

## Self-Examination At BHC In The Light Of Easter

**BELGRAVE Heights 2016 Easter Convention** was a time of reflection on Christ's life and sacrifice – and a time to view the flaws in our own personal lives, as well as that of the church, as we studied *Corinthians* and *Colossians*. Both the speakers directed our thoughts to the way we should be reflecting Christ rather than the world. The Missions' theme was John 15.5 with vines and grapes slung across the ceiling connected to a central world globe. We especially rejoice in the future plans for BHC that have been approved by the Yarra Ranges Council.

**Chris Chia, from Singapore, has spoken at the convention four times.** It was lovely that his wife, Mona, could join him for the second time. Chris grew up in a Buddhist-Taoist home full of idols. His mother prayed for four hours each day to the idols, as well as rearing 12 children. Chris continued his education at Sydney University where a friend invited him to a Billy Graham meeting. He thought it was a free rock concert! But he was rocked to the core when confronted with Jesus and sin. Then another friend invited him to church where he became a disciple of Jesus. At a convention in Adelaide Chris obeyed God's call on his life



Easter 2016 BHC – well attended by an enthusiastic crowd.  
Photo credit: Al Watson.

to serve in ministry. He has been senior pastor of Adam Road Presbyterian Church for 26 years. It has grown from a very small congregation of 30 to 1,700 adults today. The church welcomes all people from professionals and scholars to drug addicts and ex-prisoners. Every week 12 men minister to the prison inmates.

**Rory Shiner, the other speaker, was a member of Chris's church while he lived in Singapore.** Easter was a great reunion for them both.

**Inglorious Leaders (1 Corinthians 1.10-17).** Chris commenced with an outline of *1 Corinthians*, highlighting the divisions within the fellowship and the remedies. Much of what is precious to us, as with the *Corinthians*, is shaped by our cultural values; learned from childhood and deeply entrenched. (Continued p.4)

### Victims Of Easter Day's Bombing In Pakistan Appeal Launched!

ANGLICAN Aid has put together an emergency appeal for the victims of the Easter Day bombings in Lahore, Pakistan. The attack targeting Christians celebrating Easter left 72 dead and hundreds injured in hospitals. They have a trusted and established partner in Lahore who is demonstrating God's love to victims and their families through visiting them in hospital and responding to their practical needs.

To find out more and make a donation, go to:

<https://anglicanaid.org.au/.../victims-of-easter-days-bombing>



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## When Too Much Is Never Enough

**YOU can never get too much when it comes to enriching your spiritual life.** Conventions generally held at Christmas/New Year and Easter in major centres bring thousands of Christians together for Bible learning and fellowship – and this year's Belgrave Heights (Melbourne) Convention would have to go down as one of the best. Winsome and dynamic teachers Chris Chia and Rory Shiner teamed up to give Bible-saturated and practically applied teaching linking the situation of the Early Church with the Church Today for the spiritual enrichment of preachers and congregants, young and old in age and in faith. Worship surrounding the teaching combined the best of Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, old and new, and were well chosen to enhance the theme of each session. The foyer contained imaginative and attractive displays from a wide cross-section of mission organisations. The ever-improving facilities provided a space conducive to teaching, learning and fellowship. Koorong Books and BHC Recordings ensured the ongoing usefulness of the BHC experience. Glory be to God for the ministry of conventions.

**You can never get too much when it comes to learning about 'The Great Works Of Christ' in the world today.** Your denomination has a regular publication or publications to keep you informed about what's happening in your corner of the Kingdom. So does your favourite missionary society, Bible college or seminary, morals or other parachurch ministry. And there are three publications which bring news of the non/trans/multi/inter/denominational church: *New Life* ([www.nlife.com.au](http://www.nlife.com.au)), *ChristianToday* ([www.christiantoday.com.au](http://www.christiantoday.com.au)) and *Eternity* ([www.biblesociety.org.au/meet-the-bible-society/our.../about-eternity](http://www.biblesociety.org.au/meet-the-bible-society/our.../about-eternity)). Pretty well all of these publications are free and available on the Internet or in the case of *Eternity*, in hard copy in most churches. Basically all you have to do is ask! Why not get them all and become one of the best-informed Christians in your church or fellowship?

**You can never get too much prayer fuel.** 'Ye have not because ye ask not' are words which should challenge every Christian to greater frequency and fervour in their prayer lives. And the publications mentioned above will provide massive amounts of fuel to stoke the fires of prayer in the hearts of believers to keep us praying, praying always, praying on, praying through.

**You can never get too much when it comes to improving or multiplying your gifts.** *'I would live ever in the light, I would work ever for the right; I would serve Thee with all my might; therefore to Thee I come. Just as I am, young, strong, and free, to be the best that I can be, for truth, and righteousness, and Thee, Lord of my life, I come.'*

So wrote Marianne Hearne. If her dedication is our dedication too, we can never rest on our laurels, never sit back and take our ease, never get too much from all the help and blessing we receive in the local church and from the wider church, and above all from the Lord Himself, so that we can 'give (our)selves wholly to the work of the Lord.' – Bob Thomas

## MATTERS FOR PRAYER:

### AZERBAIJAN: War Looms Over Nagorno-Karabakh

**CONTEXT:** Located between the Black and Caspian Seas, the Caucasus states sit on a volatile, geo-strategic, ethnic religious fault-line between three powers: Turkey, Iran and Russia. Over recent decades, oil and gas pipeline politics has caused the strategic and economic value of these states to skyrocket. Should war erupt in the South Caucasus (specifically between Armenians and Azerbaijan) it would be likely to take on regional dimensions, with Russia backing Armenia, and with Turkey backing Azerbaijan.

