

Teaching And Reaching At Belgrave Heights

TWO powerful preachers speaking on the over-arching theme *Salvation Belongs To God* challenged the hundreds who gathered for Belgrave Heights Summer Convention as they expounded the Scriptures.

Mike Raiter, Director of the Centre For Biblical Preaching in Melbourne, took us through the book of *Judges*, contrasting God in His divine perfection and man in his sin.



Ajith Fernando (left) and Mike Raiter (right)

Mike Raiter's passion is to preach God's Word faithfully and engagingly – and to help others to do so too as they call Australians to repentance for our idolastry as a nation and rebellion against God.

God's patience is incredible, but we shouldn't presume upon it, although we can rely on it. *Judges* is one of the most entertaining, exciting, colourful – and depressing, even shocking books in the Bible. It's about idolatry and the compromises of the people of God. *Judges* highlights for us similarities between Israel and present-day Australia. We Christians are God's chosen people (as Peter says to Christians) as they were. We are a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession. Like Israel, we look back to our great day of salvation, our Passover, our crossing the Red Sea is the cross and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Of course, they entered their Promised Land, but ours is still ahead of us. Nevertheless the land they inhabited was full of idols and idol worshippers who beckoned them to join them in their idolatries – just like the towns and cities we live in.

Israel didn't battle against sin and temptation – she repeatedly, gleefully submitted to it. The church of *Judges* bears little resemblance to any church weve known, because we live after Pentecost – when God poured His Spirit on His people. We walk by the Spirit. That makes an enormous difference.



Some of the colourful stalls at the missions display in the foyer at Belgrave Heights Convention. (Continued on p.6)

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Lord, Open Their Eyes

AUSTRALIAN missionaries Jocelyn and Ken Elliott, both in their 80s, had been running a hospital for some four decades in the town of Djibo in the West African country of Birkina Faso when they were taken by an al Qaeda-linked terrorist group over a month ago and are believed to have been held in neighbouring Niger. A spokesman for that country's President said Mrs Elliott 'was freed following mediation led by the President of Niger, Mahamadou Issoufou, and presented to the press in Dosso.' He added that efforts to release her husband, who worked as a surgeon, were being intensified.

According to the *Sydney Morning Herald* Dr Elliott says their work has been meeting a need physically, but their ultimate aim is to show the love of God.

The fate of Dr Elliott is not known at the time of writing (13 February) but many are praying for his soon release and ability to take up again the cause so dear to his heart.

Meanwhile Mrs Elliott has expressed her love for these poverty-stricken people and her desire to return to Djibo and restart the work as soon as possible. She joins a noble company of missionary wives determined to continue their husbands' work. There was that other Elliot family, Jim and Elizabeth. Some 50 years ago Jim Elliot, Nate Saint, Pete Fleming, Ed McCully and Roger Youderian went out to reach the Huaorani tribe of eastern Ecuador. All five of the men were killed by the tribe and martyred. Their wives went back and in time rejoiced to see the conversion of the very men who had killed their husbands. Their eyes had been opened.

Then there were Gladys Staines and her daughter Esther. Graham Staines (well known to us here at *New Life* through his visits to us when he was home on furlough) – one of the Lord's choice saints – who with his little boys Philip and Timothy was martyred in India by an enraged Hindu mob as they slept in their vehicle one night while attending a Christian convention. Gladys and Esther went back to Mayurbhan, and for a number of years continued the work among lepers which the family had been engaged in (see p.8).

Long ago, at the dawn of the Reformation, William Tyndale made a translation of the Bible into the English language of his day. For his pains Tyndale was arrested and imprisoned, tried for heresy and treason in an unfair trial, and convicted. Tyndale was then strangled and burnt at the stake in the prison yard, on 6 October 1536. His last words were, 'Lord, open the King of England's eyes.' This prayer was answered three years later, in the publication of King Henry VIII's 1539 English *Great Bible* – and the rest, as they say, is history.

In today's world, 'the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the Gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God' (2 Corinthians 4.4). And therein lies the tragedy – that adherents of other religions, as well as adherents of none, are so blind to the goodness and love of God as seen in the labours of His faithful servants that they remain blind, 'lost and dead in their trespasses and sins' and will not see the boundless love of God in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our earnest and concerted prayers must be that the Lord will open the eyes of all who are blind in their minds 'so that they cannot see the light of the Gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God'; that they would turn from their wicked ways and receive the blessings of belief – and that all who labour for Him 'will not grow weary in well-doing, but know that in due time they will reap a reward.'

– Bob Thomas

CHINA: A New Cultural Revolution Is Upon Us

BETWEEN 1958 and 1961 at least 18 million (and possibly as many as 45 million) Chinese died as a direct result of Chairman Mao's disastrous socio-economic campaign known as the 'Great Leap Forward'. Subsequently dissent rose within the Chinese Communist Party. In 1966 Mao struck back, launching the socio-political movement known as the 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution'. He purged opposition from the CCP and incited indoctrinated youths to purge society of being 'closet capitalists'. Books were burned, art was destroyed, intellectuals were incarcerated and killed, churches were confiscated and bulldozed, foreign missionaries were expelled or executed, and Chinese pastors were murdered and condemned to decades in labour camps and coal mines.

At that time the Church in China was estimated to be around one million strong. Despite being severely persecuted the Chinese Church committed herself to mission. God redeemed the suffering, using it to make hearts receptive to the Gospel. For decades Church growth was largely confined to rural regions. But then, the Tiananmen Square massacre of 4 June 1989 shattered the confidence of China's urban elite, opening the door to the spread of the Gospel in the cities and at every level of society. Once again, the Chinese Church, being committed to mission, scattered the seed of the Gospel over hearts God had prepared to receive it.

