In one of the largest developments ever seen in the Blue Mountains, Katoomba Christian Convention has plans for a $64 million rebuild on its premises at Cliff Drive. The plans call for the demolition of several existing buildings and building of a new auditorium for public worship, a 500-seat dining hall, six eco-lodges and three eco-chalets to accommodate 390 people, a new reception building, bookshop and cafe. The first phase of the development would be a $25 million replacement of the 2,100-seat auditorium with a 3,500-seat structure, as well as a new bookshop, toilet facilities and seven meeting rooms.

KCC has been at the site next to Scenic World since the 1950s and executive director Jonathan Dykes says the upgrade is needed to bring the ‘tired’ facilities up to standard and to meet visitor expectation. ‘Things have been adapted and updated as finances and resources have allowed, but we can only stretch that so far for so long,’ he says. ‘Works conducted over the years to ensure standards compliance, including asbestos removal, have reduced the capacity of the site, yet still did not deliver accessible accommodation for people with a disability. The new facilities have been designed to be respectful of the location and its significant environmental values.

The new auditorium would be re-orientated to funnel noise away from neighbours, and Mr Dykes believes the development will lessen the impact on surrounding residents because it would keep all activities in one place, reducing traffic movements to and from the site. The Development Application, which gives the estimated total cost at $63.6 million, says the new buildings would not interfere with views at popular lookouts nearby. And while some trees would have to be removed for construction, more than 80% of the site would remain undeveloped.

KCC is the largest conference venue in the Blue Mountains. It was also used as a staging base for emergency services and community information meetings during the 2013 bushfires. Katoomba Christian Convention is a not-for-profit and interdenominational Bible-preaching ministry that relies on volunteers, donations and the financial support of visiting delegates. It started in Katoomba in 1903 as an informal gathering of Christians in a house overlooking Echo Point. By the 1930s, 800 people were attending to sing hymns and listen to guest speakers and Bible readings.

KCC held seven worship events last year, including the Easter Convention which was attended by 3,100 people. The upgrade could see the centre made available to secular not-for-profit organisations like schools or to groups like the Ultra Trail Australia running event, although its main purpose would remain a place of worship.

– Jennie Curtin
There is nothing confusing or surprising about Paul’s dying exhortation to his younger partner in ministry, Timothy: ‘Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction’ (2 Timothy 4.2). It is not confusing. Timothy is to see that his ministry revolves around the proclamation of the Word of God through the Bible. The Bible is God’s Word, it’s origin is God Himself. Not to preach it therefore and preach the Scriptures by correcting, rebuking and encouraging the flock with this Word. Cut the modern-day pastor and he must bleed Bible!

Neither is this surprising, because Paul has already reminded Timothy that it was this breathed-out Word of God which ‘gave him wisdom for salvation’ and is ‘useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness’ (2 Timothy 3.15,16). The Bible is God’s Word, it’s origin is God Himself. Not to preach it therefore and preach the Scriptures by correcting, rebuking and encouraging the flock with this Word. Cut the modern-day pastor and he must bleed Bible!

Instead we may have preaching which takes the idea of the text and preaches the idea in isolation from the text. We may have sermons which are addressed to all sorts of contemporary issues, which tell much more about the issue than what God says in the Bible. We may have sermons about a theme which follows the theme through the Bible in a doctrinal way, ‘flipping preaching’, which does not settle down in one passage and explain and apply that passage to hearers. One pastor asked recently, ‘Does this mean I have to expound a passage every week?’ No, but realise that the week you don’t expound a passage is the week the sheep will go home hungry.

Let me give an example. Recently in the light of that very emotional confession of Australia’s cricket captain Steve Smith, I might have preached a sermon on the topic of, Why The World Is In Such A Mess. I would preach on the dynamics of Genesis 3, Adam and Eve receiving God’s Word, but the contrary voice of the Serpent tells them the lie and the lie is believed. The reason the world is the way it is, is because a lie has been believed! I would cross reference just once, to Jesus’ description of the Devil as a liar and murderer (John 8.44) to show that the contrary voice is always the voice of the Serpent. I would warn the church to always be aware of two voices, one which speaks the crafty lie; our parents believe the lie; God judges the serpent, the woman, the man and the Earth. Therefore trust the Word of God, rightly understood and don’t believe the Devil’s lies.

John Chapman would often say in critiquing a sermon, ‘the authority is in the text brother, preach the text!’ Do you make the text of Scripture the object of your explanation and application, thus feeding your sheep?