**BACKGROUND:** In 1915 some 1.5 million Armenians were slaughtered and starved to death in the Armenian Genocide. Many thousands more were expelled or forcibly Islamised and 'Turkified' as Turkish ultra-nationalists incited ethnic-religious cleansing to rid the Anatolian Peninsula of non-Turks. In May 1918 the newly independent state of Armenia was declared, alongside the newly independent state of Azerbaijan. Although Nagorno-Karabakh was historically Armenian and populated by Armenians (94.5%), Azerbaijan claimed the mountainous territory as its own. War erupted. Exploiting the chaos, the Soviets invaded and annexed the region, dividing it between the Soviet Republic of Armenia and the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan. To compensate Armenia for its massive territorial losses – specifically the loss of Western Armenia to Turkey – N-K was awarded to Armenia. However, when Turkic Azeri communists protested, Stalin stepped in. In 1923, to appease both Turks and Communists, he handed N-K (Armenian Christian) to Azerbaijan (Turkic Muslim), with N-K having the status of an autonomous province. For decades, ethnic-religious tensions were suppressed due to Soviet Communist repression.

**RECENT HISTORY:** In the 1980s glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring) converged with Islamic revival to awaken Islamic identity and to fuel Islamic zeal. In 1990 the Soviet empire unravelled and Armenia declared independence. When Azerbaijan declared independence in 1991 it immediately abolished the N-K autonomous oblast. Horrified, N-K's Armenian Christians held a referendum on self-determination in which 99% of voters supported independence. Azerbaijan responded by launching a war of ethnic cleansing against Armenian 'separatists' and 'occupiers'. By 1993 Azerbaijan – then a terror hub servicing the Chechen War – had incorporated some 2,000 Chechen and Afghan jihadis into its armed forces to fight the Armenian Christians. Despite overwhelming odds, the N-K Armenians not only prevailed but occupied some 20% of Azerbaijan so as to create a buffer zone around N-K to protect civilians from shelling. In 1994 a ceasefire froze the conflict. While Azerbaijan insists that N-K is its territory, the Armenians of N-K would rather die fighting than surrender their historic Christian homeland to Turkic Muslims whom history has taught them not to trust.

**CRISIS:** While border clashes have flared routinely over the years, the fighting that erupted on Saturday 2 April was different. Just one day after Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev and US Vice-President Joe Biden met for talks in Washington, it was the worst violence since 1994. Today, as Azerbaijan states its willingness to 'liberate' N-K militarily, it is receiving loud support from neo-Ottoman Turkey. The US too – being heavily invested in oil-rich Azerbaijan – has declared its support for Azerbaijan's 'territorial integrity', while asserting that the status quo is unacceptable. So in attacking and provoking N-K now, what might Azerbaijan be hoping to achieve? Is Baku threatening to trigger a regional conflict: drawing in neo-Ottoman Turkey (to support Turkic Azerbaijan) and then Armenia (to support N-K); Russia (to support Armenia); the US (to protect its considerable economic interests in Baku); transnational jihadis – all in the hope of effecting a final solution on N-K and even possibly on Armenia itself? Such a scenario represents a pan-Turkist's dream and an Armenian's nightmare. Fighting has died down since a ceasefire was declared on 5 April, but tensions are soaring and the situation is highly volatile.

– Elizabeth Kendal, International Religious Liberty Analyst And Advocate.

Elizabeth is Adjunct Research Fellow in the Centre For The Study Of Islam And Other Faiths

At The Melbourne School Of Theology and Director of Advocacy for Christian Faith & Freedom based in Canberra.

#### LATE NEWS: REMEMBERING THE PAKISTANI MARTYRS

IN loving memory of all who lost their lives on Easter Day, when suicide bombers killed 80 and Injured 300 in Lahore Pakistan, a service will be held on Saturday 16 April at 6.30 pm in All Saints Urdu-Hindi Church, 466 Glenferrie Road Kooyong (Melbourne) praying for the bereaved families. Bishop Philip Huggins will preach. Enquires: 0410 719 641 – 0431 159 242 Email: [allsaintpakistanichurch@outlook.com](mailto:allsaintpakistanichurch@outlook.com)

#### PLEASE PRAY THAT GOD WILL:

- expose lies, propaganda, greed and megalomania for what they are: sins that give the devil a foothold to bring darkness, chaos and devastation to the Earth, and great suffering to God's people; may all such evil be recognised and rejected and justice prevail.
- draw Armenians and indeed all Christians into prayer, so they might put their trust not in weapons, not in defences, and not in humanity, but in the Lord their God who has promised that, when exalted and honoured, He will be 'strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate' (Isaiah 28.5,6).
- intervene for the sake of His people, so that all things might work together for the good of those who love Him, according to His good purpose. (Romans 8.28)

## EASTER AT BELGRAVE HEIGHTS CONVENTION (FROM P.1)

**To confront and change those deep-rooted values is the task of the church.** Corinth had 12 temples. The city boasted of its wisdom and power. But believers know that Christ is the wisdom and power of God (1.24). Corinth was the most gifted, yet the most problematic church in which Paul ministered. Today, as then, the pastor's role is to turn the church into a Christ-centred people rather than problem-centred; to get the world out of the church. While there is fighting, the believers are still babies in the faith. Pride has taken over. Self-promotion has become an art form. They judged leaders by their appearance and eloquence. But we need to know the difference between looking the part and living the part. Do not look for education, charismatic leadership or good Bible teaching in a leader. But look to Christ.



