

'Times Of Refreshing' At Banner Of Truth Conference

ONE of our greatest needs as ministers of the Gospel is to constantly recharge our spiritual batteries so that we are growing and being nurtured in our own faith as we labour to see others brought to saving faith and growing in that faith. The Banner Of Truth Ministers' Conference, held every second February at the Salvation Army's excellent Colaroy Conference Centre overlooking the Northern Beaches of



Conferees' focus was on 'knowing Christ Jesus, who is the centre of everything'.
Photo credit: Richard Wilson

Sydney is one of those conferences which delivers good, long-lasting spiritual nutrition for our ongoing biblical Gospel ministries.

More than 150 Christian Gospel preachers, teachers, trainers, potential Gospel workers and prayer warriors of the Lord from all over Australia and a couple from Singapore spent time together listening to six different speakers from 23-26 February 2016.

This year's Banner Conference built on those held previously to support and encourage ministers to persevere in the task the Lord has given us. Good fruit borne there will keep on nourishing us as fellowship and friendships formed there will continue to grow. Many of those who attended came from isolated and difficult situations. They in particular have been mutually encouraged by the sound Biblical teaching, seasons of prayer and the chance to share blessings and difficulties with others in similar situations. This is part of the reason why so many come back bi-ennially, but one really encouraging aspect of this conference was the large number of first-time attendees, especially from younger age groups.

The first speaker was Rev Johnny Li, Pastor of Maroubra Presbyterian Church in Sydney, who encouraged us to *Press On Toward The Goal* – Seeking Jesus, using Paul's words and example from Philippians 3. 'Do we know the joy of communion with the Lord?' he asked, defining ways in which communion can be enhanced: taking a set time for daily devotions, observing the weekly Sabbath Day, meditating on the Word of God, memorizing Bible texts, studying the Greek New Testament, learning the Catechism, singing and learning hymns, reading the Puritans and Spurgeon, turning meditation into adoration, looking forward to Heaven assured that if we seek the Lord we will find Him.

Paul Washer, Founder and Director of Heartfelt Mission, which operates with 243 missionaries in 39 countries, spoke on *The Glory Of The Gospel*, focusing on Isaiah 6.

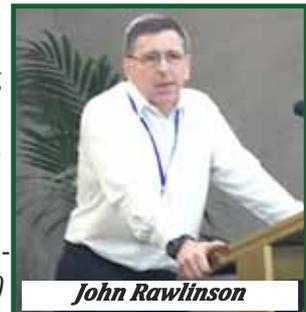
(Continued on p.4)



Johnny Li



Simon Manchester



John Rawlinson

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Christians – What Do We Do When Our Cities Collide?

I LIVE in Sydney, a beautiful city. What a pleasure it is to show friends from overseas around the harbour, the beaches and the mountains. And yet, like all believers, my home is the eternal city which is above.

We read in Hebrews: 'For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.' (Hebrews 13.14). The whole book of *Revelation* is focussed on the future city, where there will be no more tears, death, mourning, crying or pain (Revelation 21.4). The apostle Paul alludes to *Isaiah* when he speaks of our future hope: 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him.' (1 Corinthians 2.9).

So we Christians live in these two realities, the city below, which is very real and yet will fade away, and the City above, which is not so real in this present age and yet will last forever and will be our eternal home. We live under two authorities, we live under rulers, governments who are to be respected because they are established by God (Romans 13.1,2,4) and are God's servants, and yet we realise their authority has been delegated by Him. Their rule is passing like the city to which they belong. They are a superior authority and so they bear the sword (Romans 13.4) and rule, and so we are to respectfully submit to them (Romans 13.1,5) and yet we know that God is the supreme authority and we owe Him our ultimate allegiance.

The Lord Jesus referred to these two worlds as two sides of a coin. 'Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and give to God what is God's', He said (Mark 12.17). Moses' mother, the midwives of Egypt, the prophet Daniel, the Apostle Peter are all examples of those who said 'No' to the superior authority because of their recognition of the supreme authority.

Our attitude to government, whoever is in power (remember Paul wrote Romans 13 when Nero was Emperor of Rome), is one of respectful submission, but it is not unquestioning obedience. Superior authorities require submission, to which there is a voluntary element, whereby I order myself under the authority.

However, the supreme authority, God above, requires intelligent obedience, rightly understood; we bow the knee to His Word, whether we like it or not. This issue may come to a head very soon if a Federal Government seeks to change the Marriage Act under which Ministers of Religion are licensed by the State to perform marriages. Will we continue to submit and perform marriages under an Act that no longer is consistent with the creation ordinance of God (Genesis 2.24) or will we recognise that the delegation is now inconsistent with the Delegator and make clear that we owe our obedience to Him?

These are never easy issues, but this decision will be made after an open and God-honouring exchange of our views and then we will act in solidarity as the body of Christ in the way in which we believe our Head, Jesus Christ, directs us. **Meanwhile, let us think clearly and live carefully,** mindful of the words of *Hebrews*, 'Therefore, since we are receiving a Kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for "our God is a consuming fire"' (Hebrews 12.28,29)

– Rt Rev David Cook

CHINA AND EGYPT: Court Rulings Designed To Intimidate

CHINA: Tightening The Reins

Pastor Bao Guohua of Holy Love Christian Church in Jinhua, central Zhejiang, was arrested in early August, along with his wife and son, after they publicly criticised the Chinese Communist Party's policy of demolishing crosses on churches in Zhejiang. In what has become an established pattern, they subsequently dismissed their lawyers. On 25 February the Wucheng District People's Court of Jinhua found Bao Guohua, his wife Xing Wenxiang and son Bao Chenxing guilty of offences pertaining to corruption, delivering harsh prison sentences of 14, 12 and 3 years respectively. Nine other essential church staff received sentences of varying lengths. The sentences came a week after authorities detained 16 pastors in and around Wenzhou city, Zhejiang, during confrontations with the authorities over the cross removal program. While some have since been released, at least eight remain in criminal detention without access to lawyers.