By the beginning of the 21st Century the Church in China was estimated to number 100 million, with Chinese Christians working and witnessing as lawyers, academics, entrepreneurs, musicians, etc. This growth has occurred in the absence of foreign missionaries, making Christianity in China an indigenous movement. The most un-Chinese thing in China today is the Marxism Mao imported from Europe!

Today it seems the cycle is repeating. Communism has failed, the economy is fragile and dissent is rising – even inside the CCP. In this context it seems President Xi Jinping (who assumed office in November 2012) is laying the foundation for a new cultural revolution. The CCP is being purged, mostly by means of an 'anti-corruption' campaign and Maoism is being resurrected. President Xi, increasingly the focus of a personality cult, is tightening his control over the cultural sphere while promoting solidarity around ideology as being China's only hope against foreign infiltration. From 2002 - 2007 Xi Jinping served as governor and party secretary of Zhejiang Province, where he would have witnessed the phenomenal growth of Protestant Christianity, especially in the city of Wenzhou, known as 'China's Jerusalem' because of its many churches, Christian-run businesses and its sizable, influential Christian minority. According to a new report by Willy Lam (*The Jamestown Foundation, China Brief*, 4 Feb 2016) it is no accident that President Xi's campaign to 'Sinicise Christianity', so as to put Christianity into the service of the CCP, was launched in Zhejiang. Lam comments, 'Except during the Cultural Revolution, 'official' churches' – as distinct from house churches which refuse to come under the auspices of the CCP-approved Three Self Patriotic Movement and the China Christian Council – 'have not been directly subjected to the party's ideological or doctrinal intervention.'

Lam is wrong on this count for this has recently changed. Pastor Gu Yuese, arrested on 27 January, was an official with the CCC and pastor of China's largest TSPM church – Chongyi Church in the Zhejiang capital, Hangzhou. Now detained in a 'black jail' on charges of corruption, Gu's only offence was to criticise CCP policy in Zhejiang. The government has since appointed a new pastor to oversee Chongyi Church, having divided up and transferred out its pastoral team. Authorities have also arrested Li Guanzhong, the chairman of the China Christian Council in Pujiang County, Zhejiang, and senior pastor of Puyang Christian Church in the city of Jinhua. Arrested on 29 January, Li and his wife, Zhang Shuzhen, now also are detained in China's 'black jail' system where, like Pastor Gu, they are being held incommunicado, without access to legal representation, on charges pertaining to corruption. Like Gu, Li had protested CCP policy in Zhejiang. In July 2014 he resisted CCP pressure to destroy his own church's cross. More recently he resisted the CCP's order that all TSPM churches fly the Chinese flag. Eighteen crosses have been toppled from churches in Zhejiang since 1 January (some 1800 since February 2014) and eight TSPM pastors are now detained.

Furthermore, the authorities have abducted five booksellers out of Hong Kong and a journalist out of Thailand; formal charges have been brought against nearly 20 human rights lawyers; coerced 'confessions' are once again being broadcast on state television. 2016, marks the 50th anniversary of the launch of Mao's Cultural Revolution and many observers suspect that a new cultural revolution is upon us. Just as the last one failed, so too will this one. In fact it could even facilitate revival and result in the collapse of the CCP, but not before much suffering has been unleashed.

The Church in China needs our prayers for wisdom, for endurance and for mission. Please pray that China's imprisoned pastors and Christian human rights lawyers will have full assurance that nothing can separate them from the love of Christ Jesus (Romans 8.35-39) who has promised to be with them to the end of time (Matthew 28.20) and to give them rest, peace and strength (Matthew 11.28; John 14:27) – *Elizabeth Kendal*.

DEFENDING THE FAITH

Wycliffe Associates Set The Bar High For 2016

THERE are more than 6,900 languages spoken around the world today, with full translation of the Bible in only 531 of those, but Wycliffe Associates plans to close that gap significantly in 2016.

'We're going to see more than double the number of new Translation Starts around the world. We're anticipating more than 500 new Bible translations to begin during the coming year,' said Wycliffe Associates President and CEO Bruce Smith.

This expectation comes despite opposition in many of the countries where Wycliffe Associates is working. Smith says the rate of translation is increasing considerably, primarily due to a new translation method and 'out-of-the-box' tools.

Mobile Assistance Supporting Translation (MAST) is a new program revolving around a single team of national translators who can draft and check an entire New Testament translation in record time, Smith said. Indigenous translators work in parallel, translating different passages of the same

CHRISTIANS living under persecution are risking their lives to translate the Bible into their local languages, according to Wycliffe Associates. Bruce Smith, President and CEO of Wycliffe Associates, says despite the risks, the demand for translations of the Bible is coming from the local churches themselves. Persecution has led to Bible translators having to flee or suspend their translation work for safety. A number have been jailed and some tortured, while one person has lost their life and others are working very carefully and quietly to avoid such direct antagonisms. Wycliffe equips national translators with technology to help them work discreetly and collaboratively, ensuring maximum speed and security in translation.

book of the Bible. When a translator hits a bump, he has the benefit of seeing the work done by a peer on a similar section of Scripture. 'The workers help each other, check each other's work, get community input—and the overall effort is lightning fast by Bible translation standards,' Smith said. He estimates that a 26-member team of national translators can produce a New Testament translation in less than a year. Wycliffe began using MAST in 2014, with 235 groups employing it around the world. Using MAST, Wycliffe Associates will begin 500 new translation projects in 2016.

– Cliff Jeffery

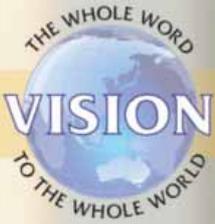


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Parents Call Time Out On Safe Schools Program

CONCERNED parents are pulling their children from school after some 490 schools across Australia signed up to the new \$8 million Government-sponsored program *Safe Schools* that endorses students cross-dressing and other radical sexual concepts.