Chris and Mona Chia with 'Mrs DP'

**Like any modern city, Corinth was famous for its inglorious sex orgies.** The only way to live for Christ in a sex-mad world is to live God's way; be sanctified and made holy (6.11). The Greek philosophy, common in Corinth, was that the body was separate from the soul, so nothing you ate or drank or indulged in with your body would in any way affect the soul. Body and soul are two distinct parts. Paul says, 'Nonsense! What we do in this life affects us eternally.' The body is the person and the person is the body. Therefore we must glorify God with our bodies (6.20). We must glorify God in marriage; put to death self-interest, self-glory and self-freedom. We must take our instructions from God, His Son and His Word. Marriage is an invitation to die to self-rights, and to fulfill our God-given responsibility. Is my marriage to glorify God or to satisfy myself?

**The Corinthian Church was divided over food.** Some arrived early and ate plenty. Others could not leave work in time, or were slaves only permitted certain hours of freedom. The wealthy church members ate apart and with better food. But the Lord's Supper declares unity and oneness in Christ – over the disunity and separateness prevalent in Corinth. Paul contrasted the way Jesus took the bread and shared it out, with the selfish manner of the Corinthians. They took it for self; to elevate self and shame others; to find false security. Jesus shared the bread with others; to serve others; to identify with others and to display true security in God's salvation. Christians are all equal in sin, in salvation and in salvation's blessings. The cross is the greatest leveler of human differences. We need to examine ourselves for sins of pride, disunity, superiority. Never think of yourself as better, richer, wiser. Christ died to make us one. We need to welcome each other from the heart; without pride or prejudice. Beware of stereotyping groups. Christ died for all. He has broken down every barrier. The church should be known for its humility.

**When the missing virtue in the church is love, it is easily forgotten** in a moment of self-interest, self-promotion and self-importance. In Corinth, church life centred around themselves rather than God. Spiritual maturity comes when Jesus is our true glory, wisdom and power as the permanent effects of the Gospel take root and change lives. In Corinth, they were obsessed with spiritual gifts. The most gifted spoke in tongues. That is man-made spirituality! Spectacular trances and tongues seem to be a sign of godliness. In reality they are like a noisy gong. The reality of gifts is not questioned, but the motivation behind their use is the problem. Without love, they are nothing. What we do matters much less than how we do it and why we do it. A public display of love is very easy. The private, routine, ordinary everyday living out of love is much more challenging. Love is the very essence and character of God so there should never be a loveless church or a loveless Christian.

**The Corinthians kept majoring on the minor things such as gifts, tongues, prophecy.** They were still immature believers, without the all-important gift of love. The Christian life is about love because God is love. Love is the currency of Heaven and the more we practise love, the more prepared we will be for Heaven. Now they have to hold fast to the teaching and grip it intensely. We cannot rely on past actions or belief. We must hold fast now; today!

**We always need to be reminded of the fundamental, essential Gospel.** By divine plan, Christ's death was sacrificial and substitutionary. It was according to the Scriptures; not by misadventure. Our lives must bear the life-changing, gracious intervention of Jesus. His handiwork must be shaping all our actions and attitudes as we begin, continue and end by God's grace. Without Christ's resurrection our preaching is empty; faith is useless; we are still in our sins, and are the most to be pitied. (Cont. p.5)

## Will Graham, Steve Grace Team Up For Reality 2016

### In Alice Springs

WILL Graham, Dr Billy Graham's grandson, will be in Australia 20-22 May for *Reality 2016* in Alice Springs. Mr Graham will be preaching the Gospel at special youth and children's events, an Outback Concert, a family night and public rallies. Combined Alice Springs churches are supporting the outreach. Steve Grace – Australia's internationally acclaimed country and Gospel singer, Dennis Agajanian – eight-time winner of the USA Country Music Association's *Musician Of The Year* award, and many local artists will perform throughout the weekend. Evangelist Billy Graham preached in Australia in 1959, 69 and 79, and his son Franklin visited in 1996, 98 and 2005. More information about *Reality 2016* with Will Graham can be found at the website [billygraham.org.au/alicesprings](http://billygraham.org.au/alicesprings)

### DEVASTATING EFFECTS OF SCHOOLGIRLS' ABDUCTION CONTINUE IN CHIBOK, NIGERIA

TWO years on, the families of the schoolgirls kidnapped by Boko Haram in Chibok, Nigeria, are struggling for survival. Eighteen parents of the kidnapped girls have died since the attack, when 275 girls – mostly Christians – were taken from their school. Almost 50 managed to escape, but it is believed 228 remain in captivity.

According to persecution charity Open Doors, the families of those girls still missing are seriously struggling to support themselves, and many are suffering from severe health problems linked to their trauma. Though many families fled in the aftermath of the attack, some have now returned to Chibok. However, schools have not reopened since the kidnapping, and so the local children have been out of education for two years. The town's markets have also been closed since the attack.

Open Doors has been working with local churches and partners to provide food, healthcare and counselling for those affected. – *Christian Today*

### Former Boxer To 'Fight The Good Fight'

AFTER winning the final fight of his career, Christian boxing great Manny Pacquiao gave all glory to God and revealed he plans to spend his retirement serving his fellow Filipinos. When asked about his future plans, congressman Pacquiao, who is a former eight-division world champion with 58 wins in his career, told media 'I am going to go home and think about it, but I want to be with my family and I want to serve the people of the Philippines.' He says he intends to retire to a life of charitable work and politics in the Philippines, where he is a two-term congressman running for a senate seat. Last year, he reportedly spent about \$604,000, of his own money to supply homes in a local village, with plans to build a total of 600 units and a hospital.

