetic programs remove many of the negative attitudes some have to Christians; Testimony programs help to explain a new believer's faith to their families. Programs about the Early Church, and the Middle Eastern Christian contributions to Arabic, Persian and Turkish literature, art and culture help to legitimise the authenticity of Middle Eastern Christianity as a truly indigenous religion, and show that Christians have always been in the region – and that Christianity is not, as some believe, a Western import! Another of our programming goals has been to better show the Church in action. The events around the Arab Spring presented new opportunities to do this – through our live coverage of big events that brought the churches together, such as the 11/11/11 prayer night attended by 60-70,000; and the live New Year's Eve celebration from Tahrir Square.

• SAT-7 brings hope to seekers.

SAT-7 programs bring new perspectives on God and hope at a time when people are the most open to new ideas, when they are in the midst of change. SAT-7 also shows respect to its viewers by not attacking anyone's beliefs. We also show respect by not spoon-feeding them truth, but often just present our audiences with a discussion showing different opinions, and leave them to decide on the issues for themselves. We show that God loves everyone, unconditionally, including women, the disabled, ethnic minorities, even those who have done much evil.

• SAT-7 brings hope by being honest with its viewers – and they can feel it.

This is in stark contrast to many other TV or radio channels, with their manipulative dishonesty, (Continued, p.5)

THE WORD GOES OUT ...

(Continued from p.4) and even incitements to hate and violence. We provide hope to those who are sincerely looking for spiritual truth or any kind of honesty and authenticity.

• **SAT-7 presents stories of hope.** In general, people who have lost hope cannot, by definition, see any way out of their present situation. This is where we can tell stories of real people who are like them but who have overcome. In telling these stories, SAT-7 is sharing in the pain and the journey of its viewers, who learn from them and find hope in the change they see has happened in others like them, as one man wrote to us recently: 'Why do you speak of God with so much love and joy – how can I get to know your God? I want to have such calm and peace within me. Your programs give me hope!'

• **SAT-7 believes the message of the Gospel is intended for everyone.**

We believe that God loves everyone and that we are called to do the same, treating each with the human dignity that is a part of their human creation. SAT-7 brings hope to women by letting them share their stories and struggles, bringing hope to other women.

• **SAT-7 brings hope through showing a United Church.**

And that unity it has in its diversity.

• **SAT-7 brings hope through personal interaction with its audiences.**

This is done through social media, praying with them, giving everyone a voice, providing counselling and so on.

• **SAT-7 brings hope to the marginalised of society.**

Through its social impact programs SAT-7 brings hope to single mothers, the disabled, and many others on the margins of society. SAT-7 also brings hope by reminding viewers of their God-given humanity and their need to be compassionate.

• **SAT-7 Brings hope through its positive programming!** Most of the media focuses exclusively on the bad news, because this gets people's attention. But people can only tolerate so much bad news and very often we hear from our viewers that they find peace and escape in our programming. We are not looking to provide escapism for people per se but we are looking to provide a godly perspective on all that is going on in their lives and societies. Certainly our positive programming has won the trust of the millions of parents whose children watch SAT-7 KIDS. This is the one place where they feel that their children are safe!

• **SAT-7 broadcasts Christian truth.**

The truth, as Jesus told us, will set us free – free from despair and hopelessness. The truth brings hope. If we believe the words of Scripture are all life to those that hear them we have to continue to broadcast. It is only His Word that will bring light, life and hope, the hope of the Gospel.

'May the God of HOPE fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with HOPE by the power of the Holy Spirit.

– Romans 15.13

MECO MIDDLE EAST TOUR 8-25 October 2014

- Where did Jesus spend His first Christmas?
- Where was Jesus baptised?
- How about sailing on Galilee?

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(mission leader)
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Cost: \$6480 – includes airfares, accommodation, entrance fees and most meals – a pretty good price for all of the above!

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meco australia

CHRISTIAN CREATIVITY

Latest Megavoice Bible For The World's 600 Million Blind, Vision Impaired, Poor Sighted – New, Inexpensive Bible, For The Blind

'A MIRACULOUS gift from God,' is the way the Rev Dr Roger Chilton, former chair of Bible Society Australia, described the new *MegaVoice Envoy Audio Bible For The Blind*. 'It is an extraordinary example of inspired creativity; it is a miraculous gift from God,' Dr Chilton said.

MegaVoice CEO, Charles Cibene, tells how MegaVoice became deeply concerned that of the world's 600 million blind, visually impaired and poor sighted, very few have access to God's Word, that is, access in their own heart language and in a convenient and usable form.

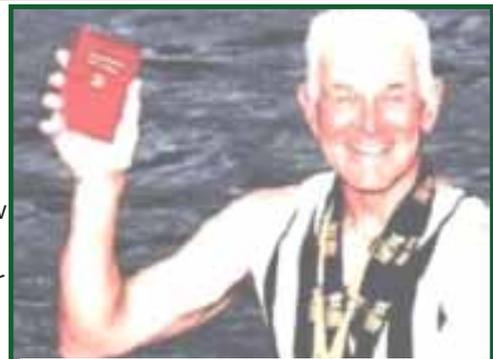
'Whilst Braille was invented in 1821, most of the world's languages still do not have a Braille Bible, or any portion of it in Braille. Of those that do exist the cost is over \$800 a copy, making it a very expensive item for many people to purchase. But now, MegaVoice International (www.megavoice.com), has brought out a new, inexpensive Bible for all mankind, especially the blind. It is a very compact, hand-held Bible, designed for easy use. At just 65 grams and 5.4 cm x 10.4 cm x 13 mm, it fits well in a shirt pocket or hangs decoratively around a person's neck. Yet it is rock solid in construction and will withstand the harshest of conditions. Being solar powered means there are no running costs and no batteries to be continually purchased. The new, well laid out, simple control panel, with keys all on one surface, is especially designed for blind people to feel and operate easily. With raised buttons, it also helps those who are poor sighted.