Exactly six months after he was dragged out of a church in Wenzhou and 'disappeared' into secret detention, Christian attorney and defender of the cross, Zhang Kai, has appeared on Chinese state-run television 'confessing' to his 'crimes'. 'I really regret doing these things, I feel very remorseful,' Zhang said in the 25 February telecast. 'I also warn those so-called human rights lawyers to take me as a warning and not collude with foreigners, take money from foreign organisations or be engaged in activities that break the law or harm national security and interests.' Zhang's friends and colleagues expressed concern about his appearance, noting weight loss, lack of glasses and signs of stress and 'physical exhaustion'. They do not doubt the 'confession' was coerced. The scene would have been very familiar to Chinese survivors of the Cultural Revolution. Zhang Kai is now being held in criminal detention on charges of 'disturbing public order' and 'endangering state secrets'.

The CCP is deeply anxious that the US might seek to exploit unrest or dissent in China to facilitate 'regime change' or a 'colour revolution' in Beijing to install a regime more amenable to US interests. Consequently President Xi Jinping is escalating his anti-corruption campaign, which is less about pursuing corruption than it is about purging dissent and consolidating power ahead of the 19th Party Congress in 2017. Xi is also establishing a personality cult around himself as 'the core' and is bringing all segments of society under his control. Criticism is not tolerated. Repression is escalating. President Xi is tightening the reins.

EGYPT: Sacrificial Lambs

ON Thursday 25 February four teenage Coptic boys faced court charged with 'contempt of Islam' and 'inciting sectarian strife'. The boys had been filmed mocking the pseudo piety of Islamic State. The court deemed the boys guilty, sentencing the three older boys to five years in prison and the youngest boy to an indefinite term in a youth detention facility. An appeal will be launched. Observers have commented on the dramatic escalation in blasphemy ('contempt of Islam') cases since the fall of the Mubarak government in late 2011. In this respect, the regime of General Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi is no better than the regime of the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohamed Morsi. Christians are not the only ones in the firing line. In January an Egyptian court sentenced Islamic scholar and theologian Islam al-Buhairi to a year in prison after he was deemed guilty of blasphemy/insulting Islam. Al-Buhairi's questioning of some sources of Islamic interpretation had enraged the academic elite at Cairo's Islamic Al-Azhar University. On 20 February a court sentenced Egyptian author Ahmed Naji to two years in prison on charges of 'public indecency' after receiving complaints about the sexual content of his latest novel.

The two primary power blocs that struggle for supremacy within Sunni Islam are the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafi/Wahhabi movement. Egypt's President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi (who seized power from the MB's Mohamed Morsi) leans towards Salafism and receives regime-sustaining financial aid from Wahhabist Saudi Arabia. A pragmatist, al-Sisi does not want war with Israel, which has earned him the wrath of the Muslim Brotherhood and of Islamic jihadists in the Sinai. To retain power, al-Sisi must crush, or at least contain, the MB and the jihadists who are working to destabilise Egypt. But the MB and jihadists have a lot of support. So before he can act al-Sisi must establish his Islamic credentials and earn the political capital which will be spent in the crackdowns. This is done through the pre-emptive appeasement of influential Islamic fundamentalists in the mosques, universities and courts. The fundamentalists will let al-Sisi kill jihadists and imprison Muslim Brotherhood members as long he lets them advance an Islamic order, something the conservative al-Sisi is more than pleased to do. Hence the dramatic rise in blasphemy cases over recent years. The law's victims are simply sacrificial lambs.

PLEASE PRAY:

- that the Lord will grant China's church leaders divine wisdom and moral clarity as they negotiate an increasingly dangerous path. May the great and good Shepherd, our Lord Jesus Christ, lead them; may the ever-present Holy Spirit embolden them; may the eternal Father comfort, bless and sustain them.

- that the Lord will grant Egypt's indigenous Copts, along with other Egyptian Christians, divine wisdom and sensibility as they navigate a hostile and increasingly dangerous environment. 'If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.' (James 1.5 ESV)

– Elizabeth Kendal

(Continued from P.1) 'We cannot understand the humiliation of Christ unless we understand the glory of Christ,' Paul Washer said. 'Christianity is not primarily about morals but about Christ. Everything the Father has done, He has done for the Son, who is absolutely everything in the economy of God. The most useful Christian is the one who is enslaved to God, captivated by God, acted upon by God to love God more.'

John Rawlinson, General Manager of the Banner Of Truth Trust, spoke on Bishop J.C. Ryle, who still ministers around the rapidly changing world today through his writings. Ryle was an outstanding scholar, cricketer and well-bred gentleman before taking ordination in the Church of England following his father's business collapse and a time of illness when he started reading the Bible and Ephesians 2.8,9 became a reality to Him. He saw the necessity of being born again, with the life of holiness being the evidence of a true Christian. In parish ministry Ryle developed a direct preaching style allied to methodical visitation, distribution of tracts and concern for his peoples' material needs. From 1880 onwards as Bishop of Liverpool he brought great blessing in both Liverpool and the wider Church. Ryle urged his ministers not to preach dull, tame sermons but sermons of light, life, power and love. He was a great believer in the need for true Biblical doctrine – not doctrine for its own sake but to drive us forward in faith. He was a gifted preacher, but humble and great Christian leader.

Rev Simon Manchester, Rector of St Thomas', North Sydney, took us to Isaiah 52, showing that it sets the scene for the coming of Christ, and Isaiah 53 which shows us the need to understand, the obligation to believe, the need for revelation to see the information which God delights to reveal. There we see substitution and reconciliation; sin is ours but salvation is His. God has built a bridge from Heaven to Earth with two planks of wood and three nails.

Rev Peter Barnes, Minister of Revesby Presbyterian Church in Sydney, spoke on *The Gospel And The Muslim*, starting with the thesis that the greatest threat to Christianity is Christianity itself, having been attacked from within by theological liberalism, moral laxity and general malaise. He said that Islam is basically a heretical form of Christianity. In approaching Muslims with the Gospel, our first task is to be faithful to the Scriptures and to use the Word. Be kind to them, respect their customs and seek points of entry with the Scripture narrative and the Gospel, remembering that Islam holds to strict monotheism.