The Safe Schools Coalition has released the All Of Us program that teaches children aged 11 to 14 that they can be lesbian, gay, bisexual, straight, queer and pansexual (attracted to everyone). According to Australian Christian Lobby spokesperson Wendy Francis, the most worrying aspect of the program is that it confuses children about their own identity. (One activity requires the class to imagine themselves as 16 year olds in a same-sex relationship.)

In the All Of Us program students who do not support Gay issues have to explain in front of the class and teacher why they hold a different view, and are coached to alter their views. Wendy Francis says ACL encourages parents across the nation to inquire from their children's school whether it has signed up to the *Safe School* agenda. 'And if it has, parents should be speaking out loudly in defence of their children by pressing the school to withdraw from the dangerous program,' she said. - ACL

'Spirit Of Forgiveness, Love And Peace' Shown By 'Followers Of The Way'

IT has been widely reported that a church in the US, where a shooting last year claimed nine lives, has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. The Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, has apparently been recommended for the prestigious award by a group of politicians. It is claimed that the nomination was inspired by the church's decision to promptly forgive Dylann Roof, who is accused of committing the killings last June.

The town fathers were quoted as saying 'If anyone was responsible for promoting the peace, it was the church leadership. They demonstrated more love, peace and forgiveness than we have ever seen before ... They are a great example for us all to follow.'

A petition on the township website supporting the Nobel Peace Prize nomination said: 'In some other city, an incident of such hatred and racist horror might have sparked an outpouring of anger, violence and divisiveness – driving crowds into the streets in clashes with each other and police. Instead, the entire community of Charleston came together in a spirit of forgiveness, love and peace.'

- Premier News

Wesley Mission On The Up And Up

CEO of Sydney's Wesley Mission, Rev Dr Keith Garner, says their commitment to values of Christ-like servanthood, unfailing integrity and courageous commitment across their service areas have helped build reputation and trust. Wesley Mission has increased its standing as 'a reputable and trustworthy charity in the eyes of the Australian public' according to a recently released national survey.

Wesley Mission has moved from 28th to 21st position on *Australia's Most Reliable Annual Charity Reputation Index*. The *Index*, which lists the top 40 Australian charities, collates insight directly from consumers, and does not rely on any information provided by the organisations being studied.

- Wesley Mission

Testifying To The Power Of Christ

FIVE people who found faith at a homeless centre in the UK will share their stories in a series of short videos which the Church of England is re-

leasing for Lent and Easter. *Christian Today* reports that the men and women in the videos came to faith through the 'Saturday Gathering Centre' and have struggled with things such as doubting God, drugs, alcohol, and homelessness.

The first film, now released, features 24-year-old Emma who shares her struggles with doubting and questioning God, even though she has come to faith in Him. 'Without God,' Emma says, 'I'd still be drinking and taking drugs. I don't even know if I'd be here, because I was a self harmer, I would have probably taken my own life at some point.'

Rev Arun Arora, Communications Director for the Church of England says each of the inspirational stories is a reminder of how faith and prayer can turn life around.

- Christian News Headlines

'Here am I ... send me.'
Isaiah 6.8

UP TO THE HEIGHTS FOR STRENGTH IN THE VALLEY

Teaching And Reaching At Belgrave Heights *(Continued from p.1)*



Mike Raiter made many other salient points during his addresses:

- Australians used to show sympathy to the Church but this has morphed into apathy which has hardened into antipathy, with Evangelical Christians becoming the most-loathed group. BUT God is still Sovereign; still in control.
- To counter this we must continue to preach Christ and His Cross, preach memorably, preach with Holy Spirit anointing and power.
- Don't let our proclamation be trivial – it's not about us, it's about our Sovereign God.
- *Judges* brings before us a tragic progression – or regression – from being different to being indistinguishable; from being in the world to being of the world; from being separate – to belonging; a situation to avoid.
- The great comforting news of *Judges* is that God is still a God of compassion. In fact, the thing that

surprises us most of all about *Judges* isn't the repeated faithlessness of the people – but the repeated compassion of God.

- Only strong faith will enable Christian men and women to survive in this society. Only a Gospel of a crucified Saviour who rose and conquered death and calls on all people – not just to see Him as a passport to Heaven that simply needs a stamp and a signature; not just to see Him as the answer to their problems; not just the leader of a wonderfully loving, supportive and friendly group of people in the world's most livable city – will achieve this. We must know Him and proclaim Him as the Lord of Heaven and Earth who demands that we deny ourselves, our ungodly ambitions, our immoral desires and our destructive addictions – and take up our cross and follow Him.

Next Issue: *Ajith Fernando's contribution to the BHC Summer Convention.*

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'BRING THEM IN'

Warm Welcome Essential To Reach Muslims For Christ

AMIDST the rise of Islamic State, appalling violence and the displacement of 16 million people in the Middle East, many Muslims are seeking alternatives to Islam, says leading missiologist Rev Dr David Williams. 'It is no exaggeration to say that the world of Islam is in turmoil' he says. 'On the one hand, Islamic State's model of Jihad is attracting some to its cause. On the other, many Muslim people are asking all sorts of questions about what they believe. There seems to be a new openness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.'



Speaking at the annual CMS Summer School

Mission Conference for Queensland and Northern NSW, David encouraged Australian Christians to reach out to people from other cultures and religions in their local neighbourhoods and workplaces.

With many Muslims now coming to Australia, especially as refugees, it presents Christians and churches here with many local cross-cultural mission opportunities. 'You don't need to get on an aeroplane to meet someone from another culture. You just have to walk down the street or into the local shopping mall. The nations of the world are now on our doorstep,' David said. 'We all have the opportunity to be cross-cultural missionaries. Will we take the opportunities that are in front of us?' David said that people would be wise to reflect about the attitudes of our hearts, our homes and our churches. Rather than excluding people from very different backgrounds, either through outright hatred or indifference, he said Australian Christians needs to embrace them as Christ would.