'The *Envoy* is so designed that any church, mission, ministry, or agency, is able to load and reload their messages, up to 700 hours of audio content, anywhere in the world, at any time and in any quantity, direct from their computer whilst the message is secure so that the end user cannot change it. Partners can quickly load a whole Bible or their chosen messages, in just a couple of minutes.'

Subsidized prices range from \$33.95 down to \$15.95, dependent on the model and quantities ordered. Director of Wycliffe/SIL Bible Translators in Vanuatu, Ross Webb says, 'This means that with the *MegaVoice Envoy*, it is now possible for all blind people to own God's Word for themselves - and even hold it in their hand! Braille Bibles for minority languages will never happen. *MegaVoice* is a fantastic and far better solution for these precious people.'

Australian inventor of *MegaVoice* Bibles, Tom Treseder, who, during the last century was a World Champion sculler, says, 'God has given us a Bible in a form that can reach everyone with the love of Jesus. Our whole global MegaVoice team is totally committed to providing these miraculous gifts from God to all those who will send them "to the ends of the Earth".'

To know more, purchase or donate *MegaVoice Envoys* for the blind, contact; Darrel Templeton, dtempleton@megavoice.com or go to www.megavoice.com – Dan Wooding, Founder, ASSIST Ministries



Tom Treseder displays the Megavoice.
– Photo, Ramon Williams.

New Kogarah Centre To Provide Students, Health Professionals With Vital Training, Education

A NEW \$2.9 million mental health education and training facility at Wesley Hospital, Kogarah, in Sydney's southern suburbs, was officially opened on Thursday 10 April. The centre is an answer to the increasing demand for mental health training and education among nursing and medical students as well as health and allied health professionals, with education and training programs designed and developed for students studying medicine (psychiatry), psychology or nursing and include clinical training and supervised work experience within the hospital.

The centre adjoins the 30-bed Wesley Hospital and is fitted with the latest technology. There are flexible work areas for students, breakout areas, and seminar and training rooms. Funding for centre has come from the Commonwealth Department of Health. 'This new education facility is a major step forward in the journey of better health care knowledge and practice,' said Wesley Mission CEO the Rev Dr Keith Garner. 'It also provides the foundations for a more integrated and whole of community and sector response to mental health.'

'AND HE HAD COMPASSION ON THEM'

Dami Im Visits Compassion Kids In India

JUST days after releasing her single *Jolene* Dami Im jumped on a plane and travelled to India to meet some of her biggest fans—the two children she sponsors. 2013's winner of *The X Factor*, Dami Im, has touched down on home soil after a whirlwind trip across India with her husband Noah to visit the children they sponsor through Compassion Australia. Dami and Noah arrived in India on Saturday 8 March.

Their first stop was a small village two hours outside of Bangalore to meet 12-year-old Sakthivel, the boy they have sponsored for six years—and 250 of his friends at the Compassion centre. 'It was amazing!' says Dami. 'Hundreds of children ran to us, trying to shake hands or say "Vanakkam" ("Hello").'

Dami became an ambassador for Compassion Australia in December 2013 to highlight the potential in the next generation—no matter where they're born, or what situations they're born into—and to draw Australia's attention to the plight of children living in poverty worldwide.

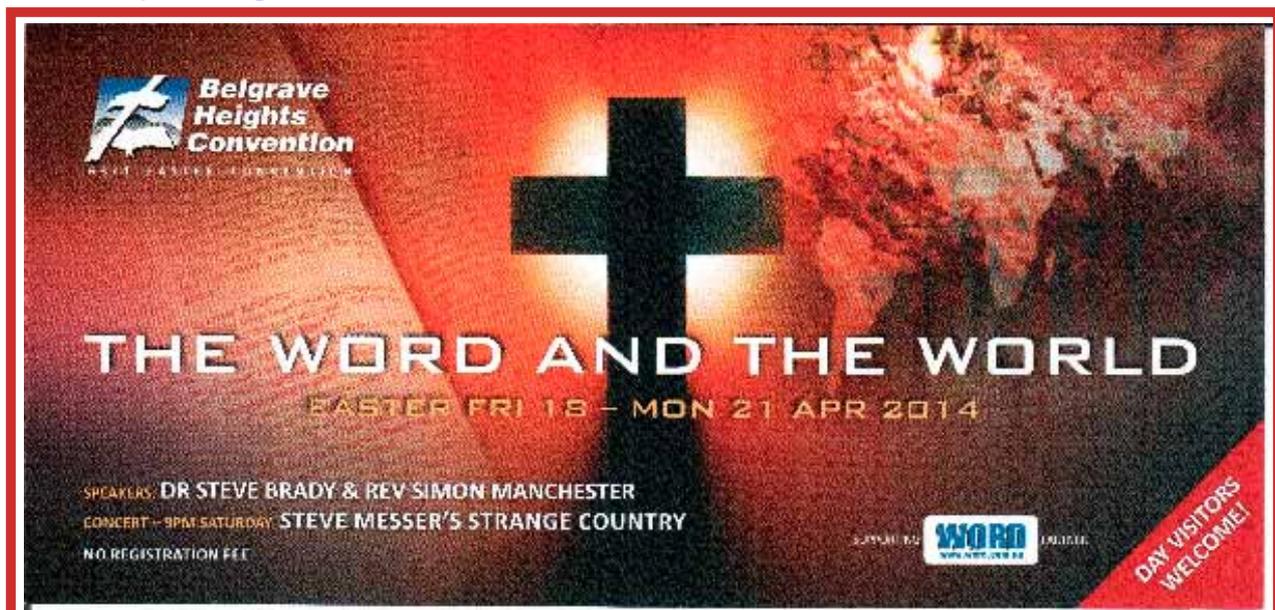
Dami is a South Korean-born Australian singer and music teacher who won the fifth series of *The X-Factor Australia* in 2013. She released her winner's single *Alive* and debut album through Sony Music Entertainment Australia, both of which debuted at number one on the ARIA charts and achieved multi platinum sales. The 24-year-old is a committed Christian from Queensland who attends Brisbane Full Gospel Church with her husband, Noah. Dami immigrated to Australia with her family at the age of nine. She studied at the Young Conservatorium of Music, graduated with honours in music from the University of Queensland, and is an accomplished violinist and pianist. For more information, visit www.compassion.com.au



Dami and Noah with Sakthivel who was shy at first but soon warmed up.