David Robertson is quoted as saying, ‘A preacher who does not preach the Bible is like a comedian who is not funny. You wonder what is the point’.

—David Cook
Easter At Belgrave Heights Convention – A Journey Worth Pursuing

The weather was perfect. The camp sites were filled with exuberant families; the car park was over‐flowing on Easter Sunday; over 40 toddlers and babies were cared for in the crèche; OAC catered for 220 primary‐aged children. Their program covered three topics; Creation, Failure, Rescue Plan.

For the first time students from Capernwray Bible School (near Bowral, NSW) ministered to the teenagers. Capernwray is a training centre for young people who want to know more about the Bible. They learn to put into practice what they are taught in the classroom. Major Ian Thomas, the founder of Capernwray, has spoken at BHC. His grandson, Callum Thomas (Ministries Co‐ordinator at Capernwray Australia) led the 13 staff and students who arrived with enthusiasm and a powerful program of entertainment and evangelism for the youth. They challenged the young people with the Gospel, teaching them how to be disciple‐makers as well as disciples. BHC now has an agreement with Capernwray to send a ministry team to future Easter conventions.

1. THE CHURCH AS REVEALED IN ACTS – A LIFE WORTH ...

Dr Steve Brady was born in post‐war Liverpool to a Catholic father and Protestant mother. He came to the Lord through reading the Bible and involvement in a youth group. After working in local government, he attended London School Of Theology, where he met his wife of 42 years. Brenda died in his arms on 30 December 2017. The epitaph he has for her is: ‘In Christ, For Christ, With Christ.’ We all continue to pray for Steve and his on‐going ministry as Principal of Moorlands College, Trustee of Keswick Convention and Chair of the Association of Bible College Principals. We also pray the Lord will bring Steve back to BHC. Steve spoke on The Church As Revealed In Acts.


If an author such as J.K. Rowling has a game plan for the whole series, it is not too much to believe that the all‐wise, all‐knowing God can put a book together; one book telling the great and grand story of God’s creation, providence and redemption. Jesus has an on‐going ministry in His world until His Kingdom comes. He was forsaken on the cross so that we might never be forsaken. When God forgives, He stands the bill. He reconciled the world to Himself. After His suffering, Jesus gave many amazing proofs that He is alive. Death is the great Achilles heel of all religions except Christianity, because He rose again. He ascended and is now sitting at the right hand of God, making a way for us to follow. He is our High Priest; the ultimate Bridge‐Builder; ever‐living to intercede for us. The future is bright. He will return in the same way as you saw Him go!

c. Connected To His Power – Acts 1.5,8.

2. A GOSPEL WORTH PREACHING – ACTS 2

It is the Day of Pentecost. God has come in great power and authority. Peter enthusiastically addressed the crowd.

(Continued on p.4)
NEW LIFE – 15 April 2018 – Page Four

FROM THE HEIGHTS (BELGRAVE HEIGHTS 2018 EASTER CONVENTION)

(Continued from p.3) Peter's sermon contains 500 words; 300 are OT quotes.

a. Focus On God ... Acts 2.17,22. Peter shows how he is accredited by God and the scene fulfills Joel’s prophecy. It was God’s set purpose for Jesus to die. God raised Him and made known the fact of Jesus’ death and resurrection. The people knew to whom Peter was referring. Today, the word ‘God’ often means pluralism. Unless we know the Old Testament, we are without context and background to Jesus’ time on Earth. Society has no framework of God the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

b. Centre On Christ. Christ was a real Man, yet He eternally existed with God in Him, God became flesh. If there is no God, there is no explanation or purpose in the world. ‘Our God contracted to a span, incomprehensibly made man.’ (Charles Wesley.) Jesus’ deity was attested to by miracles, wonders and signs. The Pharisees explained it all as the devil’s power but the ultimate truth is that God put Jesus to death at Calvary; it was impossible for death to keep its hold on Jesus. He presently reigns, raised as the great Mediator between God and man, seated by the Father at His right hand as our advocate on high, who never loses a case! Who will defend you if Jesus is not your advocate?

c. Urge Repentance And Faith. Turn to the Lord by changing your mind. When you go the wrong way, you must turn around and change direction. Believe the message; reject the world; join the church and rely on the Spirit.