However, human beings have an inbuilt safety mechanism. 'When we see something new or different, or something we don't understand, the safety mechanism kicks in to protect us. We tend to assume the worst,' he said. 'While that is a great thing when it comes to spiders; it's not a good thing when it comes to cross-cultural relationships. Because we tend to assume the worst of people when we don't understand a cultural situation.'

Our homes can be places of hospitality or safe-haven. David said that offering hospitality to foreigners, refugees and asylum seekers has a huge impact on people's lives. He hears many stories of people from other cultures being invited to a meal and saying: 'This is the first time I have been into an Australian home.'

That hospitality extends to the church, which might offer 'welcome or walls.' Churches can be places of welcome for people of different cultures. One way is through providing English conversation classes, and then giving people the choice of staying to hear a Bible story and learn more about the Christian faith. 'The New Testament clearly presents hospitality as part of the Christian life – see Romans 12.13, Hebrews 13.2 and 1 Peter 4.9. So we are to open our homes and practise hospitality. At the simplest level that might look like having people around for a meal. Or it might look like having someone come and live with you,' David said. 'Mission in the 21st Century is truly from everywhere to everywhere. All we need is hearts that will embrace those who are different from us, homes that are hospitable and open, and churches that are warm and welcoming.'

Rev Dr David Williams, is CMS Training and Development Secretary and a former missionary to Kenya as Principal of Carlile College, a mission training college. For further information about cross-cultural mission in Australia, contact CMS Queensland with Northern NSW qld@cms.org.au phone (07) 3112 6530

Ramon A Williams
- Worldwide Photos -
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Prestigious Award For Gladys Staines

GLADYS Staines from Queensland has just been granted the Indian-based Harmony Foundation's *Mother Theresa Memorial Award for Social Justice 2015* for her work in serving poor and leprosy affected peoples in India – almost 17 years after Gladys and her daughter Esther (then 13), at their home in Baripada in the Mayurbhanj district of Orissa, heard the tragic news that her missionary husband, Graham, and their two sons, Philip (10) and Timothy (6) had been deliberately burnt to death in their station wagon at the village of Monoharpur, 160k away. Graham had been attending the annual *Jungle Camp* (Christian Convention). Their attackers accused Graham of forcibly converting tribal Hindu people to Christianity. The killing triggered an outcry around the world, with then President K.R. Narayanan denouncing it as a 'crime that belonged to the world's inventory of black deeds'.



Many were impacted by the expression of forgiveness from Gladys even in her profound grief. Graham and Gladys were serving with the Evangelical Missionary Society in Mayurbhanj, founded in 1895 by Kate Allenby from Windsor Road Baptist Church in Qld. The work focussed on serving those affected by leprosy and other impoverished and outcast peoples; and on planting and supporting local churches. A succession of missionaries served the mission and, by the time of the deaths in January 1999, it comprised a Leprosy Home (with 70 residents) and farm, a Rehabilitation Community and farm (approx ten families), two mission compounds and around 27 churches. In 2005 Gladys was awarded the prestigious *Padma Sri for Social Service Award* by the Government of India.

In granting the *Mother Theresa Memorial Award For Social Justice*, Dr Abraham Mathai of the Harmony Foundation advised Gladys, 'We are pleased to highlight this year's focus on women's and children's rights and access to affordable medical and health care services to those who are marginalized and destitute. Considering your work with leprosy patients in the remote tribal areas of Mayurbhanj, Orissa over the past 30 years, along with your tireless efforts to continue serving the medical and health care needs of the local community through the Graham Staines Memorial Hospital opened in 2004, it is Harmony Foundation's great pleasure to invite you to grace this auspicious occasion to receive the prestigious Mother Teresa Memorial Award.' The Award was conveyed at a ceremony in Mumbai on 22 November. 'It's an honour for me, my husband and my entire family,' she said, recalling that her first reaction after the tragic incident was whether she would be able to stay in India or need to return to Australia. 'I thought, "I hope I don't need to return to Australia. This place has been my home for 15 years." I wanted to go on living there and continue the work. I'm so glad that I did,' Gladys told the *Mumbai Mirror*.

Gladys continued to live and serve in India until 2004, when she returned to Queensland. In a report on the award printed by *Asia News*, Gladys said, 'I have never worked for awards, and was amazed to be chosen for this award. While I have not been living in India some time, I periodically visit and take great interest in the work for leprosy being carried out in Orissa. I thank God for His help in enabling me to carry out the work of caring for people with leprosy, even after my husband was killed'. Now living in Townsville, Gladys continues serving as the Honorary Secretary of EMSM. She has made several visits to support and advise on the development of the ministry in India. The 15 bed Graham Staines Memorial Hospital was opened in 2004, the Philip and Timothy Memorial Hostel for 40 boys in 2003 and the Kate Allenby Girl Child Care Centre/Hostel with seven girls in 2013.

Gladys is quick to say that such progress has much to do with the initiative, sacrifice and hard work of many others in India and through the generosity of many donors, especially in Australia. The church ministry continues to benefit from a partnership with the Indian Evangelical Mission, with a new agreement currently being drawn up. The medical work has benefitted for services and drugs provided by The Leprosy Mission and the hospital with staff seconded from the large Christian Fellowship Hospital. To learn more, contact Gladys Staines, Honorary Secretary at gstaines@gmail.com OR Lloyd Carter, EMSM Home Council Chair at lloyd@carterclan.id.au 0433 352 088. – Lloyd Carter

Creation SuperCamp – ‘Raging Success’



Interesting experiments ...



... absorbing conversations.