– *Breaking Christian News*

### You're Never Too Old ...

IT'S often said that older people find it harder to change their worldview – and therefore also more rarely come to faith – but that doesn't seem to be the case in Moldova, at least not among those receiving provisions through an elderly care project. Through a partnership with local churches, Operation Mobilization is helping share the Gospel and

be Christ's hands and feet through its Relief and Development program. And many elderly people are coming to faith in Christ. Sometimes this begins with something as simple as delivering a hot meal to a neighbour in need, and for one man, Vasile, this was exactly what he needed. His wife died a few years ago, and he had had an accident with an axe and lost a leg. He was disabled and alone. Since coming into contact with the elderly care centre, he is receiving hot meals and a daily chat, and his outlook on life is changing. He listens as he is told about the love of God and has begun asking questions about faith. Vasile says: 'I like this church – the people there care for others nobody else cares about.'

– *MNN*

### ACL Wants To End Sports Betting Advertising

THE Australian Christian Lobby has welcomed a policy announced by the Greens to end sports betting advertising. Under the policy, all sports betting promotion would be banned in a similar approach to the way cigarette advertising was outlawed in 1992. Lyle Shelton, managing director of ACL, says the policy reflected the damage gambling causes to families and the community and called on the Federal Government and the Labor Party to support the bill.

– *ACL*

## Shining For Jesus At BHC

RORY Shiner with his wife Susan and four primary aged boys, was visiting Belgrave Heights Convention for the second time. He is senior pastor of Providence City Church, Perth, WA, a non-building church with a church-plant in the suburbs. The largest age-group in this fellowship is 20-30 year olds. Rory is aware of the tremendous challenges facing young adults who believe God's Word in today's society. As Rory grew up in a Christian home, he was always aware that God was his Father and Jesus was his Saviour. He did rebel in his later years at High School. Then he was challenged to full commitment during his gap year in Zimbabwe, and later at university. He spoke from *Colossians* on *Reflecting Christ*.



**Paul wrote *Colossians* to a church in Turkey which, like other churches, had been alienated from God (1.21-23).** He did not plant the church and had never met the people, but *Colossians* is a very positive letter, beginning with thanks to God for what He has done for the Colossians and what Paul knows God will do in them. Like all churches, there is a history of rescue from the dominion of sin and darkness. (1.18).

**But now we have peace through Christ's blood, celebrated in a hymn of praise (1.15-17).** The ancient world had many idols and icons but God's Word forbids image-making because we are made in His image! Just as a coin stamped with the Queen's image is her coinage, so we belong to Him. But mankind has refused His sovereignty. We have become severely compromised and can no longer reflect His image. Jesus is the only One who fully reflects God because He is God's image; the firstborn over all creation; Ruler and Inheritor. In Him all things hold together (1.17). We are made for Jesus, just like a hammer is made for a nail. We were alienated and enemies because of our willful behaviour, but we glimpse a grand vision of what we can be in Christ (1.21,22). *Colossians* poses the question, 'How shall we then live?' We were alienated, but we have now been rescued by the cross. Salvation is not an award or a reward, but deliverance. We were stuck in the dominion of darkness, without hope, and Christ alone could save us.

**We need to be thankful and humble as we have been brought into a new Kingdom,** the Kingdom of God's Son. He has cancelled our debt and forgiven our sin. We need to learn to become what we have been made! The Law accuses us in our failure to live as God expects. But He took our failures and nailed them to the cross. 'He who knew no sin became sin for us.' (2 Corinthians 5.21) To live by faith is to believe that God has nailed our sins to the cross. We have been reconciled to God; no longer strangers and estranged from Him. We can now live our lives in response to His sacrifice at Calvary.

**We want to grow up in Christ, and not stagnate.** We must deal with sin and move forward (3.1-5). The heart of our faith rests on the conviction that Jesus was bodily raised from the dead. There was an empty tomb! In one sense it has already happened to us as well: 'Since you have been raised with Christ' (3.1). His resurrection gives us new power as well as new life. We experience the power of Christ's resurrection now, as well as look forward to the future. We live between 'the now' and 'the not yet.' We are united in Him; safe in Him; protected in Him; hidden in Him (3.3).

**To receive Christ's blessing, we must be 'in Him'.** Whatever happened to Him, happened to us! We can have complete confidence in Him with no more doubts or fears.

**We need to move from the indicative (what is true) to the imperative (what we should do):** What I am, which is clothed in Christ's righteousness; what I should be – being transformed into His image (Romans 12.2). We died, therefore we need to put to death all evil thoughts and actions. Christians are not perfect, but we are forgiven, restored, and raised with Christ. We all have the same power within us that raised Christ from the dead. As God's chosen people we need to clothe ourselves in His good qualities (3.12,13). Dr Martyn Lloyd Jones said, 'Learn to stop listening to yourself and start talking to yourself.' When you are inclined to give up because of sin, put on these good characteristics. Every Christian has the power that raised Jesus from the dead. He has set us free! (Continued on p.7)

## Shining For Jesus At BHC

### **New Life, New Freedom – Colossians 2.9-15**

**WE know we are holy, but we now have to become holy (2.6,7).** We need to live out what is already true of us. We are rooted in Christ, like a tree in fertile soil. We need to flourish and grow fruitful with the persistent nourishment of the Word and prayer. A Christian is fundamentally committed to a continuous process of change.

**Paul shows the ways that will hinder our growth.** Don't let people judge you in regard to religious observance (2.16,17). Don't let people disqualify you with mysticism or experiences (2.18,19). An amazing experience can deflect from God's truth as revealed in His Word. Paul had an incredible religious experience (2 Corinthians 12.1-6) but he didn't talk about it for 14 years. 'God's strength is made perfect in weakness' (2 Corinthians 12.9) and Jesus is all we need, not Jesus plus experience or anything else. Don't let anyone enslave you (2.20,21).