3. A PRIORITY WORTH KEEPING – Acts 6. The work of God is always opposed. Problems begin when the church starts growing; problems within and without. Problems distract from the will of God. We need to sort out and maintain God’s priorities.

a. Identify The Problem. Israel had a great reputation for caring for the marginalized, the poor and widows. There was a problem with some of the Greek and Hebrew widows in the church. It may have been a communication problem. Cultural differences need to be taken into account. When you become a Christian, cultural markers are no longer definers. But they often get in the way. Remember Keswick’s motto: ‘All One In Christ Jesus.’ (Galatians 3.28). Some people enjoy complaining. It can almost become like holding a grudge against God. God replied to Moses in the wilderness: ‘I have heard the grumblings of the Israelites’ (Exodus 16.12). It is very easy to become a constant whiner and there is a danger of it becoming epidemic in the church.

b. Sorting Out The Practicalities. The apostles were wise enough to deal with the problem in a godly way by having a church meeting. They were ministering spiritual bread. They needed others to cater for the physical needs. So seven men were appointed; full of godly wisdom, character, competence, chemistry, capacity and charisma. We all need grace as well as gifts! Two of these men, Stephen and Phillip, were outstanding preachers and evangelists. They started by serving tables. They worked cheerfully in the inconspicuous things. God is watching and He wants to use what we have.

c. Distilling Some Principles. Some problems are unavoidable. No-one can do it all. Delegate or die! No-one is indispensable. Everyone has a ministry. Discover your major gifting and concentrate on it. Make sure the trellis does not become so important that the vine begins to die. There needs to be a balance between Gospel and social work.

4. A CHURCH WORTH JOINING – Acts 11.19-30, 13.1-3, 15.1,2. Antioch was the third greatest city in the Roman Empire. It was multi-racial and multi-religious, with half million citizens. The believers were first nick-named Christians at Antioch, where they loved to give people nick-names.

a. God Is Jesus. Jesus was central to their conversation. Everything revolved around Christ; so much so that they were called ‘Little Christs.’ Christianity is Christ. Some churches are warm, welcoming and winsome. But Christ is only incidental. Jesus is outside knocking and waiting to be asked in. Other churches are like Mary and Joseph returning from Jerusalem, ‘thinking Jesus was in their company’ (Luke 2.44).

b. Love And Encouragement Are Essential. Is your church welcoming, or one of the ‘frozen chosen?’ Barnabas was the son of encouragement. His presence makes you feel welcome. You feel things will get better because you are loved and accepted. People don’t care about how much you know, but about how much you care. There needs to be a warm-hearted Barnabas in every church. A predominantly Gentile church sent offerings to the Jewish believers in Judaea. This is a major theological statement. ‘We are all one in Christ Jesus.’ One day we will all have to give account for our time, talent and treasure. If Jesus is central, finance will not be a problem. Generosity will be birthed in our hearts.

c. Missional Leadership Is Vital. These five leaders were from different backgrounds, yet all had one aim: to win the lost to Jesus. Problems are inevitable but the difference between the nursery and the cemetery is LIFE. Some churches are like a cemetery. But in Antioch they prayed and kept Christ central. A church worth joining is where Jesus is central, with love and encouragement; focusing on mission. That church trusts Jesus with problems. Pray for more local churches worth joining.
ALGERIA: Churches Closed As Repression Escalates

Algeria’s population is 97% Muslim; most are Arabs and Arabised Berbers. [Berbers, or Amazigh are the indigenous peoples of the Maghreb. They comprise 23% of the population of Algeria.] The growth of Christianity amongst North Africa’s Berbers, especially in Algeria’s Kabyle region east of Algiers, is linked to the revival of Berber cultural identity that has been sweeping North Africa since the 1970s. Algeria held parliamentary elections in 1991. When Islamists won the first round of voting, the government cancelled the second round and declared a state of emergency. The result was a horrendous civil war which pitted Islamist against government forces and claimed the lives of some 200,000 Algerians. Whilst the war officially ended in 2002, hardline jihadists aligned with al-Qaeda spread into the Sahel and switched their focus from jihad to terrorism and kidnapping for ransom.