Talking with fellow attendees we found a positive vibe about the conference:

- **Rev Stewart Andrews**, recently retired from Tamworth: 'Great to find a meeting of minds as I spoke with younger men and women from all over Australia, and for gaining a wider understanding about what God is doing in Australia.'
- **Julie Martin from Cairns** said she came because Paul Washer was the main speaker, adding that this was a 'Five Star' conference as its focus was on knowing Christ Jesus who is the centre of everything.
- **Rev Hok Chin Lee from Singapore** also came to hear Paul Washer's Gospel message. He was impressed by the well organised conference and now returns home with the emphasis of preaching the pure Gospel against the offensiveness of human sinfulness.
- **Anna Ward from Melbourne** said she was not only here to enjoy the teaching and Christian fellowship, but as a ministers' wife to support with her husband (Rev Rowland Ward) any endeavour to expand reformation in Australia. She was encouraged by seeing more young people than previously, as well as much ethnic diversity. She found John Rawlinson's presentation on J.C. Ryle really good and helpful to link the past to the present for those ministering in Australia today.
- **Rev Graeme Hart of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in McKinnon, Melbourne**, found that the conference had not just been pitched at an intellectual level, but had aimed at fostering a deeper spirituality. He also enjoyed the challenges from Paul Washer. He wants to see the glory of Christ more fully proclaimed.
- **Dan Sawyer, a student in meteorology at Macquarie University in Sydney**, came to the conference with three of his friends from AFES after reading John Owen's *The Glory of Christ*, which changed his view on Christ in so many ways. When he heard about the Banner Conference, he felt that the preachers would be fearlessly and fully preaching the Gospel, and he was not disappointed. Whatever he will do in the future he will be sure to preach Christ boldly and fearlessly. He believes that all Christians should know and understand the Gospel and we should never take it for granted or get bored with it. Dan believes that whenever the Gospel is preached, we should be delighted and respond in obedience and enjoy Christ.

- Phillip Chang and Graeme Hart



Stewart
Andrews



Julie
Martin



Hok Chin
Lee



Anna
Ward



Graeme
Hart



Dan
Sawyer

Could The Anti-Christ Be Coming?

SOME of the most violent Muslims are trying to bring their messiah into the world, according to Pastor Michael Youssef in his new book, *The End Times & The Secret Of The Mahdi*, the head of the global outreach ministry *Leading The Way* and founder of Atlanta's Church of the Apostles, suggests the shocking surprise is that this figure will turn out to be the evil Antichrist described in the Bible.

Over the centuries, people have guessed incorrectly again and again that the Antichrist – that ultra-violent world dictator – was soon to appear. But Pastor Youssef believes that only now are conditions set for the coming of that evil one. His book details how what's going on in the world right now is leading straight toward those events prophesied in *Revelation* and elsewhere in the Bible. Hailing from Cairo himself, he says he deeply loves the Islamic people, but believes Islam is hurtling the world toward the dark days of the Antichrist.

– CBN Christian World News

Jews Turning To Christ

JEWS in Israel are coming to faith in Christ in increasing numbers, according the Israel branch of Jews For Jesus. Chairman Tuvya Zaretsky, says he has never before seen what they are seeing now, as a steady stream particularly of young Israelis are coming to Jesus from all walks of life. Mr Zaretsky believes the world political situation has helped to spark a greater interest in Jesus. In the 1990s, there were about 3,000 Messianic Jews in Israel. Today there are as many as 20,000 in 150 congregations. Of Israel's 84 cities and towns, 81 have at least one messianic Bible study. However, Christians are still less than one 1% of the population.

– God Reports, APN

Mission To Seamen – Reaching Out To 'Those In Peril On The Sea'

THE city of Yangon in Myanmar is home to the Anglican Mission To Seafarers' newest port facility, located close to the Department of Marine Administration in Yangon (formerly known as Rangoon), which will enable Myanmar's seafarers to access it easily. Yangon is one of the main seaports in Myanmar and also a key city for supplying labour to the shipping industry worldwide.

A former deck cadet who now holds a master mariner's licence, George Ko Ko Gyi, will head up the Yangon Mission, arranging a ship-visiting program, administering the main centre and providing day to day support and advice for seafarers. The mission will provide welfare support and pastoral care to all seafarers and their families, in partnership with the local church and port authorities.

– Anglican News

Hillsong Goes Global

HILLSONG Church, founded in Australia in 1983 by Pastors Brian and Bobbie Houston, with 15 international locations and over 100,000 in weekly attendance, last month announced the launch of it's third US congregation. Phoenix, Arizona is the 16th global Hillsong Church which initially will offer six Sunday worship services on three campuses. After 15 years serving as the City of Grace Church, lead Pastors, Terry and Judith Crist, say moving their church under the Hillsong umbrella will help them to reach tens of thousands more people with the love, grace, and hope of Jesus.

Meanwhile, in Australia, Darwin is the latest city to open a Hillsong church.

– Hillsong Church

Amity Press – World's Largest Bible Printer

MORE than 12 million Bibles were printed in China in 2015, but most were destined for export, according to figures from a company described as 'the world's largest Bible printer.' Figures released to the *China Christian Daily* by the Amity Printing Company, a joint venture between the Amity Foundation and the United Bible Societies, show the company has printed more than 142 million Bibles since its establishment in 1988. The Bibles are reportedly distributed in more than 70 countries and in more than 90 languages, including those of ethnic minorities and Braille.

– Sight Magazine

Will Graham – Reaping What He Did Not Sow

EVANGELIST Will Graham, grandson of Billy and Ruth Graham, returned to China recently to preach the Gospel in a city that still remembers and celebrates the impact of his great-grandparents, Dr L. Nelson Bell and his wife, Virginia, who landed in China 100 years ago and spent 25 years as medical missionaries. The visit was part of a commemoration of the centennial anniversary. After preaching to 3,000 people at one church, Mr Graham said 'I feel like I'm harvesting the seeds that I did not sow. People are coming to Christ today because of my great-grandparents' sacrifice a century ago.' Many responded to Mr Graham's invitation to begin a relationship with Jesus Christ.

