

Will Graham Goes Outback To Share The Hope Of Christ

Evangelist Will Graham returned to Australia in May to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Outback. The three-day event, *Reality*, Alice Springs, was held from 20-22 May at Blatherskite Park in Alice Springs, NT. Out of a population of 28,605, nearly 6,000 people attended the weekend event.

'Some of you have a broken life, and God doesn't use band aids. God wants to completely change you,' Will Graham declared. 'Salvation is a person and His name is "Jesus". Jesus can change everything in life. He can change *your* life tonight!' At Graham's invitation, a total of 549 people made a commitment to Christ. An additional 297 responded for prayer and spiritual support.



Reality featured five different events over the course of the weekend, including evangelistic outreaches on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights, a *KidzFest* program for children on Saturday morning, and a combined church service for the city on Sunday morning.

Reflecting on *Reality*, Graham referred to another evangelist who traveled the same territory more than 45 years prior. Dr Ralph Bell, a longtime ministry partner of Billy Graham's, spent two months preaching in and around Alice Springs in 1969, and – Graham says – paved the way for the success of this event. 'In Alice Springs God harvested fruit that we did not sow. Particularly among the indigenous people, Dr Bell and other missionaries planted the seeds of faith in Jesus Christ decades ago, and we are able to see the result this weekend.'

This was Will Graham's fourth time preaching in Australia, dating back to 2010. He's shared the Gospel in Gunnedah, Moree and Tamworth (2010); Orange, Lithgow and Bathurst (2012); and Broken Hill (2014).

Will Graham's grandfather, Billy Graham, preached extensively around the continent in 1959, 1968, 1969 and 1979. His 1959 tour, which covered Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Launceston, Hobart, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney, is widely viewed as a watershed moment in the early years of Billy Graham's ministry, and in the life of the church in Australia. Will Graham's father, Franklin Graham, preached at



multi-city tours of Australia in 1996, 1998 and 2005.

Will is therefore the third generation of Grahams to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Australia under the banner of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. He also serves as Vice President of the BGEA, and as Executive Director of the Billy Graham Training Center at The Cove in Asheville, North Carolina. Follow Will on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/Will-Graham4 and also on Twitter at www.Twitter.com/TellaGraham

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A 'Brigadoon' Hymn's Return

Judging by the response to this Facebook post, an old hymn long-vanished into the mists of time has struck a chord in being revived:

*Much in sorrow, oft in woe,
Onward, Christians, onward go:
Fight the fight, maintain the strife,
Strengthened with the Bread of life.
Onward Christians, onward go,
Join the war, and face the foe;
Faint not: much does yet remain,
Dreary is the long campaign.
Shrink not, Christians, will ye yield?
Will ye quit the painful field?
Will ye flee in danger's hour?
Know ye not your Captain's pow'r?
Let your drooping hearts be glad:
March in heavenly armour clad:
Fight, nor think the battle long,
Victory soon shall be your song.
Let not sorrow dim your eye,
Soon shall every tear be dry;
Let not fears your course impede,
Great your strength, if great your need.
Onward then in battle move,
More than conquerors ye shall prove;
Though opposed by many a foe,
Christian soldiers onward go.*

When it came to mind it made me think of some warriors I know in Turkey, Yemen, Scotland, Zambia, Malawi, Sudan, South Sudan – and, yes, Australia. They know who they are. God bless them and keep them, and give strength to their arm.

We Christians are fighting a pitched battle today on numerous fronts and while some think battle-speak is inappropriate, they are simply not facing up to reality. Satan is against us. Secularists are against us. Other religions are against us. Elements of the visible church are against us – those who compromise Christian faith and practice as they cave in to the forces promoting immorality and attacking the veracity of Scripture all the way from the first of *Genesis* to the last of *Revelation*. And these latter are perhaps the greatest threat to not just the survival but the increase of the Christian Church in the world today. They have seized power in several denominations and are proceeding apace to ensure that 'the trumpet gives an uncertain sound'.

Yes, we are 'much in sorrow, oft in woe', but Scripture stands in all its magnificent truth; it holds out its 'exceeding great and precious promises' and it gives us this blessed assurance: 'Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.'

– Bob Thomas

MATTERS FOR PRAYER:

SUDAN: War And Famine, Impunity And Funding

The genocidal jihad of the Government of Sudan against the Christian Nuba of South Kordofan has now entered its sixth year. As war rages, children die, farms burn and food runs out. Thousands of Nuba head south to seek refuge in Yida, in South Sudan's northern Unity State. When the rains come and the roads become impassable, those stranded in the Nuba Mountains, which is officially off-limits to humanitarian aid groups, will experience serious food insecurity. **The GoS is an expert at genocide** – killing both directly and indirectly by engineering the conditions for famine. According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, 7,500 Nuba refugees have arrived in Yida since the start of the year, 3,000 in May alone. Ninety percent of the refugees are women and children and one child in ten arrives alone.

Sudanese journalists with Nuba Reports believe that the reason the GoS launched its fighting so late in the season this year and relied so heavily on aerial bombardment has as much to do with logistics as with strategy. Apparently the GoS has had difficulty paying its troops. As soldiers have deserted the battlefield due to lack of payment, the GoS has been forced to recruit fighters and jihadists from far and wide.

God Answers Prayer For Maryam (Iran)

Prayer went out around the world last week for Maryam (Naseem) Naghash Zargaran, an Iranian convert and prisoner for Christ who, though seriously ill, was being denied proper medical care.

On Monday 6 June, Maryam was released on bond to receive medical treatment.

Thank You, Lord, for the blessing granted through the prayers of many (2 Corinthians 1.11). Please continue to pray for Maryam.

Mountains. On 26 May a GoS jet fighter launched a missile directly into the school compound. A Kenyan teacher was wounded and classrooms suffered extensive damage. The only reason this did not result in a massacre of children (as intended) was that the children were not present as only teachers were there, correcting exams.