Can You Help?

THE Ferguson Memorial Library and Archives of the Presbyterian Church of Australia celebrated the centenary of the Australian Inland Mission in 2012 by publishing a monograph titled *Vision Splendid* and also by re-printing John Flynn's *Call To Australia*, which was foundational to the establishment of the AIM. Both of these publications are still available. The response to material in *Vision Splendid* on the AIM Nursing service indicated a strong public interest in further material on these dedicated nurses. An extensive research project has therefore commenced aimed at compiling and publishing a biographical register and related material on each of the nurses who served the AIM from 1912 to 1977. The Ferguson Library staff are seeking urgent assistance with this project from former nurses and their companions or their family members. If you can help, please phone Sue Pacey or Daryl Lightfoot on (02) 9690-9374 or email them on archives@pcnsw.org.au

A promotional poster for a convention. The background is a dark, textured image with a large, glowing cross in the center. The text is white and yellow. In the top left corner, there is a logo for 'Belgrave Heights Convention' with the tagline 'WANT TO SEE THE BEST OF THE BEST'. The main title 'THE WORD AND THE WORLD' is in large, bold, white letters. Below it, the dates 'EASTER FRI 18 - MON 21 APR 2014' are written in yellow. At the bottom left, it says 'SPEAKERS: DR STEVE BRADY & REV SIMON MANCHESTER' and 'CONCERT - 9PM SATURDAY: STEVE MESSER'S STRANGE COUNTRY'. Below that, it says 'NO REGISTRATION FEE'. In the bottom right corner, there is a logo for 'WORD' with the website 'www.word.org.au' and the text 'DAY VISITORS WELCOME!' written diagonally in white on a red background.

VIEWPOINT

'Unique' Resurrection Touches Us All – Sydney Archbishop

THE leader of Australia's largest Anglican Diocese, Dr Glen Davies, says the 'unique' events of the resurrection of Jesus touch all Australians, as churches across the country are gearing up for Easter Services. The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge will make a private visit to St Andrew's Cathedral in Sydney, joining the congregation for celebrations on Easter Day. Dr Davies will preach at that service.

Far from being the celebration of a distant historical event, Dr Davies, says the words of Jesus, which we remember at Easter, 'speak of hope and resurrection life.' In his annual Easter message, Dr Davies said there was an interest in the theme of resurrection in films, books and popular culture. 'Even in politics, a former Prime Minister once described the likelihood of his own comeback as "Lazarus with a triple bypass";' said Dr Davies, who went on to outline the story of Lazarus, one of the miracles Jesus performed by raising His friend from the dead.

'This was an astounding comeback to life in this mortal world, but for Lazarus there would be yet another funeral. In contrast, the resurrection of Jesus, which we celebrate this Easter weekend, was unique. The words He spoke alongside Lazarus' tomb touch us all,' the Archbishop said.

'Jesus said "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in Me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die." These words have been said at funerals since the time of the New Testament. They speak of hope and resurrection life, which is available to all who put their trust in Jesus – risen from the dead.'



Why Read And Study The Bible Every Day?

YES, it can be hard work, and yes you really need to stick to a discipline to make any real progress. But the benefits gained from reading and studying the Bible every day are huge, and after a while it becomes as indispensable to daily life as the smartphone has become. Why is the smartphone so addictive to human beings? Because we are curious creatures, we want to know what is going on, and we want people to be interested in us. Daily personal bible study is all that and more. We learn things about God and His people that take our hearts to the very depths, and then take them to soar above the mountain tops.

The Bible is full of all the wealth we could ever imagine owning. If you really want gold, there are still places in Victoria where you can find it if you really want it. The problem is that it isn't as easy as going out for a morning stroll and picking nice clean nuggets from road-side stalls. The gold miner knows that digging, dirt, inconvenience, frustration, and aching muscles are the price to pay for some considerable time before the earth gives up her glittering treasure.

One of the best investments I have ever made is *Search The Scriptures – The Study Guide Of The Bible* edited by Alan M Stibbes, published by IVP. This 512 page hard back can be purchased locally for less than \$17. This guide takes you through a thoughtful study of God's Word, which builds understanding of the complete Bible in three years. The approach is excellent, in that questions are designed to gently help the readers search out the answer for themselves. In addition, it provides essential support in the way of brief notes to explain difficult words, without getting bogged down with detail.

Christians have used this book for many years, and I used a previous version of this decades ago. I am really enjoying the thrill of a daily exploration of God's Word all over again. I am benefitting from a systematic searching of my heart, as the Holy Spirit draws alongside each morning meeting me, and directing my thoughts and prayer and praise in His holy scriptures.