– Assist News Service

BILLY GRAHAM
Evangelistic Association
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SEMINAR SPEAKERS AND TOPICS:



WILL GRAHAM

Board First Vice Chairman and Vice President of Billy Graham Training Centre, Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, USA.

TOPIC: THE CONTENT OF THE GOSPEL

Will is a renowned international evangelist and the grandson of Billy Graham. Will's teaching on the content of the Gospel will explain the key ingredients of a clear presentation of the Gospel message and identify the key points essential to the evangelists' message.



BILL NEWMAN

Distinguished Australian speaker and international evangelist.

TOPIC: THE BENEFITS OF PROCLAMATION GOSPEL MINISTRY FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

Bill Newman will share the impact on the local church of the public proclamation of the Gospel in our current age, both here in Australia and overseas.



GARY COBB

Director of Training for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, USA.

TOPIC: FRUIT THAT WILL LAST

Gary Cobb will share on how to effectively prepare the local church for a citywide Gospel proclamation event, to ensure good attendance and effective follow-up so that people who respond are established in their faith.



DAVID RUIZ

Associate evangelist with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in Latin America.

TOPIC: THE UNIVERSAL AND TIMELESS NATURE OF THE BIBLE

David Ruiz will share on the relevance of the Bible to all cultures and time periods, challenging the mindset that we have to be 'hip', 'cool' or 'trendy' to reach people with the Gospel.



KARL FAASE

Well-known Australian Christian communicator, social commentator and CEO of Olive Tree Media.

TOPIC: FAITH BLOCKERS

Karl Faase will discuss research of key factors affecting the attitudes of Australians towards the Christian church and how to navigate past these 'faith blockers' in order to effectively share the Gospel.

The Bible In The Deafs' Heart Language

DOOR (Deaf Opportunity OutReach) International is working to bring the Bible specifically to the Deaf of the world. According to DOOR President and CEO Rob Myers, for the deaf, reading anything is a second language (their first being sign language) because language skills are decidedly linked to hearing and speaking. This doesn't mean that deaf people can't read, nor that some deaf people don't enjoy reading, but DOOR wants to give every deaf person the chance to have the Bible in their own heart language. DOOR International is working with the Institute for Bible Translation in Russia and the Deaf Bible Society to complete a Russian sign language Bible. The translation would immediately give access to the Deaf in Russia, Central Asia and Eastern Europe. An estimated 2.4 million deaf people would have access to a Bible in their heart language. *- Mission Network News*

A Closed Door Opened

TENS of thousands of Iranians have downloaded the Bible in the past six months under a new initiative by Christian broadcaster SAT-7, despite intense restrictions by the Iranian government. More than 60,000 people in Iran have downloaded the Bible in whole or in part since September last year, when SAT-7 opened a secure chat room service. The messaging app allows users to send messages anonymously and SAT-7 to offer Christian programs and secure Bible downloads. This service is especially pertinent in Iran, where social media platforms including Facebook are blocked, and the authorities closely monitor phone calls, text messages and emails. SAT-7 says it receives 2,000

messages a day from Iranian viewers, thanking it for providing a space for believers to talk and share their faith with one another. Many ask for prayer, or give testimonies of their faith. *- Christian Today*

Queen Personally Against Same-Sex Marriage

QUEEN Elizabeth does not support same-sex marriage because of her 'deep Christian faith.' *The Daily Mail* newspaper cites a 'friend' of the Queen saying she favoured civil partnerships. This is because she believes the traditional Christian teaching that marriage should be between a man and a woman. Same-sex marriage legislation was passed in England and Wales in 2013 and came into force in 2014. The Queen reportedly told her friend she was frustrated but powerless to intervene. *- Christian Today*

Anglicare Finds A Way To Peoples' Hearts

CHURCHES are responding positively to a new initiative by Anglicare in Sydney to help provide food security for people on low incomes. Under the new venture, a purpose-fitted van will visit a parish once a fortnight stocked with enough non-perishable groceries for about 50 people. Anglicare covers the cost of the van, driver and the food. People on low incomes pay \$10 to fill a shopping bag with pantry goods of their choice. Anglicare's Mobile Community Pantry has six churches signed up, and they will provide refreshments and at least five volunteers to welcome, assist and talk to people on the day. Anglicare's Matt Madigan says they don't want people just to pay their few dollars, get their food and go. They want to meet a felt need and build relationships so that they can talk about the Lord Jesus and their deeper need.



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To Be Forever Free - The Power Of Literacy

RIGHT now you are doing something that almost one billion people in the world today cannot do. You do it every day without thinking twice. But imagine not being able to read price tags, instructions on medications, a letter, email, or text message. Imagine not being able to read even a single verse of Scripture. Sadly, that is the reality for millions of people – many of them among the poorest and most marginalised on Earth. So why is literacy so important, and what difference does it make to someone's life? Kofi Annan says, 'To read is ... a bridge from misery to hope' Literacy skills are fundamental to daily life, and can even mean the difference between life and death.



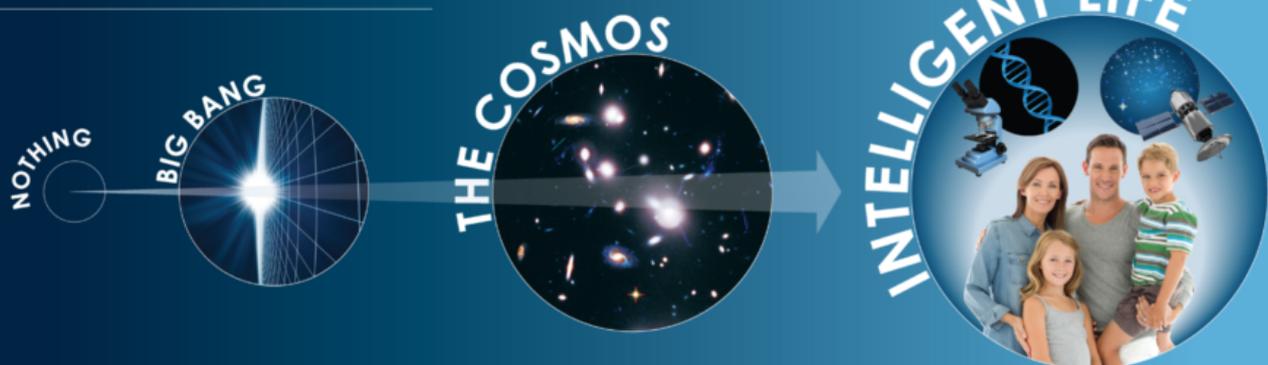
Having learned to read and write in her native Moba language (Togo, Benin), Koutonlengue is now able to write letters to family members, take notes during meetings, write down advice from nurses, and read road signs. Most importantly, she says, 'Literacy has enlightened me because I read the New Testament and other books in Moba and I understand better'.