Meanwhile back in Khartoum, on 22 May the GoS informed the head of UN's Sudan Office for Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Ivo Freijsen, that his annual stay permit would not be renewed. Freijsen had until 6 June to be out of the country. On 10 May imprisoned Sudanese Church of Christ Vice-Moderator, the Rev Hassan Abdelrahim Tawor was transferred from prison to a holding cell of a court for those facing crimes against the state. On 25 May Sudan's National Intelligence and Security Services re-arrested Pastor Kwa Shamaal, SCOC's Head Of Mission. *Morning Star News* has been informed that Pastor Shamaal and the Rev Hassan Abdelrahim Tawor could face charges calling for the death penalty.

– Elizabeth Kendal

But lack of funds might not be a problem for much longer because the GoS is about to get a massive injection of funds and assistance from the European Union. Leaked minutes from a secret 23 March 2016 meeting of the ambassadors of the EU's 28 member states indicate that Sudan will benefit from a \$45 million regional program to 'better manage migration'. Furthermore, on 5 April the EU Commissioner for International Co-operation and Development, Neven Mimica, visited Sudan to announce that Khartoum will receive a \$112 million aid package to 'address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement' in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile. This comes though Khartoum and is the root cause of irregular migration and forced displacement from these regions.

The decision beggars belief. Desperate for any action that will stem the migrant flow, it seems the EU will not let human rights get in the way. This will surely embolden the GoS, which will see it as a green light to escalate repression and persecution. On 18

May 15 bombs landed near a Roman Catholic school in Heiban in the Nuba

PLEASE PRAY: 'O LORD ...

- "lift up Your hand" and supply all the needs of the gravely imperilled Christians of the Nuba Mountains, including security, food out of season, humanitarian aid despite all the hurdles, as well as spiritual comfort and strength;

- "lift up Your hand" against the Islamist regime of Omar al-Bashir in Khartoum, breaking its 'arm' (mechanism of action) and ushering in justice for 'the fatherless and oppressed, so that man who is of the Earth may strike terror no more'; (Pray Psalm 10)

- "lift up Your hand" and intervene for Pastor Kwa Shamaal and Rev Hassan Abdelrahim Tawor.

- "Incline Your ear," Lord, and hear the prayers of Your gravely imperilled, suffering Church and all who intercede for her.'

'Arise, O Lord; O God, lift up Your hand; forget not the afflicted.' (Psalm 10.12)

REMINDER: Pray for Muslims during RAMADAN, 6 June to 5 July.

See <http://pray30days.org/>

From Faith To Atheism And Back

A neurosurgeon who died from lung cancer in 2015 explained in a memoir published this year what it was that compelled him to reclaim his Christian faith after embracing 'ironclad atheism.' Dr Paul Kalanithi, a fellow at the Stanford Neurosciences Institute, died after fighting a two-year battle with stage IV lung cancer. He graduated from the Yale School of Medicine, earned a master's in English literature from Stanford and master's in history and philosophy of science and medicine from Cambridge.

Dr Kalanithi grew up in a devout Methodist household, but began to turn away from his faith in college. Although his life was cut short, the 37-year-old was able to achieve one of his life's aspirations – becoming a writer. He wrote the best-selling book *When Breath Becomes Air* in which he examines the experience of death, and discusses how he personally wrestled with faith and disbelief.

In medical school he came to an understanding in which faith made more sense to him than not. He writes that to have a world without God banishes love, hate and meaning – a world that is self-evidently not the world we live in.

– *Christian Post*

Rare Jewish silver coins dating back to before Jesus was born have been discovered in Israel, giving new insight into an ancient Jewish settlement, according to the Israel Antiquities Authority. The coins, which are thought to date back to approximately 126 BC 'may have belonged to a Jew who hid his money and forgot to collect it,' according to the director of the excavation, Abraham Tendler. They were found in a rock crevice in an area of Israel thought to have been an agricultural estate built by a Jewish family during the Hasmonean period. Comprised of shekels and half-shekels that were minted in the city of Tyre, they bear the images of the king, Antiochus VII and his brother Demetrius II. The find will be preserved and become a centrepiece for the new neighbourhood under construction.

– *Christian Today*

The Market-Place Comes To The Church

The Liverpool (Sydney) Community Night Markets regularly held in Liverpool, Sydney, has recently found a new home – on the site of the local Anglican Church. The Markets had outgrown the previous site, and Council had been looking for an alternate site in the middle of the CBD. The church had been thinking of doing something similar in their spacious grounds, when the council approached them about the possibility. The rector of St Luke's, Rev Stuart Pearson, says he sees it as a great way for the church to engage more with the community, and for people to check out the church in a neutral setting. One market day attended by 3,000 people has already provided the church the opportunity to talk with unchurched locals about 'how life is going for them' with positive results.

– *Sydney Anglicans*

RI Under Review In Qld

Religious Instruction in Queensland state schools will be reviewed after a school principal raised concerns that teaching materials are proselytising students. Bible Society's *Eternity News* reports this is the first time a review of this nature has been called in the state. The review, announced by the QLD Minister for Education Kate Jones, comes after a local Brisbane principal told parents he had decided to axe religious instruction classes immediately after reviewing the materials and finding that, in his belief, they 'proselytised' students. Matthew

Keong, principal at Windsor State School, sent a letter to parents outlining his decision to stop the program. The materials used in his school were from the *Connect* program, published by Youthworks Media (a Sydney Anglican ministry). A statement by Youthworks Media says the *Connect* program does not proselytise. 'Parents choose for their children to participate in RI, have self-identified as Christian, and expect their child to be taught from a Christian perspective,' they say. The Qld Department of Education defines 'proselytising' as 'soliciting a student for a decision to change their religious affiliation.'