I warn you, this is addictive stuff, and whilst it is not hyped in any way, you will find that slowly but surely, the Bible will yield its treasure to you, and you will find that you are transformed in mind and life and outlook. It will amaze you that you can read your daily portions in *Leviticus* and *Deuteronomy* and throughout your half-hour study, find your heart singing and rejoicing as you are reminded there of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In some ways this book tests our sincerity. There are no instant answers, or instant fixes, but as we persist in getting to know the Bible, we get to know its Author, and we find that the open-handed generosity of His friendship is more valuable than anything else we could ever have in this world. – David Morris

HELPING FIND 'THE ANSWER'

Russian And Ukrainian Baptist Leadership Met In Kiev On 8 April

RUSSIAN and Ukrainian Baptist leadership met in Kiev on 8 April – the first meeting between the heads of the All-Ukrainian Union Of Associations Of Evangelical Christians-Baptists and the Russian Union Of Evangelical Christians-Baptists since the dramatic overthrow of the Ukrainian Government in Crimea on 21,22. Following initial talks at Kiev Baptist headquarters, RUECB-President Alexey Smirnov addressed staff in a sermon followed by a festive dinner and the signing of the joint communiqué translated below. The primary hosts were AUUAECB-President Vyacheslav Nesteruk and Vice-President Valery Antonyuk. Back in Moscow on 9 April, Vitaly Vlasenko, the RUECB's Director of External Church Relations, described the gathering as 'fantastic'. The day's events even included an 'interesting' visit to Maidan Square. The meeting had been marked by cordiality. The statement indicates that Ukrainian and Russian Baptists have every intention to continue their long-standing co-operation.

Statement By The Leadership Of The Russian And All-Ukrainian Unions Of Evangelical Christians-Baptists

'We representatives of the congregations of Evangelical Christians-Baptists In Russia and Ukraine have come together to express our common views on issues of major concern to people in our churches and countries. We thereby present a visible sign of support for the possibility of a peaceful dialogue between our churches and nations. All of our congregations pray continually for peace between our peoples as well as for those who have suffered during the course of the recent political stand-off. We pray for the maintenance of lasting peace and understanding between the citizens of our countries independent of their national and confessional affiliations ...

- We express our sincere willingness to pray and support deeds of fraternal dialogue and the promotion of peace in the Russian and Ukrainian societies.
- We appeal to all who are responsible for the future of our countries to hold firmly to the principles of freedom of conscience and confession as well as the non-interference of the state and political forces in the internal life of religious organisations.
- We condemn all acts of violence and brutality against persons as well as the resolution of political problems by military means and we appeal to all members of the various religious groups to contribute to the process of forgiveness and agreement between our peoples.
- We mourn those killed in mass clashes on both sides of the conflict, both among the public and combatants.
- We call on our brothers and sisters in the churches of Russia and Ukraine to pray for a peaceful resolution of the political confrontation between our two countries.
- We call on our peoples to make every effort to avoid any provocations, to retain in their hearts love for the neighbour, to respect his human dignity and religious beliefs.
- We are ready, regardless of our circumstances, to co-operate further in proclaiming the Gospel in our own countries and throughout the world.

– President Vyacheslav Nesteruk President Aleksey Smirnov, Russian Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists
rea.org@mail.ru

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Worship

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Balfour Road
9am Sunday

Rev Stuart Bonnington
08 9398 1304
melbonn@bigpond.com

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and to the members of their
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Who Can YOU Forward *New Life* To?

GOOD NEWS FROM ABROAD

Overseas Council Celebrates 40 Years Of Spiritual Education And Growth

IN 1974, a group of businessmen launched Overseas Council for Seoul Theological Seminary with the vision of providing scholarship funds for seminaries in South Korea. After 40 years of support, hard work and dedication of many involved, the nonprofit organization has become known as Overseas Council and has grown to support 130 seminaries and Bible colleges in 70 countries around the world. Overseas Council makes it possible for people from all walks of life to take advantage of theological education by providing grants, materials and guidance. The scholarships provided through Overseas Council also offer instructors an opportunity to think from the ground up about curriculum as their students and administrators actually experience it.



'There's just no better investment you can make than in the life of just one of these leaders,' says Dr David Baer, President and CEO of Overseas Council. 'Overseas Council is an organization with a very precise focus. We're in the work of leadership training and leadership development.' International educators, supported through Overseas Council and partner programs, train and provide consultation to over 58,000 students each year. Equipped with the necessary tools to mentor others in their community, those graduates share the benefits gained from their own education. With the deep belief in the effectiveness and promise of theological education, Overseas Council targets inspired leaders who strive to make a difference in communities where churches are growing rapidly or against formidable odds.

To celebrate the widespread success and substantial growth over the past 40 years, Overseas Council will host a gala in Indianapolis on August 26th, 2014 with keynote speaker Ind. Governor Mike Pence.

Overseas Council targets leaders who are called by God to make a difference in the Majority World. These men and women are biblically trained in God's Word within the context of their local culture in order to be most effective. Through these leaders' lifetimes of ministry, God's Kingdom is multiplied in a perpetual cycle of conversion and growth, person by person, small group by small group, community by community. Overseas Council serves a multitude of students, faculty, schools and communities, partnering with 130 seminaries and Bible colleges in 70 countries spread through Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East/North Africa. Each year, 58,000 students take courses and 19,000 students graduate from Overseas Council partners.

• In March and April 2014, Former Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of Overseas Council Australia, John Anderson, is touring Australia nationally speaking about his recent visits to three OCA partner colleges in Myanmar, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

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PERSECUTION WATCH

Coming From Mosque Service, Muslims Kill Christians: Common Pattern In Egypt

ACCORDING to Dr Ashraf Ramelah, founder and president of *Voice Of The Copts*, a human rights nonprofit organization, Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood 'may be officially and legally designated a terrorist organization and lawfully hunted down, but as of yet the MB is busy with business as usual in Cairo. Egypt's national newspaper, *Al Fagar*, reported the most recent incident of MB hoodlums murdering Christians.' He said that on Friday afternoon, 28 March, the entrance of Virgin And Archangel Michael Coptic Church in the Cairo suburb of Ein-Shams was filled with bloodshed when Muslims returning from noon prayer in the mosque headed to the church to cause trouble.