To read is ... 'to be forever free' (Frederick Douglass, African American freed slave). Those who learn to read and write are given the opportunity to interact with the world in new ways. The Lamari Literacy School (Obura, PNG) is having a significant impact on the lives of many young people – particularly those with drug addictions. They attend the literacy classes to learn how to read and write in their own language, but at the same time learn God's Word. Many come to know Christ as a result.

To read is ... 'A lamp to my feet, a light for my path' (Psalm 119.105), as the ability to read Scripture opens up the way to Christ. The Obura (PNG) New Testament was completed and dedicated in 1994, but only a handful of people actually used it. The printed Bibles were stored away, gathering dust, until a literacy program began in 2013. Obura New Testaments are now not only out of storage, but sold out! People are reading them in their homes and excitedly carrying them to church. A woman who had never learned to read in her language (Oku, Cameroon) was given her first literacy lesson outside the mortuary where the body of her friend lay. As she read the words of 1 Corinthians 15.20 and Revelation 7.17 for the first time ever, she said 'Reading this book took away my tears'.

Literacy is a crucial part of the Bible translation ministry. It helps members of minority language communities embrace and use their language. It unlocks the benefits of Bible translation so that people can read and be transformed by the life-giving words God always intended for them. – *Belinda Fox*

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Algerian Choir To Star In SAT-7 Easter Special

SAT-7's studio in Beirut, Lebanon was busy during the week 7-11 March recording a performance by an Algerian choir, to be broadcast as part of the ministry's Easter programming.

The one-off special, titled *The Greatest Love*, includes interviews with the Christian choir and an inspiring performance of ten worship songs. 'The recording of this concert is part of the SAT-7 mission to serve the Church in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA),' says SAT-7 Arabic Programming and Production Director, Maroun Bou Rached. This is our why, our purpose. The people of Algeria are far away but we are connected to them and by broadcasting this special performance we are showing that SAT-7 supports them.'



SAT-7 Algerian Choir.

Popular SAT-7 hosts Marianne Awaraji Daou and Rico Daou interviewed members of the choir about the challenges they face as Christians living in Algeria, before urging viewers to send in testimonies of encouragement to [#whenIloveJesus](#) on social media. Choir member Haddou Nacer described the concert as 'a rare and wonderful opportunity to glorify God and reach out to people who have not yet experienced His love. In Algeria there are very few places of worship for Christians and we do not have opportunities to openly sing Christian songs in big budget productions like this one. Music is the medium we use to spread the Word of God and when people listen to this performance they will ask, what is SAT-7? And, who is Jesus?'

The choir, which belongs to the True Vine Baptist Church in Tizi Ouzou, the largest city in North Central Algeria, hope that one day they will be able to perform all over the MENA region.

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THE LIGHT SHINES ON ...

More Than 7 Million Indicate Decisions For Christ Through Internet Evangelism Ministry

SEARCH FOR JESUS, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association's online evangelism ministry, has seen more than 7 million decisions for Christ recorded since its inception in 2011. 'Every one of those 7 million represents a person who has viewed and indicated a response to the Gospel,' said Mark Appleton, BGEA's Director Of Internet Evangelism. 'It's motivating and exciting that God would allow us the opportunity to engage with so many. The internet is a massive mission field.'

Since its opening in 2007, the Billy Graham Library has welcomed visitors from each of the 50 states and more than 86 countries. Those guests have come from all walks of life, from US Presidents to school children, and international dignitaries to retiree tours. Yet, the comments from those varied guests resoundingly affirm that the Billy Graham Library shares more than the legacy of a man, it shares the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the hope found through a relationship with Him. The key interface for the ministry is PeaceWithGod.net which uses Bible passages and compelling video presentations to share the Gospel with visitors. In addition, Appleton said, BGEA has developed a network of more than 400 volunteers to answer questions, help visitors take next steps and to mentor people one-on-one in a Bible study at courses.goingfarther.net

New CMS Victoria Staff Member

CMS Victoria desires to see people be a part of a world that knows Jesus and is excited to be adding to their team in order to communicate more effectively with CMS supporters as well as reach those who are not yet CMS supporters. Cheryl McGrath has joined the communications team with a special focus on developing the use of electronic media.

For the past two years Cheryl has worked in educational publishing, from books to tests to digital content. Her roles have covered editing, production and administration. She has a Master's degree in publishing and communications. 'I got into editing and publishing because I enjoy words and content,' she says. 'I love connecting with people and creating clear messages, which will be a key part of my role at CMS.'

A member of St Alfred's Church, North Blackburn, Vic, Cheryl comes to CMS keenly aware of how God has been growing her faith in recent years, especially through supportive Christian friendships which have enabled her to face often demanding professional situations. In the role of communications co-ordinator at CMS, faith and function mesh perfectly. As Cheryl puts it, 'I'm excited by the opportunity to grow new skills and meet new people, but most of all to have a chance to explore and support Christian ministry.'