– *Eternity News*

Simple Ministry; Profound Consequences

Jean Christy, a devout Christian, will be missed when other people's birthdays come around at her church. She died 28 May aged 111, leaving a void as the Andrews (USA) United Methodist Church's phone-based 'birthday ambassador,' calling people on their birthdays. Since she turned 105, Miss Christy felt she needed to do more for her congregation, so she called her pastor to suggest she could use her telephone skills to cheer up fellow Christians on their birthdays. 'I just call and say, 'Your church wants you to have a very happy birthday, and Miss Christy wants you to have one also,' she would say. 'And they seem really happy to hear it.' Her minister said: 'Jean was someone in whom the light of Christ shone brightly.'

– *Christian Herald*

God Opens Doors For Ministry In SE Asia

South East Asia is known to be an area resistant, even hostile to the Gospel and those trying to share it, but that hasn't stopped the Church from growing. Mary Jo Wilson of Asian Access says a group of indigenous pastors recently graduated from a two and a half year world mission training program have already begun to apply their learning by reaching out to their neighbours. While cross-cultural missions often involve going overseas, this area of SE Asia is extremely diverse with a large number of cultures and language groups all in one area. Ms Wilson says 'It's exciting to see how God is working and providing means to bridge into these other cultural people groups.' The pastors are reaching out to the different cultures and despite some opposition are already seeing God open doors and people responding to the Gospel. – *MNN*

Christian Soldiers Marching In Brazil

Brazil's *March For Jesus* gathered hundreds of thousands of evangelical Christians who took to the streets of Sao Paulo, turning it into the 'largest Christian event in the world.' The *Reborn In Christ*

Church spearheaded the event that saw 350,000 people participate, doubling the attendance of last year's march. Organisers have described the march as 'the largest Christian event in the world.' A church leader says the march 'is a celebration of the freedom to show our faith, living with joy because of Christ's gift of Salvation.' The procession extended across Sao Paulo, ending downtown, where musicians played worship music until late night. Growth of the evangelical church continues in Brazil, as many pastors bring hope to the poor who live in slum areas. – *Breaking Christian News*

Bishop Sacrifices Kidney In The Cause Of Christ

A 30-year-old Hindu was to die soon from kidney failure, but a glimmer of hope came when a Christian bishop in India offered to donate one of his kidneys to save him. Bishop Jacob Muricken of Palai Diocese says his decision to help Sooraj was in the spirit of Christ, and he hopes it will serve as a strong message for others to donate organs. Sooraj says Bishop Jacob is nothing less than 'God's intervention.' The kidney transplant took place on 1 June. – *Gospel Herald*

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CHURCH AND NATION

'Safe Schools' Defies Birmingham's Order To Get Out Of Primary Schools

Three months after Education Minister Simon Birmingham ordered the inappropriate *Safe Schools* program out of primary schools, the minister's directive is being widely ignored. The Australian Christian Lobby's children's spokesperson, Wendy Francis, said revelations in the media and a check of the *Safe Schools* website showed primary schools throughout the nation remained signed on to the program which teaches children their gender is fluid.

'We have seen little evidence that the government is taking the concerns of parents, the wider community and its own directive seriously,' Ms Francis said. 'State governments are calling Minister Birmingham's bluff, some openly defying the Federal directive while others seem to be dragging the chain. Each day that passes, new revelations about the program's extreme agenda for children emerge, and yet *Safe Schools* continues to thumb its nose at parents. The directive, issued in March, recognised the inherent problems with the sexualised nature of the program and warned against using the content on children.' At the time, Minister Birmingham said he was 'requiring local program managers to ensure the distribution and promotion of Safe Schools Coalition Australia program material is restricted to secondary school settings only. Yet, the Safe Schools Coalition continues to promote contested gender theory to children as young as four while primary schools across the country are still listed as 'members' of the Safe Schools Coalition Australia on its website. According to that website, at least 35 primary schools in Victoria still are running the program, as well as around six in Queensland and more than 11 in Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania.

'In Queensland, the Government has done all it can to hide *Safe Schools* from parents by refusing to release the names of the schools signed up to the sexualised and age-inappropriate material, showing it is more concerned with protecting rainbow ideology than it is for the welfare of children. It has snubbed a *Right Of Information* request as well as a petition of more than 11,000 citizens. A poll in Fairfax Media shows low support for *Safe Schools* with more than 70% of respondents saying the program should be removed.'

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HERE'S HELP FOR ONLINERS:

'One Afternoon In Sydney' – Help For Those Involved In Online Ministry

The remarkable outcomes of the Online Ministry *One Day In Melbourne* last April has prompted *One Afternoon In Sydney* for Saturday 13 August at the Salvation Army's Stanmore House, Stanmore, co-hosted by Rev Bob Thomas Editor of *New Life*, John Sandeman Editor of *Eternity* and Dr Mark Tronson, daily columnist with *Christian Today*.

One Afternoon In Sydney is compacted into an afternoon rather than a full day as it is combined with the Press Service International young writer annual conference and awards. As with *One Day In Melbourne*, there is no cost, the aim being to provide mission agency/society publication editors, Christian bloggers and those in small Christian media outlets with an affordable top-of-the-line presentation.



Rev Bob Thomas (left) Editor of *New Life* and John Sandeman Editor of *Eternity* at *One Day In Melbourne* – and again in Sydney

A packed program for both conferences is being prepared. From 9.30am-12.30pm the PSI Young Writers' Conference focusing on issues specifically designed for them, then from 1.30pm-4.00pm, *One Afternoon In Sydney*. The earlier part of the day, the young writers section, has luminaries such as John Sandeman speaking, Editor of *Eternity* (Bible Society), a former senior journalist over many years with Fairfax. Sophia Sinclair, who spoke so engagingly at *One Day In Melbourne* will chair *One Afternoon In Sydney*, which aims to assist mission agency/society publication editors, Christian bloggers and those in small Christian media outlets, along with the young writers. As was *One Day In Melbourne*, *One Afternoon In Sydney* will be specific and focused.