'As a consequence, 18 people were rushed to hospitals in the Egyptian capital. Five are now dead,' he said. 'An eyewitness who contacted the office of Voice Of The Copts said he saw unarmed citizens trying to prevent an attack upon the church by confronting a mob in the street armed with iron sticks, wooden clubs, swords, knives, and guns. According to the *Al Fagar* report, Priest Yohanna Fouad contacted law enforcement and the fire department which responded promptly.' Ramelah said that 25 year-old Mary George was wearing a cross and not a head scarf (hijab). Witnesses say she was killed for that reason alone, a sign of her faith. Miada Ashraf, a 21 year-old journalist and reporter on the scene for *Al Destor* newspaper was killed by gunshot to the head. In earlier attempts to sway the media away from accurate reporting, Miada was twice kidnapped by the MB and released both times after mediation by authorities. He went on to say, 'As always, condemnation by international bodies of such terrorist acts is non-existent. Shall we regard silence as respect for Egypt's sovereignty, and, if so, how shall we view the recent international cries of concern for Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood members receiving guilty verdicts and death sentences? "Unfairness" for Muslim Brotherhood's "statesmen" and street thugs prompted international objections and questions about Egypt's justice system.'



– Dan Wooding, Founder, ASSIST Ministries

INDIA – Christians 'Fearful' As Elections Begin

CHRISTIANS in India are fearful that the country's general elections may lead to a rise in persecution of religious minorities. Opinion polls suggest a victory for the opposition National Democratic Alliance, led by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party. Its prime ministerial candidate, Narendra Modi, is currently Chief Minister of Gujarat. He was widely criticised for failing to prevent the massacre of more than 2,000 Muslims in the state in 2002. Most incidents of mass violence against Christians have taken place in states under the rule of the BJP. Rev Richard Howell, General Secretary of the Evangelical Fellowship of India, says Modi's rise has led to 'fear and insecurity' among Christians. 'The perception ... is that the scale of persecution of Christians will increase,' he says. India's parliamentary elections are being held in nine phases, ending on 12 May.

– *Morning Star News via Release International*

Threat Of Major Attack Cause For Concern In Kenya

KENYAN authorities made more than 650 arrests following a 31 March bomb attack. The government is worried that the wave of small-scale bomb and gunfire attacks indicates a large-scale terrorist assault may be imminent. Todd Nettleton, a spokesman for the Voice of the Martyrs, agrees. 'It seems like radical Islam is definitely targeting Kenya. They're definitely trying to make a stand there, make a statement about what they can do, what they can accomplish there. So it really does seem like it's consistently getting worse.'

– Ruth Kramer, Mission Network News

Christians Left Homeless By Islamist Siege On Syrian Town Need Help

HUNDREDS of Christian families who were forced to flee their homes in a north-west Syrian town when it was besieged by Islamist rebels are in desperate need of food, clothing and other essentials after militants from the al-Qaeda-linked al-Nusra Front, Sham al-Islam and Ansar al-Sham launched an assault on Kessab on the Turkish border in the early hours of 21 March. They started attacking houses in the purely Christian Armenian town, forcing residents to run for their lives. The death toll is not known, but is thought that about 100 people were killed, at least 13 of whom were beheaded. One Kessab resident told a Barnabas Fund partner in Syria: 'After such fear and threat, we started phoning and the move started. Within a few hours more than 3,000 armed men with covered faces came into our villages ... So we left our places semi-naked, with no money in our pockets; we forgot to take our ID cards, our personal documents and official papers for our houses and lands and so on. They were horrible, terrible hours in my memory. I lost everything. But praise the Lord I still have my family members with me and we can start new steps. Most people went to neighbouring Latakia and Bassit, where they sought refuge in an Armenian church, school and club. Around 35 elderly people refused to leave their homes in Kessab, despite the rebels threatening to kill them; it is not known what has happened to them. For more details go to:

www.barnabasfund.org

REACH BEYOND: How They Take The Good News From Melbourne Via Kununurra

REACH Beyond have their studios and offices in Melbourne, where they receive programs from all over the world. With advances in technology they can receive the recorded programs through the internet almost instantly, whereas in the past these programs were recorded on cassettes and sent by mail. The programs are checked by the studio team and then inserted into special computer software designed for radio broadcasting. These computers will follow the broadcast schedule and play out the right program at the right time. The output from this goes through a special connection with Kununurra and into the transmitters there where it is played out in real time.



Kununurra is where the antennas (pictured) and two HC100 transmitters are located. Because of the strategic location of this property Reach Beyond can reach far beyond the borders of Australia. A special team of people look after the transmitters and antennas and make sure they reach their intended audiences. Many program partners produce special programs for Easter. Pray that many people will tune into the broadcasts and that their lives will be touched. – www.reachbeyond.org

Hymn Books Wanted!

HYMNFEST meets on a quarterly basis at the Pine Rivers Salvation Army Hall at Lawnton on the north side of Brisbane. Many past participants have been called home to Glory, but a good number still meet, with new participants each time. HYMNFEST uses both *Sankey's Sacred Songs & Solos*, and *Alexander's Hymn Book* (large print preferred). These are getting harder to procure, so if any church has copies they no longer use we would be glad to have them. If you would like to donate any copies please contact Eddie Free on ejfree@tadaust.org.au or call (07) 3204 8582. Transport can be arranged.

Easter Appeals

MANY church denominations around Australia and many mission and aid organisations have special appeals at Easter time. Here at *New Life* we receive notification of some of these. It is a time when we can especially remember the great needs there are both overseas and in Australia. It can be an appropriate way to practically show thanks for the 'new life' we have in Christ. So it is a good chance to look up our denominational website or go to a mission or aid organisation website we would like to support in this way and see what we might do.

Australian Charities And Not-For-Profits Commission Legislation Update

IN March the *Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission (Repeal) (No. 1) Bill 2014* was presented to the House of Representatives. The Bill has since been referred to the Senate Economics Legislation Committee for inquiry and report. Submissions close on 2 May and the reporting date is 16 June 2014. Should this Bill be passed, it will not take effect until the enactment of a second Bill, which is yet to be released and due to be

tabled in the winter sitting of Parliament (June–July). The Government intends the second Bill to contain details of the arrangements replacing the ACNC.