Internship opportunity at CMS Victoria. CMS Vic is looking for a person who enjoys new challenges and is looking to serve God as a new intern at their Mitcham office in 2016. For further enquiries contact CMS on (03) 9894 4722, email vic@cms.org.au

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PERSECUTION WATCH

INDIA: Hindu Radicals Attack Church

A MOB of suspected Hindu nationalist Bajrang Dal members, their faces covered with cloth, stormed into the Sunday worship service of an Indian church on 6 March, shouting Hindu slogans and beating the Christian congregation, including the women and children. According to eyewitness Shiv Kumar, around 40-50 men barged into the church in the village of Kachna, on the outskirts of Raipur, capital of Chhattisgarh state. Locals reported that the men were shouting 'Jai Shri Ram' ('Hail lord Ram'), and, according to some reports, they were wearing saffron bands on their foreheads. The saffron colour represents Hinduism, and saffron flags

Hindu nationalism, a political stance that requires all Indians to adhere to Hinduism. They accused the Christians of forcibly converting people to Christianity and demanded that the church be shut down.

Local police downplayed the incident, said Arjun Pannalal, President of the Chhattisgarh Christian Forum. According to Inspector General of Police G.P. Singh, 'the major case for the disagreement is the encroachment of land ... The local Sahu Samaj has been protesting against the land being encroached upon and this prayer hall being built.'

The attackers fled the scene as soon as police arrived, but they left their motorcycles behind, enabling police to track some of them down. Nine people have been arrested so far in connection with the incident, and cases registered under Sections 147 (rioting), 452 (trespassing with intent to commit an offence), 295 (defiling a place of worship) and 323 (voluntarily causing hurt) of the Indian Penal Code.

Violent attacks at church gatherings in India such as this one are a frequent occurrence. A report released by the Evangelical Fellowship of India recorded 20 cases of violent persecution against Christians in 2015 in Chhattisgarh state, surpassed only by neighbouring Madhya Pradesh state with 36 such cases. Violent attacks against religious minorities in India have become more frequent since Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power in May 2014.

- [www.barnabasfund](http://www.barnabasfund.org)



Indian believers receiving trauma counselling, funded by Barnabas, celebrate a birthday

LIBYA: Some Good News For A Change

SHAHID (not his real name), is from Libya and grew up a devout Muslim. He spent 14 years attending Muslim schools, where he became an expert in the *Koran*, memorising the entire Muslim holy book. But the closer Shahid examined Islam, the more he became disillusioned, until he decided to abandon the faith of his childhood and become an atheist. Later he came across the *Leading The Way Christian Ministry* which broadcasts across the Muslim world. Shahid secretly connected with Christians in Lebanon and Jordan and eventually was introduced to Jesus Christ, baptised and then returned to Libya. Two years after leaving Islam, *Leading The Way* reports Shahid has planted 11 churches across North Africa and Europe and is baptising Muslim converts.

- *Breaking Christian News*

BURMA: Global Day Of Prayer

SUNDAY 13 March was the Global Day of Prayer for Burma. The largest ethnic group is the Bamar (Burman) nation, comprising 60% of the popula-

tion. The Bamar are Buddhist. However, 57% of the land of Burma is occupied by over 135 ethnic minority nations, mostly not Buddhist. The Chin and the Kachin are Christian nations and the Karen nation is up to 30% Christian. Today, 54 years after the March 1962 military coup, many repressive and unjust militarist policies remain woven into the fabric of the State, and the Christian ethnic peoples are still marginalised and persecuted. Pray that God will intervene to empower and protect all who risk much to pursue justice, righteousness, truth and life. - *Elizabeth Kendal*

CAMEROON: Ongoing Boko Haram Attacks

SINCE the beginning of the year, Boko Haram's attacks against Christians in the northern region of Cameroon have sharply increased. According to Barnabas Aid, although Boko Haram is based in Nigeria, the jihadist group often crosses the border into Cameroon as well as into Chad and Niger to carry out its jihad. Last month two female suicide bombers killed 21 shoppers in a marketplace in a village near Cameroon's border.



SMBC Centenary Thanksgiving Service marking 100 years since lectures at SMBC commenced will be held at 7pm on Friday 15 April 2016 at SMBC Croydon Campus, 43 Badminton Rd, Croydon. The speaker will be Rev David Cook. All SMBC friends and alumni are welcome! Supper will be served. RSVP is not required. For other Centenary Celebrations go to smbc.com.au

Life In God’s New Society

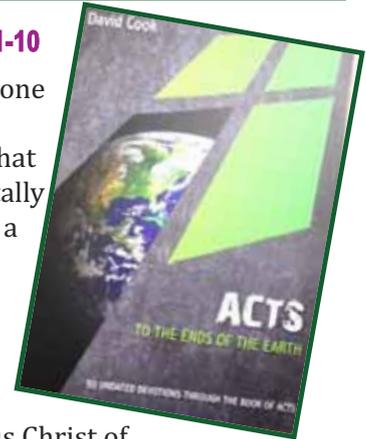
ACTS 3.1-10

MANY miraculous signs were done by the apostles (Acts 2.43). Here is one of them.

In such a dynamic book which shows the Gospel ‘on the way’, it is ironic that the first sign should concern an immobile man. This man was obviously totally dependent, having to be carried to the Temple to beg. Another irony is that a man in such desperate need should be placed at the gate called Beautiful (3.2). He was now over 40 years old (4.22) and he had been crippled since birth (3.2).

All the world could do for him was to throw a few coins his way. Peter and John, however, were clear that the church could do far more.

Peter has no coins to give him. Rather, he calls on him in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth to walk (v.6). The response is instantaneous. It is not that he got better gradually; his feet and ankles immediately became strong so that he went walking and jumping (vv.7,8). This is an incredible creation miracle, removing the cause of paralysis and bringing muscle to existence. Even the Sanhedrin could not deny the reality of ‘an outstanding miracle’ (Acts 4.16).



FOR REFLECTION:

IN what ways is the beggar’s physical experience symbolic of our spiritual experience?

Is there ground here to think that the church’s mandate is to preach and physically heal?

It is clear that just as God had accredited Jesus by miracles and signs (Acts 2.22) so He is now accrediting the apostles, and therefore their message, in the same way (Acts 14.3). Periods of fresh revelation in Scripture are always accompanied by authenticating signs.