Specifically, One Afternoon In Sydney will include the following: from 1.30pm, Josh Reid will speak on *Faith And Media*, and Justin Monaghan on *Creativity And Faith*. From 2pm, Sophia Sinclair will chair a *Panel Discussion* with Thomas Devenish of Hobart, Justin Monaghan of Adelaide, Tash McGill from Auckland, Charis Jackson from Brisbane and Josh Reid from Sydney. Afternoon tea will follow at 3.30pm; then the Annual Young Writer Awards will be presented at 4pm and *Closing Address* at 6pm.

We invite Mission agency/society publication editors, Christian bloggers, small Christian media outlet personnel to be part of *One Afternoon In Sydney – Evangelicals Online* on Saturday 13 August from 1.30-4.00pm at the Salvation Army's Stanmore House, Stanmore. Please contact Dr Mark Tronson email: timeout@bushorchestra.com or phone: 0419 917 713 for further details and to register. RSVP by Tuesday 9 August.



Dr Mark Tronson is a retired Baptist minister who served as the Australian cricket team chaplain for 17 years and established *Life After Cricket* in 2001.

He was recognised by receiving the Olympic Ministry Medal in 2009 presented by Carl Lewis, Olympian Of The Century. He mentors young writers, has written 24 books, and enjoys writing.

He is married to Delma, with four adult children and grand-children. Mark Tronson's archive of articles can be viewed at <http://www.pressserviceinternational.org/mark-tronson.html>

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HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE

The Interserve National Day Of Prayer

Interserve's National Day Of Prayer will be held next Saturday, 18 June, from 1.30–5pm at Mitcham Baptist Church, 8-12 Simla Street, Mitcham, Vic. This will be an opportunity to meet several Interserve Partners, to celebrate what God is doing, pray for Interserve workers, the people among whom they serve and the countries where they serve, as well as praying for new workers. To register contact: Matt Walton, vicoffice.isa@gmail.com

Expand The Kingdom – Hillsong Conference

ALL Christians can be involved in building and extending God's Kingdom, according to Lead Pastor of Hillsong Church Australia Joel A'Bell. Speaking ahead of the annual Hillsong Conference, 5-8 July, Pastor A'Bell said it is easy for people to become so distracted by everyday life, that they push their spiritual calling into the background. 'The entire reason Pastor Brian and Bobbie Houston started Hillsong Conference almost 30 years ago is very simple – to champion and build the local church,' he explained. 'And by the church, I'm referring to the biblical meaning, which is the people.' For Conference Information go to: <https://>

hillsong.com/conference/sydney/

How They're Bringing The Good News From South Korea To North Korea

A defector from North Korea is risking his life to share the Gospel with citizens of the isolated country via a small radio station in Seoul, South Korea. From 1-2 am every day, Kim Chung-seong hosts *Hello From Seoul, The Republic Of Korea*, which sends a mix of gospel music and news into North Korea, according to Reuters news agency. Kim, who went to the South in 2004, told the news outlet that he has hosted the show for six years and often fellow defectors appear on the show as special guests. Despite the extreme risk he is taking in sharing the Gospel, Kim says he is confident that the Good News can change the hearts of even the most brutal of dictators. North Korea strictly bans access to outside information, including radios and TV sets, unless they are set to pre-state channels. However, many people tune in to foreign shows with smuggled Chinese radios and illegally altered North Korean sets. Open Doors estimates that 300,000 Christians are hidden among North Korea's population of 26 million. – *Gospel Herald*

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Assisted Suicide Is Not The Answer

The final report of the Victorian Legislative Council committee investigating end-of-life choices has recommended legalising assisted suicide. But FamilyVoice Victoria director Peter Stevens says that legalising assisted suicide would send a devastating message to depressed young people who are going through a temporary period of depression.

'It would send the message that suicide is the answer to their problem – even if the new law does not apply to their case,' he said. 'The Victorian committee's report was not unanimous. The two dissenters – Inga Peulich and Daniel Mulino – have written carefully argued minority reports that deserve wide reading.'

Peter Stevens endorsed the view of Inga Peulich, who said: 'What impact does the promotion of a physician-assisted death regime have on our efforts to reduce suicide or assisted suicide? This is a most serious social impact that has not been adequately considered by this or any other inquiry of which I am aware.'

Daniel Mulino provided documented evidence of the 'slippery slope' that has occurred in countries where euthanasia and assisted suicide have been legalised. Legislative safeguards have not been enforced; there is systematic non-reporting and a growing number of cases involving vulnerable people.

Peter Stevens said media news items have sadly ignored the minority reports as well as the committee's recommendations on palliative care. 'If we really care, we need to kill the pain – not the patient!' he said.

Bookings Open For Ridley Preachers' Conference

'Unless They Hear' is the theme of the Ridley College 2016 Annual Preachers' Conference to be held from Tues 23 to Thurs 25 August at El Kanah Guest House, 975 Buxton-Marysville Road, Marysville, Vic. Rory Shiner and Mike Raiter are the speakers at this training conference for men and women on preaching God's Word to minds, hearts, wills and lives.

Accommodation at El Kanah is single or shared in the newly built village (superior) or old lodges (budget – BYO sheets and towels). You may nominate another delegate to share a room with in your registration. For more information go to <https://www.ridley.edu.au/>

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TRIBUTE TO MARIAN WALDEN

A service of celebration and thanksgiving for the life of Marian Walden (née Chambers) was held on Friday 27th May at Bethel Chapel, Mitcham, After almost 103 years Marian went to be with her Lord on Thursday 19 May.

After training as a teacher, Marian served in a number of capacities including a governess, cook, teacher and then worked with Howard and Lillian Kitchen in a small home caring for children of overseas missionaries. She then joined the staff of Melbourne Bible Institute where she taught English and assisted in organising the kitchen and student meals.