OVER 800 people attended a five-day *Creation SuperCamp* hosted by Creation Ministries International from 4–8 January. Scientific speakers from the USA and Singapore joined a host of Australian scientists delivering 19 professional talks. Topics ranged from the big bang to local rivers and rocks, from superbugs to antibodies, from ice age to current climates, and from the dynasties of ancient Egypt to current atheist arguments and challenges to education. And of course the powerful message underlying all of these talks was that sound science reveals our Creator God and upholds the Bible. Four bonus sessions referred to as ‘night owl’ talks (one each night) catered for the insomniacs. It is part of CMI’s mission to ensure the Christian community is provided with an overview of new research on Genesis history every three years or so.

When it was all over, one man related: ‘Many (older) people talk about a Billy Graham Crusade being the turning point in their life. This SuperCamp has been my “Billy Graham experience”’. The Stanwell Tops Conference Centre between Sydney and Wollongong hosted the conference. The torrential rain over the first three days was a blessing as it ensured that participants found more time to chat to each other, and a real sense of community developed early in the event.

The Q&A session illustrated the importance of such events, with the majority of scientists on stage at the same time. The response of campers to this session was outstanding – over 300 questions were posted! The team answered as many as they could in the time available, promising to continue discussions with those whose questions could not be answered during the session.

The camp theme reinforced the Genesis-Gospel connection, proclaiming that the Lord Jesus Christ is Creator and Saviour of the world. It provided an excellent opportunity for people to digest current research and learning, and to join ad hoc discussion groups with other campers, CMI Staff and the scientific speakers.

A highlight of this SuperCamp was the broad and growing range of highly qualified creation scientists who continue to work towards a deeper understanding of how scientific discoveries support Genesis history. Many participants were thrilled to see a new crop of young speakers on stage. One participant said, ‘The young guys who are fruit of CMI’s ministry and encouragement – they truly are champions and weapons in the Lord’s hands already. And they are just warming up down the end of the runway waiting for the control tower clearance to take off!’

The children and youth were also well catered for. There was a daily crèche and an exciting Children’s Ministry that included Bible teaching, puppet shows, science projects, music, and much more. The Youth Group was attended by over 80 who met for meals, movies, activities and the like. For many youth the highlight was the special VIP youth dinner with the scientists.

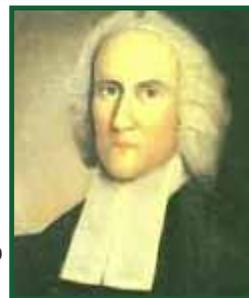
The great response to the SuperCamp highlighted once again that Australian national camps like this are highly effective. Indeed CMI received many requests to reach out more frequently as well as many offers of support to do so.

For news of upcoming CMI camps and events, subscribe to CMI’s free email newsletter at creation.com/infobytes. Include your country and postcode to be informed of forthcoming events in your local area. **‘CREATION.com**—Your solution to evolution.’

Jonathan Edwards Goes Digital

THOSE who love the writings of Jonathan Edwards will be pleased to know that Yale University's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, assisted by the Jonathan Edwards Center, has completed a high-resolution scan of the entire *Edwards Collections* at both Yale University and Andover Newton Theological School.

Go to beinecke.library.yale.edu To view and use the scans. It is recommended that you first go to the *Finding Aid Database*, enter GEN MSS 151 (the record group number for the Edwards Collection), and bookmark or download the manuscript inventory. This will be needed in order to enter manuscript titles correctly into the digital scan collection. The work has been overseen by Professor A.C. (Adriaan) Neele, a member of the World Reformed Fellowship, who is Research Scholar, and Digital Editor at the Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University, and Professor of Historical Theology and Director at the Jonathan Edwards Centre Africa of the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa.



– Dr Samuel T. Logan

'LET GOD BE GOD'

ECCLESIASTES 3.11: *He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.* Three very significant truths are expressed in this short verse.

Firstly, God is the sovereign Creator of everything, and He has been intentional, so that everything is 'beautiful in its time'. Solomon had just reflected on God's sovereign rule in his familiar 'a-time-for-this-and-a-time-for-that' passage (1-8). Satan might try his hardest to undermine and frustrate God's plans, and rebellious man might shake his fist and defy God's rule with dire consequences for His world; but the Lord of all pursues His plan inexorably to its culmination in the Return of Christ to reign. Even the horrors of the Cross, where Satan and rebellious Man combined forces to do their worst, were part of this 'beautiful' plan, so that Paul is able to say, 'And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.' (Romans 8.28).

Secondly, we have a firm and encouraging basis on which to share the Good News of Jesus with others!

There are times when we might feel discouraged when confronted by deaf ears and hard hearts, as if nothing could ever get through to people we are trying to get through to with the Gospel. But Solomon reminds us that '[God] has also set eternity in the hearts of men. Often it seems like this is not the case, but we are all God's image-bearers and the Holy Spirit can penetrate and soften the hardest heart. (Some of us can testify to that personally!)

Thirdly, Solomon reminds us that God is God and we are part of His Creation, and therefore we must leave some difficult questions in His sovereign hands. In Romans 9-11, Paul has been dealing with the difficulties raised by Man's disobedience vis-a-vis God's covenant promises, and particularly the place the doctrine of His electing grace has in this – the 'why' of His choosing – and he concludes: 'Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counsellor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen.' (Romans 11.33-36). And to this, Solomon would also say 'Amen'. – Bruce Christian, Sutherland Shire Christian School.

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PERSECUTION WATCH

Light For Laos Through Christian Literature

SPARKLIT (formerly SPCK) needs financial help to publish Christian books in Laos. One man's testimony tells us why: **I often wondered if the stories about Jesus were true.** I had seen what happened to followers of the Christian religion. They were isolated, followed, tortured and sometimes killed.

One night I slept restlessly. I woke to hear a voice calling my name. A knock at the front door followed. I dressed quickly and went to answer it, but no one was there. I returned to my bed, confused. My family accused me of hallucinating, but I knew it wasn't in my head. Perturbed by a sleepless night, I agreed to go to church with my uncle. I sat in the pew, unsure of what to expect.