The crowd is filled with wonder and amazement (v.10). Peter takes the opportunity afforded by the gathering of a crowd to preach the Gospel to them. The church is mandated to preach the Gospel. The sign both draws a crowd to hear the Gospel and authenticates the message. **Peter, the source of Mark’s Gospel,** would have remembered Jesus’ words from Mark 1.38 when the crowd was looking for Him to heal, were that He had come to preach. ‘That is why I have come.’ The healing of the man was a means of solving his deeper need as well as that of the crowd—to become eternally healthy.

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

Matthew 4.19 - ‘Fishers of men.’

Bethel *Overview Of The Bible* classroom pictures available free of charge. Melbourne area.
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Quotable Quote:

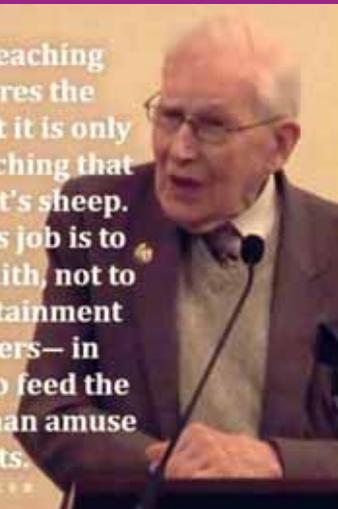
I want people to fill their minds with passages of Scripture while they are well and strong, that they may have sure help in the day of need. I want them to be diligent in studying their Bibles, and becoming familiar with their contents, in order that the grand old Book may stand by them and talk with them when all earthly friends fail.

-J.C.Ryle



Seen On Facebook:

Doctrinal preaching certainly bores the hypocrites; but it is only doctrinal preaching that will save Christ’s sheep. The preacher’s job is to proclaim the faith, not to provide entertainment for unbelievers— in other words, to feed the sheep rather than amuse the goats.



BOOKS WORTH READING

JESUS THROUGH MIDDLE EASTERN EYES: Cultural Studies In The Gospels, Kenneth E. Bailey, Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2008. ISBN 978-0-8308-2568-4.

After living and teaching for 40 years in the Middle East, no one is better equipped than Dr Ken Bailey to lift the veil off the life and teaching of Jesus in its original Middle Eastern setting. Bailey helps us to see with Middle Eastern eyes the birth of Jesus, the Beatitudes, prayer, women in the ministry of Jesus, and his dramatic actions and selected parables as recorded by Luke. Bailey draws on ancient and modern Bible commentaries and Bible translations in Arabic, Syriac and Coptic. He also takes seriously the rhetorical structuring of biblical passages (parallelism, chiasm and the like) as established Eastern ways of ordering written accounts and poetry.

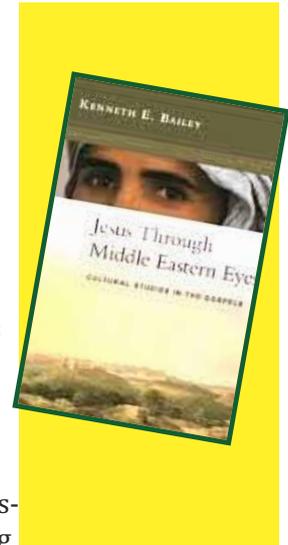
Bailey shows that the typical Christian retelling of the first Christmas is more a pietistic novel than reality, for there was no 'stable' and no 'inn', but a full guestroom in a private home. However, Joseph and Mary found hospitality and assistance in their time of need. Bailey discusses the reasons for Matthew including four women in the genealogical record of Jesus. He argues that the Magi were gentile Arabs. He expounds the Beatitudes, rooting them in Old Testament teaching and in the culture of 1st Century Palestine. He provides a sensitive and moving exposition of the Lord's Prayer from the Middle Eastern perspective, showing that this prayer forms a community and renews individuals in relationship with a loving Heavenly Father.

Bailey breathes fresh life into familiar Gospel stories, like that of the call of Peter and the account of Jesus' sermon in the synagogue in Nazareth. He shows Jesus' radically positive attitude toward women, elevating them to a place of equality in the band of disciples he created. Jesus took women seriously, He initiated contact with them, He taught them and He called them to serve Him in significant ways. Bailey brings to life some of the most memorable encounters Jesus had with women, including the woman at the well, the woman caught in adultery and the woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears.

Bailey has the ability to help us see well-known Gospel incidents in a new light and to feel their moral import with fresh force. Through his writing we can see Bailey's love and appreciation for the people and culture of the Middle East, such that there is something beautifully Christ-like in his explorations of Jesus' actions toward women and men. Ken Bailey is an acknowledged expert on the parables in Luke's Gospel and in this book comments on a selection of parables, interpreting them through Eastern eyes. He calls Jesus 'a metaphorical theologian', given how prominent parables and other figures of speech are in His teaching. Bailey shows that when they are examined with care, Jesus emerges as an astute theologian.

As well, an understanding of the culture and customs of Jesus' day helps us to see how counter-cultural our Lord's teaching and actions often were, as He shows us the amazing grace of God, an unexpected love that has no every-day analogy. Bailey is right to find a profound theology of incarnation and atonement in the parables, which sadly are often read in a pietistic and moralistic fashion. We do not have to wait for the writings of the Apostle Paul to find a high view of Christ or a costly salvation. If you have not read a book by Ken Bailey, you are in for a treat!

– Greg Goswell



VISITING MELBOURNE?

You're welcome at The Faith Factory:

ST KILDA: Cnr Alma Rd/Barkly St. Every Sunday 11am & 7pm;
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You're Welcome At The Faith Factory

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BOOKS WORTH READING

THE INCOMPARABLE CHRIST, John Stott, IVP Nottingham, 2014.

THERE are four parts to this book, which is a new edition of a book originally published in 2001. Each part explores a different aspect of how Jesus has been portrayed both in the New Testament Scriptures and in the Church.