In February 2006 the Algerian government passed a Charter For Peace And National Reconciliation. As part of the deal, some 10,000 Islamic militants were granted amnesty and released from prison. A few weeks later, in March 2006, the Algerian government enacted Presidential Order 06-03 which mandates fines and prison terms for anyone who ‘incites, constrains or uses seductive means seeking to convert a Muslim to another religion… or who produces, stores or distributes printed documents or audio-visual formats or any other format or means which seeks to shake the faith of a Muslim’. Then, in June 2007, the government amended the religion law to create the National Commission For Non-Muslim Faiths and massively increased the regulation of Christian churches, especially those deemed ‘extremist’ (ie, evangelical). Now Christian activities may only take place within government-approved associations and structures.

The government has allowed itself to be trapped essentially in an eternal balancing act. To ensure security and stability it must repress domestic fundamentalist and militant Islam. To compensate and appease the Islamists it represses Christianity, by which means it also bolsters its Islamic credentials. Further compensation and appeasement is achieved by providing sanctuary to jihadists (such as al-Qaeda’s JNIM) along the southern border and by refusing to support regional anti-terror efforts. This is nothing but pragmatic cowardice.

Persecution has been escalating since late 2017. On 8 March one pastor received a fine and a three-month suspended prison sentence for ‘proselytising’ in violation of Order 06-03. The same day, two brothers were handed large fines and suspended sentences for being found (in 2015) in possession of some 50 Bibles. Accused of ‘proselytising’, the brothers insist the Bibles were purchased for church use only. Most critically, 25 of the 45 churches belonging to the Protestant Church of Algeria (l’Église Protestante d’Algérie, or EPA) have received notices to comply with new standards or face closure. Indeed, four churches have been closed in the last four months – three EPA churches in the coastal city of Oran (400km west of Algiers) and an independent village church in Azagher which is near Akbou in Kabyle region. In each case the authorities cited lack of state approval and non-compliance with building regulations.

The uptick in repression may well be linked to the political tensions stirring in Algiers. Algeria’s next presidential election is due in 2019. With President Bouteflika (81) looking increasingly incapacitated, the jockeying for power, especially between the two major parties, has already begun. That said, despite his obvious frailty (the result of suffering a stroke in 2013), many fear Bouteflika might decide to run for and seize a fifth term. Strikes and riots are on the increase and many fear Bouteflika might decide to run for and seize a fifth term. Strikes and riots are on the increase and observers are anticipating a year of escalating unrest. Maybe we should anticipate a year of escalating repression and persecution as the ruling party seeks to establish itself as a champion and defender of Islam.

Please pray that God will:
• invade and transform the Algerian situation, so that Algerians en masse will reject repression and yearn for liberty, including religious liberty. ‘For nothing will be impossible with God’ (Luke 1.37 ESV);
• raise up Algerian leaders, not only in politics, but in all fields, who will be strong and courageous, prepared to tackle difficult issues (fundamentalist Islam and religious freedom) and genuine threats (regional and domestic terrorism); leaders who will be prepared to lead the Algerian people to real peace, real openness and real liberty;
• pour out His Holy Spirit on Algeria’s emerging and growing Church, so that wisdom, courage and grace will abound in the midst of escalating repression, May the Lord give all pastors and Christian leaders great wisdom to navigate these difficult days. ‘My grace is sufficient for you …’ (the promise of 2 Corinthians 12.7-10).

Praise and thank God for sustaining Slimane Bouhafs (51), a Kabyle Christian and convert from Islam, through a very difficult 18 months in prison. Arrested in July 2016 for ‘insulting Islam’, Bouhafs was released on Easter Sunday, 1 April, and reunited with his family.

Elizabeth Kendal is the author of Turn Back The Battle: Isaiah Speaks To Christians Today (Deror Books, Melbourne, Australia, Dec 2012) which offers a Biblical response to persecution and existential threat; and After Saturday Comes Sunday: Understanding The Christian Crisis In The Middle East (Wipf and Stock, Eugene, OR, USA, June 2016). See www.ElizabethKendal.com
It Pays To Advertise

See it. Churches in over 100 places across the UK are beginning to use trypraying: in Selkirk, Sheffield, Sleaford, Sunderland and Skye (to name some of the ‘s’ s). In Edinburgh the visual impact is the greatest there has been over the eight years. For a week Princes Street, one of the world’s most famous streets, will have trypraying adverts along the length of it. The adverts will be on the 24 digital screens on all the bus stops. In addition, Waverley Station will have a huge digital screen with the trypraying advert. And 80 buses have ads on them.