**As we appropriate salvation and live in the Spirit we don't do it by rules and regulations.** Spirituality is the recreation of a gift from the Creator. Let us give thanks and live in Him, so we must set our hearts on Christ (3.1,2). We have been separated, not to win God's approval but because we have God's approval in Christ's redemption. We need to encourage each other in songs, prayers and testimony; be a community that spurs each other on to holiness with vigour and love. Because Christ has fully worked through us and changed our status, we are victorious.

**God is looking for a people who will bear fruit (2.1-5).** Throughout the Bible we have examples of men who were saved in order to bear fruit (1.6). God has poured out His Spirit on us so that we might bear fruit. Paul suffered for His name, and has a sense of his own calling to suffer (Acts 13.47) but he also refers to Christians in general, and missionaries in particular, as being ready to suffer for Christ (1.24). Paul was called to preach the mystery (secret) that is Christ in you, the hope of glory. The Gentiles are heirs together with Israel. All those who believe are able to call Him, 'Abba, Father.' Paul's strategy was to become immune to the thought that he was anything less than being fully accepted in Christ (2.4). To add something to Jesus is as erroneous as taking away from Him. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Christ (2.3). Paul's mission statement is 1.28,29. He has no need for rosters or permission to start. His aim is to have every person fully mature in Christ on the last day. Nothing can stop one person ministering to another. We must work for God's glory, not our own satisfaction. Make sure your daily routine is flexible enough to be able to pause and share with, or pray for, someone in need. Busyness is driven by the thought of more action equals more reward! Our aim must be fruitfulness for God's glory.

*– Reported by Barbie Prout ('Mrs DP')*



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## **Plans For Dementia Care Village A First For Victoria**

**PLANS to build a \$30 million dementia care village in Caulfield**, a first of its kind in Victoria, have been put forward for approval by leading health and aged care charity, HammondCare. The 90 bed aged care village to be built in stages would provide best practice dementia care across eight cottages in a village context complete with village centre, general store, chapel, studio, salon, workshop, memorial pavilion and extensive gardens and walkways.

**HammondCare Village Concept Plan**



**The village is proposed for land leased from the Victorian government** adjacent to Alfred Health's Caulfield Hospital and will complement the existing Caulfield Nursing Home and redevelop two other facilities, all of which have been operated by HammondCare from 2014. If redevelopment proceeds, beds for the site will reach about 180.

**State Manager of HammondCare Victoria**, Seamus van der Westhuizen, said a feature of the village is HammondCare's cottage design for dementia care, which has been developed since the 1990s and is now recognised around the world. 'Instead of the large institutional approach to aged care that has been common, residents in HammondCare's Caulfield village will live in small cottages with a home-like feel,' Mr van der Westhuizen said. 'Each resident has their own room and ensuite with fully-functional fresh cook kitchens in each cottage, safe and private backyards and a range of design features that make the environment more familiar and navigable for a person with dementia. The surrounding village amenities such as village centre, general store, men's shed and salon further ensure residents have the opportunity to engage in meaningful activities of daily living which is so important to quality of life.'

### **Olive Gardens Christian Retirement Association**



**35 Olive Road, Eumemmerring, Vic.**

**Modern, fully renovated two bedroom unit  
in a popular retirement village  
close to shops, public transport and freeway.**

**Unit must be owner occupied.**

**Price only \$140,000.**

**Contact: Herman Schuring: 0400 131 339.  
or Tony Smit: 0418 591 765.**

## REACHING OUT TO THE COMMUNITY

### ROCK: Easter Mission Rocks Clayton With The Gospel

THE Christian Gospel ROCK (Reaching Out to Clayton Kids, and beyond) Mission was presented to children (and community generally) during school holidays, after Easter, at Clayton, Vic. Bible passages pertaining to the death and resurrection of Jesus were dramatically portrayed in the open air, at beautiful Namatjira Park each day during the period 29 March to 1 April.



The Clayton ROCK Team

The team of 37 members, mostly teenagers, was united and zealous in the Holy Spirit as they presented the Gospel Message of Jesus. The ROCK team operates under the authority of the Presbyterian Church, Clayton. The Scriptural Gospel of Jesus was proclaimed in lively songs, stories, skits, plays, drama, games etc.

The team gives thanks to GOD for the blessings of Easter ROCK as a witness in the community to the love of GOD. ROCK team members Nick Boys (as Jesus), his wife Jess (as Mary Magdalene) and Peter Roberts (as the Centurion) were inspirational and convincing. Michael Jensen and Murray Niel were austere, intimidating and scary as Pharisees. Several other team members exercised their spiritual gifts realistically as Bible characters in support, notably the repentant thief. As one visitor expressed: 'GOD is in this place! Alleluia!'

Daily attendances of children and adults averaged 100. On the last day, Café Day, there were 106 children and 94 adults (including other children in their care) 200 in all. Numerous passers-by lingered to watch on the various days, particularly during the daily drama episodes.

Thanks are extended to the Kingston Council for making the facilities at the park available, and to the Clayton pastors' prayer group for their prayer and moral support. Thanks to the many friends who prayed for the Easter mission. Please pray for the next summer ROCK mission, GOD-willing, in early January 2017.

- Dr Des Gaffney

## THE MEDIA CAN BE HOSTILE TO CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

### Help your ministry

- Understand the media
- Protect your reputation
- Manage negative issues
- Use the media to promote your positive messages

**Who should attend?**  
All Christian ministry, school and church leaders

**When?**  
May 10 - Kogarah  
May 11 - Castle Hill

**Morning session:** Dealing with the media - for faith-based organisations  
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## GOOD NEWS FROM ABROAD

### GOSPEL LIGHT DAWNS IN WORLD'S COLDEST CITY

YAKUTSK is a Russian city known as the coldest city on the planet. Temperatures go as low as 70 below zero, and are very often 40-50 degrees below zero in the winter.