– www.acnc.gov.au

New Bishop For Riverina (NSW) Anglican Diocese

THE Synod of the Anglican Diocese of Riverina has elected the Rev Alan Robert Gillion as the next Bishop of Riverina in NSW. Dr Gillion is currently Rector of the Parish of Holy Trinity, Sloane Square with St Saviour's, Upper Chelsea and Area Dean of Chelsea in the Diocese of London. He is a member of the Archbishops' (of Canterbury and York) College of Evangelists, a regular writer and Trustee for the Bible Reading Fellowship, and a contributor and advisor to the BBC for religious broadcasting. Rev Gillion will begin his work in Australia later in the year.

– www.anglican.org.au

Women's High Tea Fundraiser For Wakisa Ministries

WORLDSHARE are excited to be hosting a Women's High Tea fundraising event on Saturday 10 May from 2-4pm, costing \$40, at the Kew Golf Club, 120 Belford Rd, East Kew VIC to raise funds to support Wakisa Ministries.

Wakisa Ministries Uganda runs a pregnancy crisis centre which offers temporary shelter and pre and post-natal care. It runs vocational skills training in areas such as cooking, gardening and craft, providing the women with a means to support themselves and their children after they leave the centre. Wakisa also assists the teenage mothers in the reconciliation process with their families. The ministry was established as a vehicle for God's love, compassion and mercy towards these vulnerable young women. Contact katem@worldshare.org.au or phone 03 9899 2044.

'THIS IS MY STORY, THIS IS MY SONG ...'

Cliff Barrows' Advice At 91: 'Hide God's Word In Your Heart'



CLIFF Barrows has quite a few birthday memories. But as he celebrated 91 years on Sunday 7 April, he could point out one favourite. It was on his 72nd birthday that Barrows proposed to his wife, Ann. Both Cliff and Ann had lost their spouses to cancer. 'We were both very grateful that God would give us an opportunity to see that there was grace to love again, even at our age,' Ann said.

The trio of Cliff Barrows, Billy Graham and the late George Beverly Shea are a constant memory of those who have followed Mr Graham's ministry over the years. With his arms and mouth open wide, Barrows would direct the musical selections at each Crusade, while George Beverly Shea's deep voice boomed throughout arena after arena. 'All three of these men are such awesome men because of God,' Ann said. 'There was never that spirit of competition between them. It was always, "How can I help you? How can I make you look good?"'

That was evidenced last November as hundreds gathered to honour Billy Graham on his 95th birthday. After entering the room to a standing ovation, Graham took the microphone only to say one thing: 'Cliff, I want to thank you. This celebration is partly for you as well, and I want to thank you for all you've meant to me over these years. God bless you, and I love you.'

In addition to Crusades, the two worked together for the *Hour Of Decision* radio program, which Barrows has hosted since it started in 1950. 'I thank God for my relationship with Billy. He does my heart so much good. I think about him and pray for him constantly,' Barrows said.

Cliff Barrows grew up on a farm in Ceres, California, and came to Christ at the age of ten after his pastor preached on John 3.16. 'I got up from my pew and went and gave my hand to the preacher and my heart to the Saviour. And I've never been the same since.' These days, Barrows can still carry a tune, even blowing a song or two on the harmonica. His humble spirit and love for God many have encountered over the years is something Ann says is very genuine. For decades, he has been committed to memorizing Scripture, and after losing his sight to macular degeneration, that's his biggest advice for any believer: 'I would ask everybody at whatever age to begin to hide God's Word in your heart,' he said.

'Make a book your speciality.' Currently he is working on 1 John, 1 Peter, and his favourite verses, Philippians 3.10,11: 'That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.'

—Cicely Gosier, *Breaking Christian News*.

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Options For Understanding (Read Romans 7.14-25)

FOR REFLECTION:

Think about the dilemma of the God-fearer who has God's law, who desires to be obedient and yet does not know Christ. Thank God for the deliverance we have through Christ from the condemnation we deserve.

THERE are three options for understanding who is described as the 'I' in these verses, and of the state he is in.

OPTION 1: Is Paul speaking of himself as a believer? If he is, he is describing normal Christian experience.

OPTION 2: Is Paul speaking of himself as an 'unspiritual' believer? If so, it would introduce an unbiblical third category of person. In addition to the non-Christian and the Christian, there would now be the 'semi-Christian'.

OPTION 3: Is Paul describing his experience with the law, as a God-fearing Israelite? In this case, the experience he describes, best summarised in

verse 19 as 'I don't do the good I want to do, the evil I don't want to do is what I do', is the typical experience of every Israelite who seeks to keep God's law as the way to righteousness.

As to these options, look at Romans 9.30-33 and 10.3 to see that the Israelites sought to establish their own righteousness through law keeping. Paul explains in today's verses and elsewhere that this is an impossible quest. 'What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?' In verse 24 is the typical cry of the one under law who cannot keep it. Paul sees himself as bound to his body of death, a reference to King Mezentius who tied living criminals to the decomposing corpses of their victims.

The law is good (7.12) but it is powerless to change us or to enable us to keep it. The cry of triumph in verse 25 follows closely on the cry of anguish in verse 24. Chapter 8 fully describes the deliverance we have in Christ, climaxing with our glorification (vv 18ff). According to the first option, verse 19 is an accurate description of the believer's experience with good and evil. But, if this is typical of us, how can the exhortation of 6.19 not to offer our bodies in slavery to wickedness but rather to righteousness be meaningful, since the normal experience is one of frequent defeat? Also, how can 7.19 and 8.9-11 both be accurate pictures of the believer when they seem to say contrary things about the one person? Surely they cannot both be an accurate description of a Christian.

The first option does not seem to fit the context of Paul's argument as well as the third one does. Our performance will not be perfect this side of glory, but the desperate defeat and wretchedness described in these verses is evidence of the law's impotence to save and of the great need of unsaved Israel to come to Christ where there is no condemnation (8.1).