Give it. 400 trypraying booklets have been taken from the stands at the exit to Haymarket station in just one week. A business man took one and was looking at it. When asked why he had taken it he said, ‘It’s because of all the advertising I’ve been seeing.’ In conversation with a lady when discussing the trypraying booklet she said, ‘Would I have seen this logo on buses?’ (Yes!) As the conversation developed she said she would read the booklet and respond. A Russian waitress was given a copy saying she had seen the logo in several places. A washing machine repair man was given a booklet and said that he would read it carefully. An atheist was given a booklet. Having read it she was pleasantly surprised about the idea of praying. Over 600 people are visiting the trypraying website each week. A re-printing of the adult and youth version of the trypraying booklet soon will take the total printed over the years to over 500,000.

Try it. Christians in the West need more courage. Trypraying is a personal faith-sharing opportunity. And it’s topical. You could try this in a conversation.

Pray it. Thank God for this exposure which is touching the lives of many people. Pray that Christians will see the opportunity and have conversations about faith with friends and neighbours. Pray for people to become Christians.

What is it? For those who have not seen the trypraying booklet, it helps people pray and introduces them to the person of Jesus. It includes an explanation of the cross, the resurrection and a lot more. Order from www.thereishope.co.uk – The trypraying team

SOUTH SUDAN: Prisoners ‘Free Indeed’
Set Free Ministries has held a JESUS Film screening for 90 prisoners in South Sudan. The ministry is working with the Partners in Compassionate Care organisation to bring them the message of forgiveness which, for many prisoners, is the opposite of their culture. After the film showing, 85 of the inmates indicated they wanted to follow Christ. The missionaries distributed audio Bibles to those who responded to the Gospel and started group Bible studies.

KURDS: A ‘Forgotten People’ Found By God
The Kurdish people, many of whom say they feel they are forgotten people, are learning they are not forgotten by God. Muslim Kurds have struggled because there was no mention of the Kurds in the Quran, but this ethnic group appears in the Biblical account of those in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. One missionary to the region told Operation Mobilisation that at Pentecost God used all the languages of the Middle East region among those assembled, including the ancient Medes from the area of modern Kurdistan. So an OM team is now ministering to the physical and spiritual needs of the Kurds as well as Syrian refugees sheltering in Kurdistan. Missionaries say many families are interested in learning of God’s love for them through OM’s Discipleship Bible Study materials.

NORTH KOREA: Chinese Christians Helping And Spreading The Word
Missionaries in north-eastern China, despite the dangers, are spreading Christianity across the border to North Korea. A South Korean pastor told Worth News that at least ten missionaries and pastors have died mysteriously in recent times, and he suspects North Korea is to blame. But missionaries keep at their work because they believe their converts could help change how Christians are treated in cloistered North Korea, which equates Christianity with Western imperialism. The border missionaries provide their North Korean visitors with room and board. In return they ask them to memorize Christian teaching and covertly share what they’ve learned when they return home.
Reaching Out (1)

Iranian youth who make up two-thirds of the national population are using social media to look for a cause to belong to. Seventy percent of the Iranian population are under age 30. They are underemployed, politically disenfranchised and religiously restricted, according to the Heart4Iran mission.

Mike Ansari with Heart4Iran says they are fed up with Islam. He told Mission Network News that more than ever, Iranian youth are looking for meaning and purpose in life. They are tech-savvy, and Heart4Iran reaches out to them through available social media and their broadcasting arm Mohbat TV, with the Christian answer to their despair. Two-minute Gospel messages are also packaged for mobile devices. Around 16 million Iranians, about 20% of the population, tuned in to the programs within the last 12 months. – Mission Network News

Reaching Out (2)

The media team of a US church now chats privately with people who are watching services online. Crossway Baptist Church launched the program on Easter Sunday using a service called Church Online Platform. Chris Rhodes, the church’s media director, says a lot of people have questions about the church or something they heard in the message. He told Baptist Press that counsellors are also available to talk with people who respond to the Gospel, as they anticipate connecting with viewers who are not yet believers.

Not Everyone’s Way Of Witnessing, But ...

Manny Pacquiao, the outspoken Christian and Filipino boxing star has posted a music video Because He Lives (Amen) to his Facebook page. Along with the video, produced by the West Coast Baptist College, he wrote, ‘Because He lives, you can have the promise of eternal life. Please enjoy this and share it with others.’ Mr Pacquiao made headlines after his loss last year in a 12 round decision to Australian Jeff Horn in front of 51,000 fans in a packed stadium in Brisbane. After the fight, he posted a message to his followers on social media. CBN News reports the message as: ‘Tough fight but win or lose, always know that I give everything I’ve got for the Lord, my family, my country and my fans. Congratulations to Jeff Horn. God is good!’ Manny Pacquiao, is heading back to the Ring in July to challenge welterweight champion Lucas Matthysse.