Missionary work in this area is hard, not simply because of the cold, but also because the only way to get into the area is by passing over snowy roads and frozen rivers during its harshest season. They don't travel in the summer or spring because it is more difficult negotiating mud than snow and ice.

What isn't so well known about this Russian land is it's growing church population, after the first church in the area was planted in 1994. Until recently there was no training for church leadership, but through the Slavic Gospel Association courses in homiletics (the art of preaching and writing sermons) and hermeneutics (interpreting the Bible) have begun. The Slavic Gospel Association and the churches in this area are now gearing up for a six-year Bible program to train pastors in systematic theology and biblical counselling. Plans are also in place to reach the thousands of other remote villages in the region, where people have never heard about Jesus.



– MNN

#### Ugandan Water Project Doubles

SAMARITAN'S Purse is able to provide clean water to more than twice as many people in Northern Uganda as they'd planned, after more than doubling their original campaign target and raising more than \$1.8 million. The charity raised half the money which was doubled by the UK Government, under its UK Aid Match scheme.

Samaritan's Purse UK Executive Director Simon Barrington says they can now provide clean water to 48,000 people by installing and repairing 120 wells. Since the fundraising campaign ended, teams have already repaired 30 boreholes.

– ASSIST News Service

#### Beautiful Dream Fulfilled

IN 1916, a missionary in China had a vivid dream of a tree. Its branches reached to the sky, and on

each branch were thousands of twinkling lights. That missionary shared the dream with her husband, and the work of *Kids Alive International* was begun. The couple had seen the poverty and suffering of the children who lived on the streets in China – children who had nowhere to go – so they hung a sign on the gate in front of their home that welcomed those children. Each child received an education, food, a safe home, and the love of Jesus Christ.

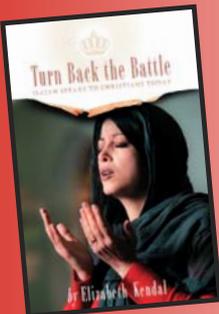
It's been 100 years since the first Kids Alive International home was opened, and Matt Parker, president of the ministry, says the dream of that first missionary has come true, with thousands of children being impacted by the Gospel today. The ministry is working in 15 countries with 6,000 children.

– MNN

**NEWS FLASH:** IN the three years that Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones' sermons have been free, over 3.2 million sermons have been downloaded! The MLJ Trust is thankful to God for such strong support!  
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## PERSECUTION WATCH

### PAKISTAN – Bomb Victim Family ‘Have No More Tears’

RELEASE International asks prayer for a heartbroken Christian family in Lahore who are mourning the loss of their son. The 17-year-old, called Sagar Masih, was killed in the suicide bomb attack in a Lahore park on Easter Sunday. A member of Release staff was able to visit the family recently and provide pastoral care and prayer support.

The family said that after the explosion they had gone to the park to find Sagar and other family members but he wasn't there. Eventually they found his body at a hospital.

The father says he has no more tears as he and the rest of the family had been weeping for days. Sagar's mother said she felt that at any time Sagar would return home but then added: 'My son is no more.'

Please pray for Sagar's family and for all who have been bereaved by the Easter bomb attack. Pray too for the injured and traumatised, that all would know God's healing touch. Pray for Sagar's cousin Chand, who is in a serious condition in hospital, and for other injured family members. Pray for Release partners as they visit the bereaved and injured: that they will be able to minister God's love and peace. Pray for protection for Pakistan's Christian minority. – *Release International*



Praying for Sagar's family.

#### CHINA: Pastor Released

A PASTOR has been released from prison in China after being detained for two months for publicly protesting the government's removal of church crosses. Joseph Gu Yuese, pastor of China's largest Protestant Church, was arrested in February for protesting the government's removal of crosses from state-sanctioned churches. The cross removals are seen as the government's newest wave of persecution against Christians. Commentators say Christianity's recent rise in China has made the atheistic communist government nervous. Although Pastor Gu Yuese has been released, he is confined to house arrest, banned from preaching, and forbidden from making outside contact without permission. China Aid, a Christian organisation aimed at protecting the human rights of China's Christians, says there are many others are in government custody following the cross removal protests. – *CBN Christian World News*

#### THAILAND: Dangers And Fears For Pakistani Refugees

ABOUT 11,500 Pakistani Christian refugees have fled to Thailand – a 51% increase from the year before, according to World Watch Monitor. Though the people have fled the persecution they faced in their home country, more dangers and fears are lurking in Thailand. Coming into the country, the people received temporary visas, posing as tourists. Now, the visas have now long since expired. The asylum seekers have hidden in their tight apartments or kept to themselves so as not to draw attention from the Thai police. Bos News Life reports refugees are surviving with help from churches, charities, or engaging in ille-

gal work. Because of the mass of illegal Pakistani immigrants, Thai police have been cracking down, arresting or deporting people. The people have often been taken to the Immigration Detention Centres which by showing of a BBC journalists' undercover footage, are overcrowded and in horrible conditions. Families have been split up and put into cage-like jail cells to remain for an undetermined amount of time. A number of children are suffering from disease. In the video, a woman sobs, 'What have we done? We fled from Pakistan in fear, and they're treating us like this.' Almost all those arrested are Christians. – [mnonline.org](http://mnonline.org)

#### EGYPT: Christian Declared Innocent After Spending Three Years In Prison

AN Egyptian Christian, Bishoy Kameel Garas, has been declared 'innocent' after spending more than half of his six-year sentence in jail. Bishoy was jailed in September 2012 for alleged defamation of Islam, as well as Egypt's then President Mohammad Morsi and a Muslim sheikh's sister. The charges all related to a fake Facebook page opened in his name. – *Barnabas Fund*

#### SYRIA: Damage And Destruction To Churches And Christian Buildings

IN yet another blow to the Christian community in Syria, the recent liberation of Qaryatain from Islamic State control has revealed that many of the town's churches and Christian buildings have either been destroyed or badly damaged. The ancient town, which used to have a large Christian population, had been under IS rule for seven months until it was recaptured by government troops and local militia on Sunday 3 April.