In 1961 Rev Arthur Wilkins from Kew Baptist Church decided to establish a youth hostel and persuaded Marian to take the position of Matron. The Hostel initially commenced at Canterbury Rd, Camberwell, and later transferred to Kew adjoining the Baptist Church. The successful establishment of the hostel was largely due to the tireless service of Marian. She had a loving, caring and compassionate relationship with the residents. Her door was always open for encouragement, comfort, advice, and counsel, and in her time she had a lasting effect on the lives of hundreds of young men and women.

In 1971 she married William Walden and moved to Tasmania where she was welcomed as a member of the Walden family. Will passed away in 1979 and Marian moved back to Melbourne in 1983. Her last days were spent in Faversham House in Canterbury.

After a life of service the Lord called Marian home to the Place He had prepared for her. – *John Cullip*

ACL Calls On Coalition To Rule Out Redefining Marriage Without A People's Vote

The Australian Christian Lobby has called on the Liberal and National Parties to rule out any change to the *Marriage Act* unless there has been a people's vote through a national plebiscite. ACL Managing Director Lyle Shelton welcomed Prime Minister Turnbull's strong support for a people's vote. 'It was good to see the Prime Minister acknowledge that the plebiscite is overwhelmingly favoured by the Australian people,' Mr Shelton said. However, asked what would happen if a hostile Senate refused to pass plebiscite enabling legislation, Mr Turnbull was not able to give a definitive answer if there was a push to send the issue back to Parliament. 'Changing the definition of marriage is a divisive issue that has far-reaching consequences for children, freedom of speech, school sex education and freedom of religion.

'A vote of the Australian people is the best way to settle this but in the event of a Labor-Greens controlled Senate, the Liberal and National parties should make it very clear that a people's vote is the only pathway for deciding this issue,' Mr Shelton said. Labor and the Greens have vowed to oppose a people's vote. 'People are only just starting to see that "Safe Schools", legalising commercial surrogacy and restrictions to freedom of speech and religion are a package deal with redefining marriage", Mr Shelton said. 'They are largely unaware that gay couples have all the same legal rights as cohabiting heterosexual couples through State-based civil partnerships and unions. A people's vote will allow all Australians to make an informed choice.'

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Cameroon Christian 'Relies On God's Word' In Face Of Muslim Terrorists Boko Haram

Cameroon native **Jacqueline Zoutene** grew up in Central Africa with Christians, Muslims and Animists living side-by-side. Now as an adult she clings to the Bible's direction. Jacqueline Zoutene's father was a pastor, so she grew up with God's Word in Central Africa. Now, as she sees her region being terrorized by the Muslim sect Boko Haram, she fears for her loved ones but continues to draw her strength from the Bible. In fact, she turned her commitment to God into a job working for the United Bible Societies since 2006.



'I am very saddened to see my region now being terrorized by the Muslim sect Boko Haram', she says. I am living far from my loved ones and sometimes I fear the worst for them. In times of despair and doubt, the words of the Lord in John 14.1 are a great comfort: 'Don't be worried! Have faith in God and have faith in Me.' From a very early age I had a deep love for Bible stories and I knew them by heart. I was especially moved by the way God worked through the men and women in these stories. Through these [Bible] stories, I discovered a way of living, faith in God in both joy and suffering and the deep relationship that you can have with God if you place all your trust in Him.'

Zoutene grew up in northern Cameroon, where Christians, Muslims and Animists live side-by-side. As a child, she said she found it hard to see Muslims in important positions, and to watch churches being ransacked and Christians persecuted. She said she feels Christians should testify to Christ through their lives, by living a genuine faith, in integrity and honor and in accordance with God's Word.

– Julie Brown Patton, Gospel Herald

Serious Suffering As Persecution Escalates In Vietnam

Arrested in April 2011, Pastor Nguyen Cong Chinh (45), an evangelist and courageous religious liberty advocate, was sentenced in July 2012 to 11 years imprisonment for 'undermining national unity'. His wife, Tran Thi Hong, also a courageous religious liberty advocate, continues suffering violent persecution from Communist Party officials. Arrested in December 2015, Christian religious liberty advocate Nguyen Van Dai remains detained without charge, denied access to his wife and lawyers. His wife, Vu Minh Khanh, is risking much to raise awareness of his plight. On 5 May a pastor and a new member of a church in Vinh City were killed and the pastor's wife and a church elder were critically wounded when a military vehicle 'accidentally' drove into them on a footpath. Please pray for Vietnam and its Christians. *– Elizabeth Kendal*

Restrictions On Christians In Cyprus

Christians living in northern Cyprus will now only be allowed to attend church once a year, either on Christmas or Easter. Turkey, which controls the northern portion of the island, says the number of people attending services have grown and they simply cannot provide the necessary security to keep up with the demand. Turkish troops have oc-

cupied the northern third of the island since 1974. It is known as the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus. Greek Christians who fled to the south, and their descendants, want to hold services in the churches where they used to worship. Greek-Cypriots are not allowed to live in the north, and a so-called Green Line, or buffer zone, divides the Greek and Turkish sectors and those who want to cross need a passport. Since 2013, Greek Cypriots have been flocking to towns and villages in the north to attend church services, but authorities now want to limit that. The United Nations says it is 'deeply concerned' that Christians now aren't allowed to attend church services in the north.

– CBN Christian World News

Seven Christians Arrested In Nepal

On 9 June, police in Charikot, Nepal arrested seven Christians for allegedly attempting to evangelise school children. Nepali church leaders, however, stated that no such attempt was made by the Christians. According to reports, police are now preparing to file a case against those detained under Article 26 (3) of the Constitution that makes it punishable by law to convert a person of one religion to another. Pray for the release of those detained by police and for God's wisdom and guidance upon all church leaders handling this situation.

When God's Justice Was Not Delayed ACTS 5.1-11

FOR the first time we meet sin in the new covenant community. Just as Israel entered the Promised Land and God showed them how seriously He takes sin among His own people with His judgment of Achan's sin (Joshua 7), so now God shows His new covenant community the unacceptability of sin.