BILLY GRAHAM: ‘Yet Speaking’

A video of Billy Graham preaching at an Easter time decades ago has received massive attention on social media. The evangelist’s son Franklin Graham posted the video of his late father preaching an Hour Of Decision message. The video clip featured a passionate Billy Graham preaching the Gospel, speaking about the events of Easter. In the video he says the greatest news that mortal ears have ever heard was given by the angel at Jesus’ tomb ‘He is not here! He is risen!’ By Easter Monday morning, the video had had more than 1.4 million views. The famed evangelist, who preached to 210 million people in more than 180 nations, passed away aged 99 on 21 February. – Christian Post

Keen Interest In Religious Freedom Review; PM Grants Extension

Following a flood of submissions, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has granted an extension to the Panel conducting the religious freedom review. The Panel, set up after the legalisation of same-sex marriage and led by Philip Ruddock, will now deliver its report on 18 May. It had originally been expected to report on 31 March, but Mr Turnbull said ‘the number of submissions has made this impossible.’ The Australian Prayer Network reports that the response from individuals and organisations has been unprecedented, with more than 16,000 public submissions received. Mr Turnbull said the extension is to ensure that the Panel has adequate time to carefully consider the issues. The Panel was set up to consider the impact a change in the Marriage Act would have on religious freedom. – Compiled by APN from media reports

Moore College Grads Told: Don’t Forget The Basics

More than 600 people met to spur on 105 Moore College students at their graduation in Sydney. The graduates are bound for ministry in England, New Zealand, Taiwan and New Caledonia, as well as rural Australia and across the city of Sydney. Former Principal Peter Jensen gave a Gospel charge to the graduates, telling them: ‘You may now have the MA or the MTh degree. But let me remind you, it will all have been wasted if you are not prepared to tell the world “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”’. Within a week of the graduation, the current student body had spread out across the Wollongong region to take part in the Jesus is ... campaign. – http://sydneyanglicans.net/
FROM THE HEIGHTS

(Continued from P4)

5. A Vision Worth Pursuing – Acts 16.6-40

Someone has said: ‘When you come to a fork in the road, take it!’ If Christ is worth pursuing; He is worth sharing, living and dying for.

a. Seek The Lord. We might think we are missionaries, but often we are stationaries! We have flat batteries. We need to get going, kept by the Spirit. Paul had an evangelistic strategy: go to the big cities and start at the synagogue. But this time God said to wait. While asleep, Paul had a vision of a man from Macedonia. Paul discussed it with his companions. We need to have a group accountability to ensure we understand God’s will. For the first time the Gospel went to Europe ... Philippi. Luke selects three people to describe in Philippi: an upper class business woman, a lower class slave girl and a middle class jailer. The Gospel is for all types of people. God is no respecter of persons. These three each came to Jesus in different ways. There are countless ways to present the Gospel.

b. Spread The Word. Conversationally. Lydia was seeking the Lord. God opened her heart. We need to gossip the Gospel. Some people are natural conversationalists. Confrontationally. C.S. Lewis said: ‘There are two kinds of people; those who don’t believe in demons and those who have an excessive interest in them.’ Consequentially. In the shadow of brokenness people are more receptive. The real hero is God Himself at work in their lives. God works behind the scenes, but He also sometimes moves the whole scene.

c. Stand The Bill. God used the illegal nature of what happened to Paul to get people saved. As long as we are prepared to stand the bill, God can do anything. How much are we willing to pay so that others may hear and live?

Coverage of the Belgrave Heights 2018 Easter Convention continues next issue – Barbie Prout (‘Mrs D.P.’)

Christian Witness At Commonwealth Games

Commonwealth Games athletes were supported by chaplains from around theworld over the two weeks of the Commonwealth Games. The 21st games were officially opened by the Prince of Wales, representing the Queen as head of the Commonwealth. More than 4,500 athletes from 71 nations and territories are there on the Gold Coast to compete for 275 gold medals over 11 days. They were supported by ten international chaplains, who were available to people of all faiths and no faith. A chaplaincy spokesman told Christian Today that athletes are under a lot of pressure. There are issues of fatigue and some suffer with anxiety and disappointment. Their primary role is to be available on a pastoral level to anyone who wants it. Chaplains also provide corporate worship and Bible studies.