– *Barnabas Fund*

**Christ – The Only Way**

**ACTS 4.1-12**

**The world is no friend of the church.** Today we meet a theme in Acts which will repeat itself throughout the book – opposition.

**The concern of the Jewish hierarchy is seen in v 2**, the ‘proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead’. Luke is quick to remind us that, in spite of opposition, the Gospel continues on its all-conquering way (v4). The same people involved in the crucifixion of Jesus now question Peter and John as to how they performed this miracle (vv5–7).

**Peter is both clear and courageous in his answer.** It is Jesus who is responsible for the miracle (v10). ‘You crucified Him, but God raised Him from the dead’ and this was to fulfill Psalm 118.22 that the one rejected would ultimately triumph (v11).

**Here again is the familiar pattern of evangelism to the Jewish audience:**

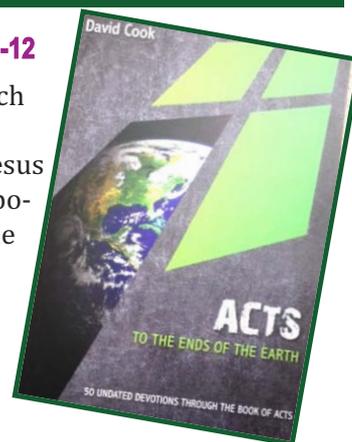
- the contrast of what you did in the name of God and what God did,
- the death and resurrection of Jesus,
- the fulfillment of the Scriptures.

**Acts 4.12 is a timely reminder to us of the uniqueness of Christ.** There is no other who can save – ‘no-one else ... no other name’. Such a verse makes it clear that Christianity is not one way among many ways to God. If the Christian faith is true, then all the other faiths must be false because ‘there is

no other name’. The basis of such a claim is that Jesus Christ is the one who died, was raised and was exalted to God’s right hand. Further proof as to the reality of the claim is the crippled beggar standing healed before them. The ascended Christ is still active.

**When John the Baptist doubted whether Jesus was the Christ**, he asked the right question (Matthew 11.3). ‘Are You the One who was to come or should we expect someone else?’ If Jesus is not the way, or not the sole way, who else has done what He did? Should we still be looking for another? The answer of the Gospel is, ‘no-one else ... no other name’.

**Peter and John are accused**, they are being interrogated, but they are not passive victims. They are on the front foot, they are on the attack with the Gospel.

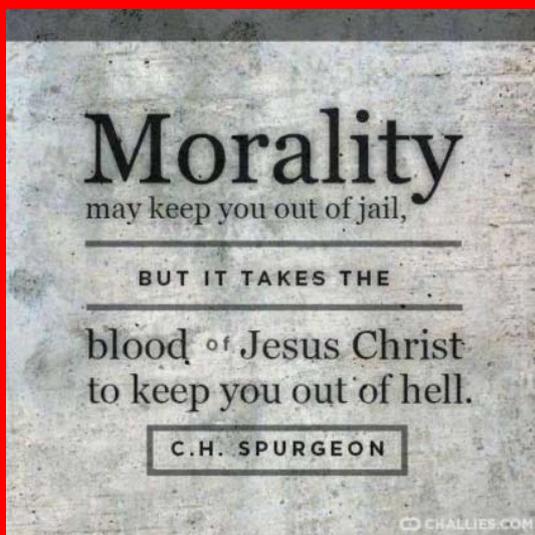


**FOR REFLECTION:**

Memorise Acts 4.12 and think about its implications for you, your friends, the world and evangelism. How should you respond in the face of opposition to the Gospel?

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

**SEEN ON FACEBOOK:**



*John 4.35:  
The harvest is white.*

**A Good Sign:**



## BOOKS WORTH READING

### **DELIGHTING IN THE TRINITY, Michael Reeves, IVP Academic, 2012.**

**IN *Delighting In The Trinity*** Michael Reeves has attempted to give us a readable book about the Christian doctrine of the Trinity and not only make it sound understandable, but absolutely essential for the Christian understanding of God and His Gospel.

**Reeves' thesis, I believe, can be best summed up** with this quote:

'If God is not Father, Son and Spirit then He is eminently rejectable: without love, radiance or beauty. Who would want such a God to have any power, or even exist? But the triune, living God of the Bible is Beauty. Here is a God we can really want, and whose sovereignty we can wholeheartedly rejoice in.'

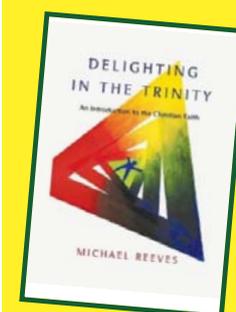
**There are some important things to note about this.** Firstly, for Reeves, the Trinity is all about God. The doctrine is not something that we use to try and resolve an inconvenient dilemma about how Jesus can be God whilst the Father is also. Rather, it informs us as to the reality of who God actually is. Secondly, throughout the book, Reeves repeatedly describes God and the Trinity with the word 'beauty'. This caught me off-guard, as I am not used to seeing the word used as a descriptor, if at all, in a theological book like this. On the one hand, I think Reeves uses it well and the fact that it caught me off-guard allowed me the chance to stop and think it through more thoroughly than I might have done otherwise. Yet, on the other hand, it is not a word that I see repeatedly used in Scripture (although, now that I said that I am sure people will comment with Biblical references).