A woman shared with me *The Four Spiritual Laws*. In the brochure I read the words 'Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in.' Immediately all fear and doubt left me. I knew who had been calling my name. I knew who had been knocking. I knew the truth. That day I became a follower of Jesus.

When no one was looking I went to church. Secretly, I disciplined new believers. But when the police threatened to kill me, I ran away to Thailand. I can't keep quiet about what I know. My people need to hear the Gospel. After a few weeks I decided to return to Laos and devote my life to Christian ministry and publishing. Although our constitution guarantees religious freedom, evangelism, training and church-planting are outlawed. The government doesn't want Christianity to spread. We face growing persecution, but an even bigger threat is the lack of Christian books. I want to write, translate books and run a radio program.

I am only one person. I can't be in more than one place at a time. But books can go where I cannot. If I can write a good book, it will bring the Gospel to my people. We want to publish books that tell people about Jesus. With books we can train teachers, leaders and evangelists. We want our people to be able to know and worship God in our language.

Please pray that our Father will prepare the hearts of our people, so that when they hear God's Word they will believe in Him. Let's publish the first Christian books written in Lao by local Christians.

For more details visit www.sparklit.org today.



NEPAL – Banning Acts Leading To Conversion

BOWING to pressure from hardline Hindu groups, the Nepalese Congress has banned any acts leading to conversions from one religion to another in the country's new constitution. At the same time they declared the nation to be secular and neutral toward all religions. The constitutional change concerns Christian missionaries in the region who reportedly have seen greater openness to the Gospel than ever before, especially following the April 2015 earthquake that killed 8,000 people. International observers have voiced concern that the Nepalese Government has flouted international treaties to guarantee freedom of religion for all its citizens. Christian Solidarity Worldwide says the freedom to choose and change one's faith is a fundamental right which must be upheld as an essential part of any constitution which adheres to international human rights principles.

– ANS

NIGERIA – Attack Leaves Ten Dead And Hundreds Displaced

FULANI herdsmen are reported to have attacked farming communities in Benue State, killing ten and displacing about 300 villagers. The attack in

Buruku local government area happened on Sunday 7 February. Please pray for our Christian brothers and sisters who are grieving the loss of family members as a result of this latest attack. Pray that those who have been displaced will find refuge and help.

– Release International

TURKEY: Refugee Life Grows Desperate

BURGEONING refugee camps in Turkey have gone from bad to worse. The growing crowds are bringing in sicknesses, and food is scarce. More than 70 nations met in London to discuss raising money for the 4.59 million registered Syrian refugees who have crossed the borders into Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and a number of European countries. The hope is to raise billions of dollars in order to provide refugees with homes, education, and supplies. Of the Syrian refugees that have fled their home country and registered with the UN, more than 2.3 million are currently residing in Turkey. Approximately 9% of this population is living in refugee camps, Christian Aid Mission reports. Refugee desperation grows as winter bites. Christian Aid Mission reports it is one of the coldest winters on record in the country and swine flu is currently spreading.

Life In God’s New Society

ACTS 2.42-47

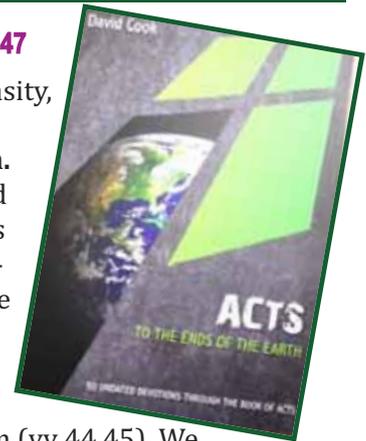
ONE of the features of our modern culture is our intense population density, yet we lack togetherness. We have proximity without community.

In these verses, we read of the community life of the prototype church.

They shared the common experience of hearing the Gospel, repentance and baptism, and now they shared a common devotion. (The idea of the word is ‘attachment like glue.’) They stuck to the apostolic teaching and to the community and the breaking of bread. (The ‘breaking of bread’ may indicate the Lord’s Supper or, as in v 46, hospitality and prayer.)

Jesus had prayed in John 17.23 for the complete unity of believers.

We now see this deep unity built around a common experience and common devotion. This even extended to a Spirit-motivated voluntary socialism (vv 44,45). We may think that the church was fairly self-absorbed, but no, their pooling of resources was to meet human need. At a time when government was not concerned for social welfare, and life was cut-throat and cheap. No wonder people were impressed with this new society growing up in their midst in Jerusalem ‘enjoying the favour of all the people’ (v 47).



FOR REFLECTION:

HOW can you encourage your local fellowship to be more like its prototype? Note how often community words are used in vv 42–47. How does this church challenge our unhealthy individualism?

Again Luke reminds us that this impressive community is not just a matter of people turning over a new leaf, but is superintended by God (v 43). God enabled the apostles to do wonders and ‘the Lord added to their number’ (v 47). This is God at work through the life and witness of His people. The church is never to be a closed, secret, and introverted community. All true fellowship is founded upon and focused on the Gospel. All true fellowship overflows into evangelism, which after all, is the overarching mandate of the church (Acts 1.8). **You need such a fellowship with your fellow believers.** The fractured world needs to see church communities witnessing to the reality of substantially restored human relationships because of the Gospel.

Content taken from 'ACTS – To The Ends Of The Earth' by David Cook, published by 10Publishing, used with permission.