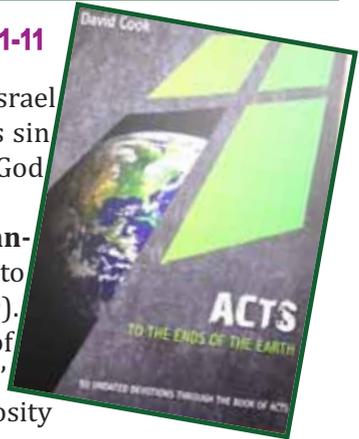
God's judgment on Ananias (v 5) and his wife Sapphira (v 10) was instantaneous. What they had done was devil-inspired (v 3) and constituted lying to the Holy Spirit (v 3), lying to God (v 4) and testing the Spirit of the Lord (v 9).

What precisely was their sin? They had conspired together to sell a piece of property, like Barnabas, and lay only a portion of the sale price at the apostles' feet as if it were the whole amount. They wanted the reputation for generosity like Barnabas, while keeping back part of the money for themselves.

It was this deception that Peter highlights (v 4). It was their land and they could have kept all of the money for themselves, but they sought a reputation that was built on deception. They hypocritically wanted an undeserved reputation. Whether or not Ananias and Sapphira were true Christians is not answered, although they were certainly part of the new covenant community. God's judgment that resulted in their swift removal from the community was actually merciful of God, because it meant that their deception and hypocritical presence would not continue to plague the Christian church.

What an impression this must have made on the young men referred to in v 6 and v 10. They may have wondered when all this was going to stop. A primary sin of the religious leaders of Jesus' day (Matthew 23.2ff) is that of hypocrisy; teaching one thing yet doing another. It is this sin that enters the Christian community and is judged.

Beware of wearing a mask, of seeking a reputation that does not fit with the reality of your life.



FOR REFLECTION:

In what ways may hypocrisy show itself in your life today?

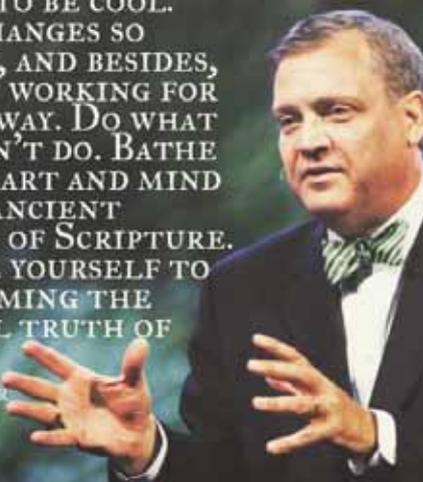
Why might this incident, extreme as it seems, represent the mercy of God?

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

SEEN ON FACEBOOK:

PREACHER, GIVE UP TRYING TO BE COOL. COOL CHANGES SO QUICKLY, AND BESIDES, IT'S NOT WORKING FOR YOU ANYWAY. DO WHAT COOL CAN'T DO. BATHE YOUR HEART AND MIND IN THE ANCIENT GLORIES OF SCRIPTURE. DEVOTE YOURSELF TO PROCLAIMING THE ETERNAL TRUTH OF GOD.

-AL MOHRER



Words Of Wisdom:

THE CHIEF DANGER THAT CONFRONTS THE COMING CENTURY WILL BE RELIGION WITHOUT THE HOLY GHOST, CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT CHRIST, FORGIVENESS WITHOUT REPENTANCE, SALVATION WITHOUT REGENERATION, POLITICS WITHOUT GOD, HEAVEN WITHOUT HELL.

-WILLIAM BOOTH

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*Philippians 4.19.
He supplies your needs.*

BOOKS WORTH READING

JOHN CALVIN, SERMONS ON TITUS: Newly Translated From The French Of 1561 by Robert White (Edinburgh: The Banner Of Truth Trust, 2015) ISBN 978-1-84871-569-1

We are once again in the debt of Robert White and Banner Of Truth for making available newly-translated sermons by John Calvin, the great 16th Century reformer. The sermons were first preached on Sunday mornings and afternoons in Geneva, August-September 1555. These 17 consecutive sermons were published in French in 1561, translated into English and published in 1579, and a facsimile edition was published by the Trust in 1983. What we have is a fresh contemporary translation that has been checked against the 1561 French original in the Bibliothèque de Genève.

Calvin warns against the tendency (ancient and modern) for people to choose preachers who suit their taste, whereas what is needed is faithful preachers of the Word who practise what they preach. It is that simple! With an eye to Roman claims, Calvin insists that the way to recognise the successors of the apostles is that they proclaim the same Gospel as the apostles. On the other hand, we are not to let our faith be shaken by those in the church who act as her enemies and behave in shameful ways. Calvin is candid about the faults of even the best churches and he calls on pastors to work humbly together and not to think that they can do the task of reforming the church on their own or in their own strength.

Typical of Calvin, his comments on and explanation of the Biblical text always aims to be brief and pertinent. He is always faithful to the text and practical in his exposition. He makes many helpful comments on the lists of qualities the apostle demands of those who lead and teach in the church. Calvin says that the main thing in ministry is that pastors 'persevere steadfastly in pure and wholesome teaching' (page 87).

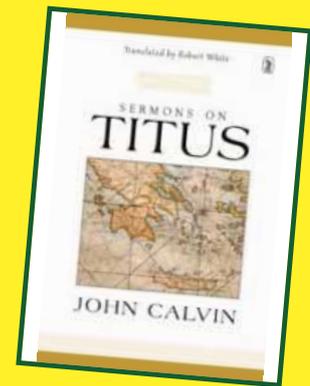
Calvin is always thoroughly realistic in his elucidation and application of Scripture, and so he insists that the Christian flock needs feeding and protection. Pastors must both teach gently and sternly rebuke (when needed), taking strong action against false teachers and troublemakers in the church. His sermons are coloured by the fact that he preached this series in 1554-1555 in the aftermath of the trial and execution of Michael Servetus, the Spanish anti-trinitarian heretic. Calvin was not, however, responsible for his death and unsuccessfully begged for clemency for this dangerous but misguided man.