Content taken from 'Romans: Momentous News' by David Cook, published by 10Publishing, used with permission.



SAT-7 Branches Out Into

Live Internet Streaming, Mobile Phone Apps

CHRISTIAN satellite TV broadcaster SAT-7 is reaching over 15 million viewers across the Middle East and North Africa with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Through professional and creative programs produced by Christians from the region, the Gospel is reaching countries like Iran, Syria, Algeria and Libya. In order to make the Gospel accessible to as wide an audience as possible, SAT-7 have widened their scope from just satellite broadcasting to live streaming over the internet, and apps for private mobile devices.

The family of a young man burned all his books when they discovered he'd become a Christian. Now his only connection with other believers is the SAT-7 TÜRK app on his phone. He wrote, 'Thanks to you my mobile phone is my church.' Please pray for this innovative and rapidly growing ministry which is reaching places that most other ministries can't.

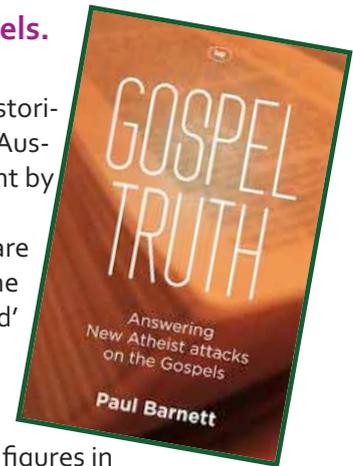
– www.sat7.org

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BOOKS WORTH READING

GOSPEL TRUTH: Answering New Atheist Attacks On The Gospels. **Paul Barnett, Nottingham: IVP, 2012. ISBN 978-1-84474-594-4**

IN the light of recent much-publicised attacks by the 'New Atheists' on the historical credibility of the Gospels as authentic portraits of Jesus, highly respected Australian New Testament scholar and historian, Dr Paul Barnett, meets argument by more effective counter-argument. He expresses his aim in these words: 'This book responds to the claims of Hitchens and other sceptics that the Gospels are inconsistent. Their instincts, however, are correct: destroy the credibility of the Gospels and you destroy the credibility of Jesus and thus the credibility of God' (p.22). A lot is at stake.



As noted by Barnett, the Gospels were written in the 60's and 70's of the First Century, within the lifetime of those who knew Jesus in the flesh. There are four Gospels, for each is connected to the mission groups of leading early figures in the Christian movement: *Matthew* (for James' mission network), *Mark* (for Peter's mission network), *Luke-Acts* (for the churches founded by Paul and his co-workers), and *John* (for his own mission field churches). The Four Gospels preserve the earliest mission teaching about Jesus.

Christopher Hitchens may deny that Jesus ever existed but the evidence of ancient non-Christian witnesses (Josephus, Tacitus, Pliny) refutes such baseless scepticism. The earliest preserved Christian document is probably *Paul's Letter To The Galatians* (AD 48). As Barnett shows, Paul's letters (*Galatians*, *1 Corinthians*) provide clear evidence of just how early the high view of Jesus as the Divine Son of God was held by Christians, such that this must be the understanding of the immediate followers of Jesus. There was no time for legends to develop or for a gradual evolution of an inflated view of Christ. The only sensible conclusion is that the Gospels portray Jesus as He really was.

Dr Barnett examines Luke's credentials as an accurate historian of the period, even down to many trivial details of geography included in *Acts* and Luke's use of the correct titles for various church officials. As well, the discovery of archaeological artefacts corroborate many of the events and persons mentioned in the New Testament. The four portraits of the life and activities of Jesus provided in the Gospels, though different in many respects (especially John versus the synoptics), cannot be shown to contradict. Likewise, the birth narratives of Jesus in *Matthew* and *Luke*, for all their differences, do not contradict each other.

Barnett shows that the report of Jesus' miracle-working power cannot be dismissed as fancy. The most stupendous miracle is the resurrection of Christ, but despite the strident claims of militant atheists that it is impossible, a sober examination of the historical evidence shows that it did happen. Barnett demonstrates that the apocryphal gospels (eg the so-called *Gospel Of Thomas*) are not serious rivals to the canonical Gospels that predate them and are located in the First Century (within 30 years of the One whose life they faithfully record). These other gospels come from the Second Century.

The many echoes of the teaching of Jesus found in the letters of Paul, Peter and James show evidence of a carefully preserved tradition that became the basis of what found permanent form in the Four Gospels. Wild claims by Richard Dawkins of fabrication and embellishment are completely unfounded. Barnett's careful sifting of the evidence reveals who in fact is doing the fabricating!

With almost 6,000 copies in part or whole of the *Greek New Testament* in existence, we are in a position to say that there is no doubt as to what the original text (autograph) looked like (with up to 99% accuracy). In other words, we know exactly what the Apostles taught about the Lord Jesus. No essential fact or doctrine is in doubt due to variability between early manuscripts of the New Testament. Thanks to the labours of Dr Barnett, we see that the Gospels, far from being the embarrassment the New Atheists claim them to be, are the bedrock of our faith.

Finally, Dr Barnett gives a fascinating survey of the New Testament, showing that the Gospels and apostolic letters were regularly read in early church meetings, indicating that the first Christians acknowledged these writings as divine revelation and placed them in the same category as the sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament. If you have been unsettled by recent attacks on the truth of the Bible (or know someone who has been), here is a book to get, read and share with others.