Read: *The Objective Evidence For The Christian Faith* by David Holden, at www.defenceofthefaith.org

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BOOKS WORTH READING

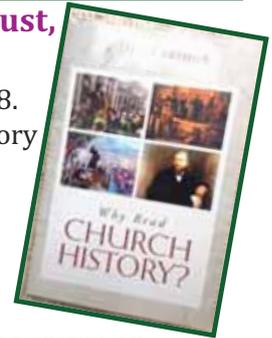
WHY READ CHURCH HISTORY? J. Philip Arthur, Banner Of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 2015. ISBN 978 1 84871 527 1.

PHIL Arthur has been pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Lancaster, England since 1988. He studied history at Cambridge University and is a visiting lecturer in Church History at London Theological Seminary. 'History,' he confesses, 'has always been one of the great loves of my life,' and his interest was aroused in the best possible way – by escapades such as walking along Hadrian's Wall as a boy with his father.

He writes with infectious enthusiasm as he takes us on an all-too-brief journey of discovery as to why we should read church history.

Pearls of wisdom abound: '(As you read Christian biography) remember to put the crown on the right head'; reasons for studying church history are many and compelling; a suggested reading list will get the reader off to a good start in the study of church history. Just 22 pages long, but with an attractive cover showing four of the great moments in church history, this booklet will surely whet our appetite for becoming avid readers of church history.

– Bob Thomas.



PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY, Allan M. Harman, Banner Of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 2015. ISBN 978-1-84871-623-0.

CARL Trueman calls this book 'A brief but brilliant book on ministry', and so it is. Allan Harman's wisdom gathered over half a century's involvement in theological education, more latterly as Professor of Old Testament and then Principal of the Presbyterian Theological College, Melbourne, is distilled here for the guidance, encouragement and blessing of those who sense the call of God to the ministry.

'The call' can come in many ways. Ones that I have heard of range all the way from 'angels dancing on the dashboard of the car' (no, I didn't take that one seriously) to a deep, recurring, inner conviction of God Himself calling one to ministry, confirmed by external discernment. Professor Harman here gives guidance for discerning one's call that is eminently suitable for 'the religion of a sound mind.'

He begins by laying down the first requirement for those who are offering for the ministry: that they be converted men with zeal for the glory of God and a desire to save souls. ('You need to know that you are right with God if you are going to call others into obedience to Christ ... There is no place in ministry for an unconverted pastor.') Then he gives a staged approach to preparing for ministry from prior and preparatory training right up to first steps in ministry. He provides a helpful check list (pp.6,10) of qualities a pastor needs to have, while numerous footnotes give references to other publications which flesh out and confirm the points he makes himself.

Following Professor Harman's own essay, Spurgeon's *The Minister's Self-Watch* from *Lectures To My Students* is published in full – which should surely whet the appetite for devouring more of 'The Prince Of Preachers' writing, then B.B. Warfield's *The Religious Life Of Theological Students* – another valuable contribution to the subject.

While this book is primarily aimed at prospective students for ministry, however, it has a much wider usefulness. Those of us who have been long in the Lord's service could do well to read it and in its light examine ourselves as to how we too measure up to the demands of ministry. Perhaps we might need to 'fan the flame that is in us', especially as the final laps of our course begin to press upon us. Perhaps we might need to beg the Lord to 'restore the years that the swarming locust has eaten', especially if we have been the victims of a liberal 'theological education'. Perhaps there are even some who have never given thought to the state of their own souls, going through the motions of ministry but without conviction and zeal, without even a right relationship of their own with the Lord Jesus Christ. And those of us who have benefitted directly from Professor Harman's ministry might just be moved to offer a prayer of thanks to the Lord for a man whom He raised up and who revolutionised the study of the Old Testament in particular and theological education in general.

Whether we treat this book as a template to hold ourselves up against if we are contemplating entering into ministry or as a challenge by which to assess our work so far for the Lord if we have been in the work for some time, or even if we are not involved in the ministry ourselves but want to understand something more of 'what makes a minister tick', this book's sanctified common sense arising from a sound Biblical foundation will shed light on the way ahead.

– Bob Thomas

BOOKS WORTH READING

A PARCEL OF PROMISES, Rita Stella Galieh, Rita Stella Press, PO Box 101, Moorebank, NSW, 1875. Cost \$17.50 (inc postage).

A Parcel Of Promises is the third book in the *Watermark Trilogy*, fulfilling all the readers' expectations. Each of the novels has its own unique story, yet the three are inseparable in relating the history of the Cantrell family.

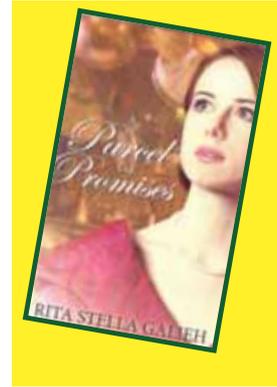
Megan Trevallyn is the heroine of Book 1, *Signed, Sealed And Delivered*. She was tragically separated from her twin daughters at birth. Book 2, *The Tie That Binds*, tells the tale of one twin, Charlotte. Book 3, *A Parcel Of Promises*, traces the life of the other twin, Charmain. *A Parcel of Promises* is beautifully presented, with sketches of tiny pies marking divisions within the chapters; symbolic of Charmain's occupation.

Rita transports us from the royal kitchens of Windsor Castle to the wilderness of New South Wales; from stately Victorian society to dangerous bushrangers roaming the countryside. Her amazing creative skills portray innumerable twists and by-ways in the plot. But finally all is resolved and successfully tied together.

The author's love of history is clearly seen as the reader experiences the restrictions of 19th Century England in stark contrast to the freedom of and independence of the new world. I could scarcely wait for the next chapter to reveal the way problems were solved. Most importantly, the main characters are believers, and their reliance on God is evident. We might say with cynicism, 'It's only a story!' But 'God does move in mysterious ways His wonders to perform'. Often truth is stranger than fiction. Each of us can look back on improbable turns in our own lives. So it is wonderful to enjoy romantic Christian fiction where God's ways are eventually revealed, and accepted, by the whole Cantrell family.