Calvin makes the point that part of a pastor's love for his people consists in exposing their faults, as Paul did the faults of the Cretans in no uncertain terms. The responsibility of church members is to accept rebuke when it is deserved and to amend their ways.

What is it about Calvin's preaching that makes it useful and instructive after 450 years? These sermons show us a preacher who cared deeply for his people, who boldly pointed out their faults, who was always faithful to his text, who made doctrine practical, who was never showy about his scholarship nor needlessly longwinded. It is little wonder that Calvin was greatly used of God to reform the church of his day. The great Reformer has not outlived his usefulness.

– Greg Goswell

CORRECTION: In NL 2016-06-01 the caption of the photo on the front cover read: 'SMBC Principal Stuart Coulton with Ecuadorian scholarship student Diego Herrera.' The gentleman on the left, however, was not Mr Coulton but John Woldhuis, SIM missionary to Ecuador. Our apologies for the error.



'These sermons show us a preacher who cared deeply for his people, who boldly pointed out their faults, who was always faithful to his text, who made doctrine practical, who was never showy about his scholarship nor needlessly longwinded. It is little wonder that Calvin was greatly used of God to reform the church of his day. The great Reformer has not outlived his usefulness.'

BOOKS WORTH READING

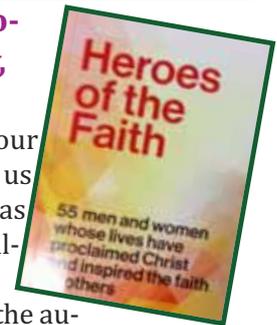
HEROES OF THE FAITH, 55 Men And Women Whose Lives Have Proclaimed Christ And Inspired The Faith Of Others, Ed Roland Ashby, Garratt Publishing, Mulgrave, 2015. ISBN 9781925009866.

While it is wrong to worship the saints and futile to enlist their support in our prayers, it is good to read their life stories with a view to learning what they teach us of the life of faith. In this book, Roland Ashby, Editor of *The Melbourne Anglican*, has brought together brief accounts of 55 saints drawn from the ranks of the 'great multitude which no man could number'.

The diversity of those chosen for 'the treatment' is matched by the diversity of the authors who tell their stories and draw the lessons to be learnt from their lives. There is something for everyone here, from Bishop Anselm (Graeme Garrett) to Bishop Alfred Stanway (Bishop John Wilson – whose own story would have made a worthy addition to the book); Martin Luther (Brian Rosner) to Pope John 23 (Mark Brolley); Jürgen Moltmann (Mark Burrton) to Leon Morris (Bishop Barbara Darling); Mother Teresa (Rowan Callick) to Dr Catherine Hanlin (Brian Porter – who fails to tell us of her glorious conversion). The authors' brief was 'to write an outline of their subject's life, reflect on their subject's spirituality, and describe how their subject helped to shape their own beliefs and life.' By and large they achieved this, but one suspects they were overly constrained by 'the exigencies of space'.

Dr Philip Freier, Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne and Primate of Australia, warmly commends this book saying it is 'alive with this Spirit, a flame of love that burns brightly in the lives of all the Christian saints' – and so it is.

– Bob Thomas



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GEORGE VERWER'S CONVERSION: 60 Years Ago God Created A Global Evangelist

To say that George Verwer Jr (b. 1938) has a larger-than-life personality is probably an understatement. It would have been obvious if you could have seen him running around at Ramsey High School in Ramsey, New Jersey, USA. Of the thousand or so students at the school, George stood out. He doesn't remember having an unhappy day in his childhood. He was from a stable home with good Dutch-immigrant parents who loved their son but weren't overly strict. Life was fun, and George sought to live life to the full. He thought of himself as a hot-shot athlete in primary school, though he wasn't quite good enough to make it into high school athletics. He was a Boy Scout who almost made it to the Eagle Scouts.



But he also had a mischievous side. He always had something witty to say and could make all of his schoolmates laugh. Each year he walked home with a lot of cash on *Goosey Night* – that's what they call the night before Halloween in Bergen County – when kids act goosey or foolish: windows get broken and things get stolen. Think of it as the trick without the treat. He once lit the local woods on fire – but then again, he also started a fire-extinguisher business alongside his stamp-collecting mail-order business.

Apart from these shenanigans, George was a moral kid from all external accounts. He was against drinking, and though he had a lot of girlfriends, it was important to be clean and not to go too far. But he loved to go out and dance, staying up all hours of the night listening to the latest music from the 1950s.

On Sundays his mother took him to the local congregation of the Reformed Church in America (his unbelieving father stayed home), but he didn't hear the Bible preached from the pulpit of this mainline congregation. It seemed to him to be more of a social club than anything.

But someone began praying for George. Dorothea Clapp and her family lived across the street from the high school, and her son Danny had been the president of the Student Council during George's freshman year. For 17 years Mrs Clapp prayed faithfully for the students at Ramsey High to know the Lord. When sophomore George Verwer came across her radar screen, she put him on her prayer list and prayed that he would trust Christ and become a missionary some day. She had a *Gospel Of John*, distributed by the Pocket Testament League, and sent it to him in the mail as a gift. George read it on and off over the year, but to little effect. If George had been asked if he was a Christian, he probably would have said yes. But 'girly magazines' enticed him more than reading the Bible. At one point in school – entrepreneur that he was – George hatched a scheme to begin buying and then selling pornographic magazines for a profit (though he never got around to doing so).