– Greg Goswell

BOOKS WORTH READING

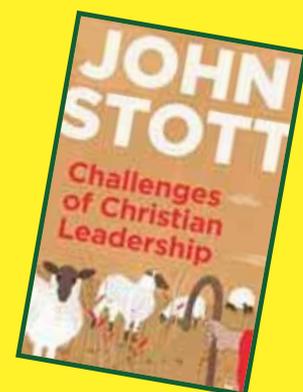
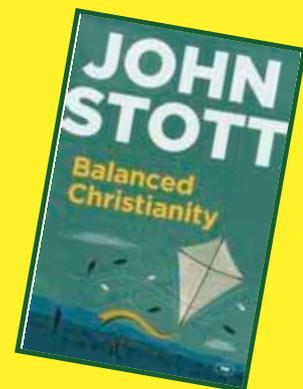
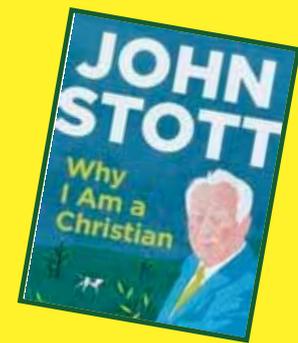
WHY I AM A CHRISTIAN; CHALLENGES OF CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP; BALANCED CHRISTIANITY. John Stott, reprinted 2013, IVP Nottingham

EACH of these three books is a gem! IVP in collaboration with Langham Literature has allowed yet another generation of Christians to benefit from the writings of John Stott and allowed those of us who have bought, read, and then given away these in the past, to purchase new copies to give away! None of these books is long, none is difficult to read, but all will leave the reader with ways of growing in Christian faith and maturity. *Why I Am A Christian* begins with the assertion that it was the Lord Jesus who 'pursued (him) relentlessly' and ends with the wonder that the Lord of Heaven comes with a personal invitation to each and every person. In between, we have a book of great value to believers and nonbelievers. For the believer there is reinforcement of the commitment made at an earlier time, perhaps a different reasoning for faith, perhaps a needed reassurance. Reference to the writings of other noted Christian thinkers is also helpful. For the nonbeliever there is an approach that looks at the realities of the world we live in, the truth of the Bible and the personal reflections that such a title suggests. As always in Stott, the Cross of Christ looms large in the picture.

Challenges Of Leadership comes from four talks that John Stott gave in Ecuador, and is for the first time printed in English. He focuses on four topics: discouragement, self-discipline, relationships, and leaders who are young. The book is full of wisdom, home truths and practical suggestions. What a great manual for leaders! Stott delivered these talks in 1985, but they remain relevant for the modern context as he pierces through the excuses the modern leader can make!

Balanced Christianity has well and truly stood the test of time as Stott is writing to Evangelical Christians, encouraging us to follow Jesus, the person who constantly confounds human attempts to pigeonhole Him, perfectly able to hold in place what we as human beings find a constant struggle. This is the Lord of the Universe who calls different types of people from every different background and asks us to live in harmony with other believers! Here is a chance to explore the question of what is essential in our faith and how that faith can be lived out. Particularly, Stott writes of the need for both intellect and emotion, conservative and radical, form and freedom, evangelism and social action. There is also the text of an interview with John Stott from 1995.

The Christian life should be one of continuing growth in thought and the outworking of our biblical understanding. From the aforementioned interview is the exhortation: 'Don't neglect your critical faculties.' Here are books that will assist us in our onward path. – Mignon Goswell



VISITING MELBOURNE?

You're welcome at The Faith Factory: St Kilda Presbyterian Church,
Cnr Alma Rd/Barkly St. Every Sunday 11am & 7pm;
Living Stones Korean Presbyterian Church. Every Sunday 12.30pm;
St Margaret's, Balaclava, Cnr Hotham St/Denman Rd. Every Sunday 9.30am.
Minister: Rev Bob Thomas 0417 592 646

You're Welcome At The Faith Factory
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BOOKS WORTH READING

NEARING HOME: Life, Faith And Finishing Well. Billy Graham, Thomas Nelson, 2014. ISBN 978-0-8499-4832-9

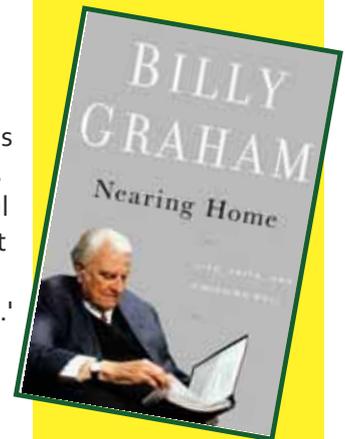
WE'RE all 'nearing Home', including Billy Graham, whose ministry has meant so much to so many. The man who could preach to thousands yet seem to be speaking to each individual has now written a book for thousands which reads as though the ageing evangelist is having a fireside chat with the individual reader.

Much of Dr Graham's effectiveness has been due to his ability to apply faithful Biblical preaching to the practicalities of life. I remember an interview broadcast by ABC television during his second visit to Australia in which the interviewer said, 'Of course your preaching has little application to the practicalities of life ...' Dr Graham interjected: 'My preaching is always practical.' 'But, Dr Graham,' the interviewer persisted, 'you're just speaking about the Bible, not about the problems and difficulties of everyday day life.' After three more attempts the interviewer finally 'got it' as Dr Graham reeled off example after example of the constant practicality of his preaching, and the interviewer changed tack.

But I digress. *Nearing Home* is a book full of practical Biblical application to a problem which far too many Christians face when they don't need to: 'finishing well'. From his own experience Dr Graham applies Biblical teaching to turning 'the last enemy, death' and the second last enemy, advancing old age, into friends.

Dr Graham's advice is plentiful, eminently sensible, thoroughly practical, completely Biblical – and peppered with homely illustrations and personal experience. But its focus ultimately is not just nearing Home, but reaching Home. Bible believing Christians know that this life is not all there is, indeed it's only a prelude to that life beyond time and space where we will spend eternity, and in his final chapter, *Then And Now*, Dr Graham brings before us the Christian's glorious hope, according to Scripture. This book will surely bring comfort, hope and blessing to those who read it, as well as challenge and enrichment as we're 'nearing Home'.

– Bob Thomas



**Advice that
is:
Plentiful...
Sensible...
Practical...
Biblical...**

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