After Uganda’s Stella Chesang crossed the line to win the women’s 10,000m, at the Commonwealth Games, Australia’s Eloise Wellings was the first to congratulate the Ugandan athlete. Eloise, a Christian, lining up on the Gold Coast for her fourth Commonwealth Games in the 10,000m and 5000m, has her focus fixed on Love And Mercy. The National Alliance of Christian Leaders reports that Love And Mercy is a foundation she co-founded to help communities in northern Uganda overcome poverty. For almost a decade, Love And Mercy has been a passion for Eloise, inspired by her Christian faith, and helping to keep her motivated and competing at the top of her sport. She says she thinks about the work of the foundation all the time she is running. The foundation has raised millions of dollars and empowered women and girls to access education and health care, and generate income.

– NACL
The heart of Sydney’s CBD was silent. Only the beat of a single drum and the cries of loved ones and friends echoed through the concrete canyons. Jesus carrying his cross moved past the colonnades of the former Martin Place General Post Office, their neo-Roman grandeur a striking but brief reminder of when pax-Romana ruled with brutality, providing the political and religious context for Jesus’ execution. Wesley Mission’s Good Friday re-enactment, however, was no place for reminiscing. Jesus moved slowly around Martin Place and after being beaten, collapsed with exhaustion, scattering his crowd of followers. He was helped on his way by Simon – a man whose strength was matched equally by his compassion.

No other event speaks more loudly to the heart of the CBD. Banks and shops are closed. Overseas visitors, airline staff and curious tourists from city hotels join the throng. The drama had begun on the stage of the Martin Place Amphitheatre 30 minutes before. The modern-day take of Jesus’ ministry, betrayal and trial, was delivered in song and script by young actors, who were moved by the opportunity and experience. Alec Green, who took the role of Jesus, told Australian Associated Press it was a challenge to play the role of Jesus. ‘It’s hard for anyone to put themselves in that sort of position,’ Alec said. ‘You are in front of large audiences, and in front of the whole world, realistically, and you get betrayed. It’s very hard emotionally. It’s just trying to bring it to a modern audience, to sort of help them understand.’ On his return to the Martin Place Amphitheatre, he was crucified crying out, ‘It is finished’ to the crowd of more than 1,000.

The Rev Keith Garner, Superintendent of Wesley Mission, spoke of the importance of focusing upon the person of Jesus not just the method of His death. The cross was a common form of execution and over the centuries it had become a symbol. However, the person of Jesus should be the focus of Good Friday. ‘We are surrounded here in Martin Place by businesses, financial institutions, major expensive car dealers, jewellery shops: all of them know what branding is about,’ Mr Garner said. ‘But in history there is no stronger brand, no stronger symbol than the cross. There is nothing more recognisable in history than the cross. The cross speaks of the risen power of Christ, it speaks of the generous love of God for all people … Jesus is for all.

‘The cross touches us in some part of our hearts. But when the crowds gathered on the first Good Friday they didn’t see a brand, they didn’t see something that was unique or something to venerate. It is not where Jesus died that matters, although he died outside the city wall in a very ordinary place. It’s not where he died or how he died that makes this day important, but it is who died that makes this day different. If Jesus’ death was left to the popular branding merchants they would have called it “Bad Friday”. But it isn’t “Bad Friday”. After three hours on the cross, He died for me and He died for you. That’s why it’s Good Friday: because He met at us at our place of need: the point of need of human sin, the point of need of human selfishness and the point of need of human greed. Sin is not the action that we do, it is what we are without God in Christ. Sin is a condition and it needs to be cleansed, healed and put right.

‘On that first Good Friday as His arms were stretched wide on the cross, symbolically those arms represent Him reaching out to the world: the world in its brokenness, the world in its hurt, the world in its need. ‘He offers His grace and love to you. If you have never received the love of God into your heart and life I cannot think of a better day of the year to do so than on Good Friday.’

There followed a moving experience as people placed flowers at the foot of the empty cross, led by children. Wesley Mission hosted a series of powerful Easter events, re-enactments and worship services and events during Holy Week 2018. For more than 50 years Wesley Mission has taken the story of Easter into the public space giving people the opportunity to hear and share in the message of Easter.