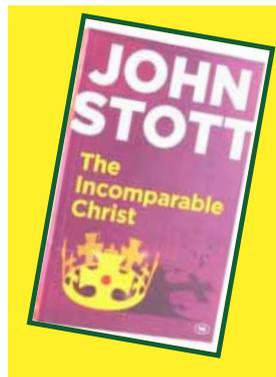
Part 1 is a helpful survey of the books of the New Testament, apart from the *Book Of Revelation*. It explores the 'original Jesus'. The emphasis is how each of the Gospels and letters portrays Jesus. Following through the New Testament with this focus allows the reader to explore the rounded picture that emerges from the different writers of who Jesus is. Stott addresses the issue of whether different emphases by the writers constitutes inconsistencies or contradictions in the New Testament portrayal of Jesus. Of course, they do not!

Part 2 is entitled *The Ecclesiastical Jesus*, with the subtitle *How The Church Has Presented Him*. Here is a quick journey through the centuries of Church History since New Testament times. Stott is even-handed in his analyses, in no way whitewashing the inadequacies of the Church through the ages but also prepared to express the positives. The different periods of Church History are investigated via individual personalities of the time. At each period Stott has questions often to indicate where there has been an inadequate theology driving the person in their view of Jesus. Stott has the skill of, in a few pages to introduce a person, explain the fundamentals of their theological position, point us to a deeper work on or from the person and compare their theology with the Word of God.

In Part 3 Stott has chosen 12 examples of how the 'incomparable Jesus' has motivated individuals to dedicate their lives to serve Him and serve humanity. These people who wanted to improve the society in which they lived were inspired by a particular aspect of the teaching of Jesus, such as the second coming, the call to missionary endeavour or the Sermon on the Mount. At the end of this chapter Stott writes: 'if we are prepared to familiarise ourselves with His (Jesus') story, exposing ourselves to His personality, example and teaching we shall not remain unscathed'.

The final part of Stott's book, entitled 'The Eternal Jesus' (or how He challenges us today), is a study of the *Book Of Revelation* again from the point of view of the writer's portrayal of Jesus. Stott introduces this chapter by saying that whereas with the other New Testament books it is possible to isolate an overall theme or emphasis, in *Revelation* there is a multifaceted portrayal of Jesus. Many metaphors are employed to reveal Jesus to us. Stott has sandwiched Parts 2 and 3 between the Biblical portrayal of Jesus. The Bible's witness to Jesus is truth and fact. The pronouncements of Church leaders are open to interpretation and not to be held in the same light. He warns that some pictures of Jesus as portrayed by Church History bear little resemblance to the Bible's witness to Jesus. He encourages us though to add to the stories of Part 3, for Jesus should inspire every believer to live in a way that points to the wonder of *The Incomparable Christ*.

– Mignon Goswell



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WITH CHRIST

JENNY SMITHAM 14.5.47 – 25.2.16 – Jenny Smitham was the adored wife of Gary from 1968, the much loved mother of Claire, Kayte and Johanna, and wonderful grandmother of 11. Jenny was saved during the 1959 Billy Graham meetings in Melbourne, at which time she was attending North Essendon Presbyterian Church. Later with Gary she attended Essendon Christian Fellowship, Tullamarine Evangelical Christian Church, and following a move to Sydney in 1978, she worshipped at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Glenwood for 37 years until her passing at age 68 after a four year cancer journey.

Jenny loved God and delighted in His service over all those years, in all aspects of women's ministry, Sunday School and youth ministry, leading a care group with Gary for many years, and generally being a blessing and an inspiration to all with her caring heart, warm smile and generous spirit.

She is greatly missed by Gary and the extended family, and all who knew her, for to know her was to love her. Jenny is now safe in the arms of Jesus.

– Gary Smitham

Mega Use For MegaVoice In Burma and Later Thailand

TOM Treseder, Director of MegaVoice, reports that Viggo Sogaard, working in Burma and Thailand, has found various uses for MegaVoice in his work there. Viggo reports: 'Our first major use of MegaVoice was integrated into a project in Burma. (Along with Bible readings) we added programs against human trafficking, health, reproductive health, violence against women, and financial management. All material was produced in Yangon during workshops I conducted. We produced in Burmese and Karen languages.

'Our second step was to develop Bible teaching material in different tribal languages. The idea was to use it in the same village, where the other project was going on and expand it as a Bible training program for villages and churches in both Burma and Thailand. The first language was Sgaw Karen (where MegaVoice Australia donated the production cost). We have produced many hundreds in this language, and presently they are being distributed by students from the Bible College in the Mae La refugee camp who are on mission trips. Following this, we produced in Burmese, Pho Karen, and Karenni. Four languages, Chin, Lahu, Lisu and P'Oh are in various stages of production. In each case, we work with local pastors and teachers who are carefully instructed regarding the content, but it is not a direct translation. The focus is on new Christians from primarily animistic backgrounds. We also include the Life of Jesus. We have added the New Testament where it is available. There are also songs between the messages. We anticipate that this project will continue and gradually expand to other languages. We have also considered Chinese and different languages spoken in Laos.

'The third use will be in Thai language, and it will focus on a completely different group of people – the modern, educated Buddhists, in particular students. This is part of our Proverbs Project, *Voice Of Wisdom*. It will have messages with starting point in *Proverbs*, and it may include the whole *New Testament* as well as the book of *Proverbs*. A new Correspondence Course is being developed for this project, and we may try to adapt that to an audio version. Buddhism focuses much on wisdom, and all Thai love proverbs. We will try to link this with mobile or an app. We will, of course, need to raise funds for both production and getting MV units, so any help you can give will be much appreciated.'

Further information: Tom Treseder, (02) 9713 5910; tomtreseder@megavoice.com

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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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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All digital conf. Lunch is donated

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



Sophia



Bruce



Rowland



David



Bob



Mark

Venue

Salvation Army Headquarters
95-99 Railway Rd, Blackburn

Date

Saturday 16 April 2016
11.00am start - 4.30pm finish

Email RSVP

Tuesday 12 April 2016
Enquiries 0419 917 713

Name, State, Publication,
Blog, Interest

To register
info@markt.id.au

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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