One day he was at the store, looking to buy one of those magazines, when he noticed a magazine featuring the 35-year-old evangelist Billy Graham. George picked up the magazine, read the article, and realized that Graham was someone special. Graham had also been featured on the cover of *Time* magazine, pointing his finger at the reader while the serpent tempted Eve in the background. Graham had exploded onto the national scene six years earlier in the northern autumn of 1949 with the *Christ For Greater Los Angeles* rally. After a number of famous conversions (including Louis Zamperini), William Randolph Hearst told his newspapers to 'Puff Graham.' Graham was by now the leading evangelist in the United States. In the spring of 1955 a man who lived on the same street as George invited him to attend an event in New York City, where Graham would be the guest speaker at *Word Of Life's* 15th anniversary rally in Madison Square Garden, hosted by *Word Of Life* founder and evangelist Jack Wyrzten. So on 3 March 1955, George and several others, including a girl from his high school and Sunday School, loaded into a bus and made the 30-mile journey down to Madison Square Garden in Manhattan.

When George boarded the bus that Thursday afternoon, he had no thought of becoming a Christian. But at the end of Graham's sermon, he issued an invitation, exhorting his listeners to come and to make a decision for Christ. George didn't move. As others began to walk the aisle, Billy continued to tell them to come as the music played. And George began to feel conviction for his sin and to sense his lostness. The thought was overwhelming in his mind: 'This is the truth; my search is over; this is the most important thing in life.' He and the girl he was with both walked forward that night to trust in Christ. And his life would never be the same.

George found his faith almost immediately tempted. As they walked out of Madison Square Garden that night as born-again believers, a street gang member said something to George, who answered back. The guy promptly proceeded to knock George down. A gang leader emerged who told his member to back off, and George sensed the grace of the Lord. George now says that he has been knocked down frequently in life – too often by 'the lust of the eyes' – but the Lord has always kept and sustained him.



(Continued on p.16)

NEW LIFE EXTRA

(Continued from p.15)

It wasn't until a few days later that George sensed full assurance, while walking across a field to get on the bus to go to school, having been helped by George Cutting's well-known booklet, *Safety, Certainty, And Enjoyment For The Christian*. He then proceeded to read Billy Graham's bestseller, *Peace With God: The Secret Of Happiness* (published in 1953), and he received much of this theological grounding from Graham sermons and publications.

When God converted George Verwer, He not only made a new creation, He also created an evangelist. In George Verwer's senior year he was elected Student Council President, and he used this position to distribute 1,000 copies of *The Gospel Of John*. He also began giving away free Christian books – a habit he continues to this day, as he has personally given away hundreds of thousands of books and hopes to reach the million-mark for personal copies handed out. By God's grace George saw several classmates accept the Lord through his passion to call others to embrace the Good News.

After he graduated from high school he attended Maryville College, a private Christian college in Tennessee. That first semester he had an idea: perhaps he could return to Ramsey High School while on Christmas break and host a rally at his old school. Amazingly, the public high school agreed, and the auditorium was packed with 600 students. George Verwer Sr even attended to support his son's new endeavour. When it came time to call his listeners to faith, George was amazed to see 125 students stand up, professing their desire to follow Christ. Most surprising of all was that George Sr stood among them. His father had become his brother.

Later that year George was shocked to learn that seven out of ten people in Mexico had no access to the Scriptures. The solution seemed obvious to George: he needed to go there and get them the Word. His friend Dale Rhoton said he would pray with George about this. After they prayed together for a few minutes on their knees, George turned to Dale and asked, 'Well, are you ready to go?' Dale responded, 'George, it takes longer than that.' George was disheartened and confused: 'Why does it take people so long to see it?' In the summer of 1957, George and Dale, along with their friend Walter Borchard, each 18 years old, sold their possessions, loaded a 1949 Dodge panel van with tracts and 1,000 copies of *The Gospel Of John* in Spanish and drove to Mexico. They called their ministry *Send The Light*, and it was legally incorporated the following year. They returned to Mexico in the summers of 1958 and 1959.

By this time George had transferred to Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. He met and was attracted to a young woman named Drena. During their first meeting, he told her, 'Probably nothing is going to happen between us, but I'm going to be a missionary, and if you marry me, you'll probably end up being eaten by cannibals in New Guinea.' They were married in Milwaukee in 1960 after George graduated. They skipped their honeymoon and headed straight to Mexico for missions. They were committed to not spending any money. When they got to Wheaton, George offered their wedding cake to the gas station attendant in exchange for gas. The worker, a Christian, filled up the tank and let them keep the cake. But at the next stop, the attendant took the cake in exchange for a tank of gas. They got to Mexico without spending a penny.

By 1960 George and his friends turned their attention to Europe, seeking to mobilize local churches for global missions which would be led by indigenous rather than foreign missionaries. By 1963 they expanded the work to India and the Middle East, and in 1970, the ministry – now called Operation Mobilisation (OM) – purchased its first ship. Today OM is involved in over 85 countries (including Latin America, Central Asia, the former Soviet Union, the Middle East, and Europe). They have around 3,500 workers, and it's estimated that over 125,000 people have participated in an OM outreach.

George Verwer handed over the leadership of OM in 2003 at the age of 65. But he did not 'retire'. Somewhere in the world today you can find 76-year-old George Verwer – a man with the energy of someone half his age – wearing his trademark Globe Jacket, speaking next to an inflated globe of the world, seeking to motivate students to read and to pray and to share and to go. One moment he will be bounding around the stage, making his audience laugh, and then without warning he will prick their consciences with the reality of the unreached who so desperately need to hear the good news. He is a man who has never forgotten the goodness of the Good News, and he will not stop until God takes him Home or until the nations are finally and eternally glad in Christ. Few people in the second half of the 20th Century have done more to mobilise for the unreached and the unengaged, and few have equipped more believers and unbelievers with Gospel literature. And it all began with a faithful mother and a neighbour who committed to pray and to send a student the *Gospel Of John*, and continued with a businessman who took the risk of inviting a student to an evangelistic rally, and it continued with a young evangelist who preached the message of the Cross. God is always pleased to use the foolishness of the weak to accomplish great things for the fame of His Name. – Justin Taylor via *The Gospel Coalition*.