For more information on Rita Stella Galieh go to ritastellapress.com where a facility for online purchasing is available. Highly recommended.

– Barbie Prout



Christin Mourice – Devotedly Serving The Lord With SAT-7

CHRISTIN Mourice works in the Audience Relations Department for SAT-7 KIDS, answering young viewers' emails, SMS messages and Facebook comments. We asked:

What did you do before you worked with SAT-7?

I have had various jobs. I worked as a secretary, a receptionist, a school teacher and was the head teacher of a nursery.

Why do you like working with SAT-7?

I love SAT-7 TV ministry to the Arabic-speaking world. It is both God's work and I enjoy doing it at the same time. I feel I have a role in sending Jesus' message to children and showing God's love to them.

Tell us a little about your spiritual journey so far.

At high school I had a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, and recognised Him as my personal Saviour. Since then, He has called me to His service in furthering His Kingdom. A strong woman is one whom God uses powerfully, like Deborah in the Old Testament.

If you could sit down with Jesus today what would you like to ask Him?

I would ask Jesus to give me a new anointing, filling me with His presence. I would ask Him to use me in an extraordinary way as He did with Paul the apostle.

What is your passion outside SAT-7?

My hobbies are learning and reading. I love to learn.



– SAT-7 News

VISITING MELBOURNE?

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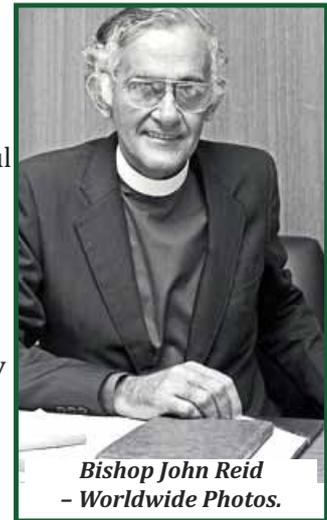


WITH CHRIST

BISHOP JOHN REID, distinguished church leader and former Bishop of South Sydney, died just weeks after his final public appearance at the consecration of new bishop, Dr Michael Stead. Bishop Reid, who was 87, was bishop of South Sydney from 1972 to 1993.

Archbishop Glenn Davies paid tribute to Bishop Reid, calling him 'a faithful servant of Christ and man of extraordinary ability. John Reid served the Diocese of Sydney as Rector of Christ Church Gladesville and later as an Assistant Bishop for more than 20 years.' Dr Davies said. 'He will be remembered for being an accomplished Bible teacher, an able administrator and a passionate evangelist. His abilities were internationally recognised through his involvement with the Lausanne Movement as chair, as well as the missionary organisation Interserve.'

Bishop Reid was in failing health and some respiratory distress as he attended the consecration on 5 December of Dr Michael Stead as the new Bishop of South Sydney. – *Sydney Anglicans*



A Call For Urgent Prayer

PLEASE pray for our brothers and sisters in Sudan where three church leaders have been arrested. Security officials have detained Telahoon Nogose Kassa who is head of discipleship at Khartoum Bahri Evangelical Church. Telahoon belongs to the same church as Peter Yein Reith and Yat Michael, the two pastors cleared of capital crimes at a Khartoum court in August. All three church leaders had opposed government attempts to sell off church property. A fourth member of the church, Pastor Hafez Mengisto, is on trial after challenging workers as they demolished parts of the church in July. A similar charge against the church's lawyer, Mohaned Mustafa, has been dismissed.

No reason has been given for Telahoon's arrest but he was questioned for five days about his links with a foreign missionary. His parents have been allowed to visit him, just once.

Two other Sudanese pastors, Kowa Shamaal and Hassan Abdelrahim, were arrested at their homes in or near Khartoum on 18 December. They too have objected to the demolition of church buildings, this time of Sudanese Church of Christ property.

Please pray that all charges against the Sudanese pastors will be dropped. Pray that members of Khartoum Bahri Evangelical Church will continue to spread the Gospel, despite intense persecution. Pray that the Government of Sudan will end its crackdown on church leaders. Pray that Sudanese officials will start to see Christians as good citizens, not trouble-makers.

– *Middle East Concern and Morning Star News via Release International*

PLEASE NOTE: P. 17 of this issue has been added without footer in case any readers care to print it and use it to encourage prayer for persecuted Christians.

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One day in Melbourne

Evangelicals online (conference)



Whose leaf shall not wither - Psalm 1

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One day in Melbourne

from 10.00am - cuppa, meet and greet
 11.00am - Online: Sophia Sinclair, editor Press Service International
 (Social Media extravaganza)
 12.30pm - lunch provided
 1.30pm - Panel
 Design - David Goodwin
 - Salvation Army former editor On Fire
 Blogging - Dr Rowland Croucher
 - The Pastor's Pastor, John Mark Ministries
 Editing - Sheelagh Wegman
 - Editor, Tasmanian Anglican
 Platforms - Dr Bruce Redman
 - Salvation Army Head of Media
 * each 14 min / breakout 4 groups
 3.30pm - afternoon tea
 4.00pm - Vision — Bob Thomas
 4.20pm - Mark T — Planning for 2017 - 4.30pm close

Fly in, after 4.30pm early dinner with an associate / family - fly home last flight!

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Sheelagh Wegman is a freelance editor dealing with a variety of publications including production of the Tasmanian Anglican magazine.



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Bruce



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David



Bob



Mark

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Date

Saturday 16 April 2016
11.00am start - 4.30pm finish

Email RSVP

Tuesday 12 April 2016

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Rev Bob Thomas editor New Life and Dr Mark Tronson chair Well-Being Australia met in August 2015 to ponder a day to offer evangelicals the latest in "online" - the result is "One Day in Melbourne—Evangelicals Online" The day is industrial, the philosophy is gospel.

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