**Overall, the best thing I got out of this book was that** understanding the Trinity helps me to understand the richness of the Gospel, particularly as it is framed around the motif of love. How sin is stopping us from being lovers of others (effectively stopping us from following the two greatest commandments), and, instead, fosters us in the love of the self. And the polar opposite to this which is found in the character of God, who demonstrates his love of others, firstly directed within the Trinity, and then outwards towards creation.

**I found *Delighting In The Trinity* to be very readable,** but as I've ventured through other reviews, I can see that not everyone has shared the same perspective. However, while being readable, the book is also very meaty – and as such is probably best for mature Christians, leaders, and professionals in ministry. There is definitely a lot to stop and think about in terms of God, His character, and His Gospel, and I am very much looking forward to reading this in a group.

**Throughout the book there are several asides from church history** and other theologians. While I appreciated these nods to historical theology, if you are intending on reading this with either a young Christian or a group of younger Christians, you will likely need to explain the tangents that Reeves' goes out on.

– Peter Hughes, via *Thinking Of God*



**'Michael Reeves has attempted to give us a readable book about the Christian doctrine of the Trinity and not only make it sound understandable, but absolutely essential for the Christian understanding of God and His Gospel.'**

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## PUTTING FAITH INTO PRACTICE

May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May He strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all His holy ones. – 1 Thessalonians 3.12,13

IS this our earnest and constant prayer for one another? We are not capable of making our love 'increase and overflow for one another', but the Lord can! Are we praying that He will – for ourselves as well as for others? Are we as good as Paul was at letting others in our fellowship of believers know how much we love them and care about them?

We all need God's help in this area. Because of the residual effects of sin in our hearts we are often too easily offended, too easily alienated from those with whom we differ (even on minor issues), too readily polarised in our views because of pride and the difficulty of eating humble pie, admitting our mistakes, and learning from others.

We need the Lord's help to overcome these weaknesses and increase in love for those we sometimes find it hard to love. And how serious are we collectively about having strong, blameless and holy hearts and minds when Jesus comes to receive us into the presence of His Father? Do we long for more evident signs of the sanctifying ('holy making') work of the Holy Spirit, not only in our own lives but in the lives of our brothers and sisters in Christ? When 'the Lord Jesus comes with all His holy ones' we are going to spend eternity with Him and with them. Are we working (and praying) hard to minimise the contrast between then and now?  
– Bruce Christian

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## Three Tips For Leading In Prayer

– Adapted From *Praying Together: The Priority And Privilege Of Prayer* by Megan Hill, Crossway Books

### How To Lead While Others Pray:

IF the fear of public speaking is the general population's greatest fear, fear of praying publicly may be its Christian equivalent. It is no wonder. In prayer together, the leader brings his brothers and sisters on a holy errand to the very throne room of almighty God. But the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1.7), and appreciating the enormity of the task can lead us to appreciate the enormity of our help. The Christian never prays alone, and the Christian never leads others in prayer by himself but always has the promised and sufficient help of the three: the listening Father, the mediating and interceding Son, and the helping Spirit. With this confidence, you can take steps (I'll suggest three) to better lead others in prayer.



### 1. Be Ready.

This has several aspects. Your readiness for public prayer always begins with a regular habit of private prayer. As Samuel Miller wrote in *Thoughts On Public Prayer*, 'None can hope to attain excellence in the grace and gift of prayer in the public assembly, unless they abound in closet devotion, and in holy communion with God in secret.' [S. Miller, *Thoughts On Public Prayer*, pp.260-261] You also get ready by studying the prayers in Scripture and by paying attention to the public prayers of more mature believers. Too, you get ready to pray publicly by thinking ahead about what you might pray. Maybe a verse from your private Scripture reading or the application from a recent sermon, maybe a particular mission field or Gospel opportunity, maybe a suffering friend or struggling church could become the subject of your prayer. Beyond that, you get ready to pray by resolving that you will pray if given opportunity. If you don't intend to pray, you likely never will.

### 2. Be Clear.

Your great aim as you lead others in prayer is that they would pray along with you. Jesus strongly warns against thoughtless rambling (Matthew 6.7) and hypocrisy and pride (Matthew 6.5). Instead, you should pray with simplicity and humility, encouraging others to join their hearts to yours. It is good to pick one or two items for prayer and pray thoroughly and briefly about them; this allows others to 'Amen' your petitions and leaves time for others to lead. The words and sentences of your prayer should also be clear; use the language of Scripture informed by your natural way of speaking.

### 3. Be Corporate.

When you lead in public prayer, you are not praying for yourself only but also with others. You are asking them to join you as you approach God and to make your petitions their own. For this reason, you should try as much as possible to use corporate language ('we,' 'us,' and 'our') and to pray for things that are common to everyone.

On a recent Wednesday night, my six-year-old son prayed aloud in the church prayer meeting. He prayed for missionaries to preach the Gospel, for Muslims to trust in Christ for their salvation, and for the sick people in our congregation to get better. His prayer was sincere, simply expressed, and very brief. It was just what the church needed.

Brothers and sisters, your most feeble prayer may unite the hearts of the church before God. By the help of the Spirit, you may remind them of forgotten truth, stir them to renewed desire, or move them to greater love. At the very least, your prayer will cause them to pray together.

And that is just what they need.

*Megan Hill is a pastor's wife and a pastor's daughter who has spent her life praying with others.*

*She serves on the editorial board for Christianity Today and is a regular contributor to Her.meneutics and the Gospel Coalition.*

*This article appeared on crossway.org  
– a website worth watching*

# One day in Melbourne

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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 - Captain Peter Brookshaw
    - Salvation Army Blogger
  - 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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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.