− Graeme Cole, Public Affairs Manager
FROM HIS FULLNESS: Preaching, Teaching, And Publishing Christ In And For The Global Context

Taking to heart John 1.14,16 ('And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father; full of grace and truth ... And FROM HIS FULLNESS we have all received, grace upon grace'), Dr Tim J.R. Trumper, former senior minister of Seventh Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA and his wife Brenda were led of the Lord in July 2017 to found From His Fullness Ministries.

Numerous factors influenced this decision – a passion shared with his late father, Dr Peter Trumper, to see Christ glorified globally; the emphasis of the late Rev Omri Jenkins (late director of the European Mission Fellowship) on indigenous church planting, and of Dr Joseph Tong of Indonesia on indigenous ministry training; the realization as a minister of the costs of educating international students in America; and the discovery that in America the ratio of theologically-trained pastors to people is 1:230, and in the rest of the world 1:450,000! (Nick Moore, Theological Famine In The Majority World).

The LORD has graciously provided initial funding, a board of directors (including two ministers and three elders), ministry partners, and recognition by the US Internal Revenue Service as a nonprofit ministry. ‘From His Fullness’ reads the mission statement, ‘is a Christian, Protestant, and reforming ministry which seeks God’s glory in the fulfillment of the Great Commission among the nations, providing pulpit ministry and affordable and indigenous theological instruction, to support the hungriest church leaders, to promote the reformation and outreach of their congregations, and to stir in the West a desire for the revival of the church.’

Dr Trumper brings to the work nearly 30 years’ experience in pulpit ministry touching four continents, longstanding experience in theological research (his PhD is from the University Of Edinburgh), administrative experience in vision planning in different contexts, and years of ministry on both radio and television. His wife, Brenda (BSc, Ministry Leadership), manages From His Fullness, and is also experienced in and available for ministry to women.

To learn more of the theological convictions, core values, objectives, ministry partnerships, and ideas for the development of From His Fullness, visit www.fromhisfullness.com or join the From His Fullness Facebook Group, or follow From His Fullness Ministries on LinkedIn. Newsletters can be received by writing to fromhisfullness@mail.com. This is also the address to which requests for Dr Trumper to serve your church or nation can be sent, for From His Fullness Ministries exists to glorify God by serving the global church, ‘proclaiming to the hungriest the grace and truth of the living Word, through the written Word.’

Elizabeth Kendal’s New Book ...

Wartime Destruction! Violent Persecution! Martyrdom! Forced Displacement!

For hundreds of thousands of now destitute Christian families, this is the new reality. Yet contrary to all appearances, God is at work in the Middle East.

Kendal’s book is a godsend to anyone who is at a loss to understand what lies behind the suffering in the Middle East. Drawing on authoritative voices from the region, her clear-eyed analysis untangles the conflicts with the heart and insight of a prophet.


For more information go to: www.ElizabethKendal.com
Indiana Adopts Law That Counts Unborn Children As Persons

The US state of Indiana has adopted a new law that essentially grants personhood to unborn children. Relevant Magazine reports that Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb has signed a bill into law that allows suspects to be charged with murder if they harm a pregnant woman who then loses her unborn child. Pro-life supporters are championing this bill, as it acknowledges the personhood of unborn children. – Veronica Neffinger, Breaking Christian News (Image: Facebook/via Christian Headlines)

Israel Folau: Right, But Not Right Enough

Rugby legend Israel Folau was not offensive enough when he posted on Instagram that gay people will go to hell if they don’t repent, according to Anglican minister and media commentator Michael Jensen. Speaking after Israel Folau’s meeting with Rugby Australia and the NSW Waratahs, Mr Jensen says it’s unfortunate that he singled out one part of the community because one group is not singled out for the judgment of God. The meeting came after major Wallabies sponsor QANTAS announced it was considering pulling its sponsorship over the incident. Mr Jensen says gay people are not the only people who need to repent. We are all in need of the grace and mercy of God. Mr Jensen told Eternity News he thought it fascinating that QANTAS has taken on the role of moral guide.

New Witness Resource Coming To A Theatre Near You

The Centre for Contemporary Christianity (CPX) is thrilled to announce that the documentary For The Love Of God: How The Church Is Better And Worse Than You Ever Imagined will launch in cinemas nationally from 9 May 2018. The documentary confronts the best and worst of what Christians have done, and traces the origins of Western values like human rights, charity, humility, and non-violence back to the influence of Jesus, weighing up the good, the bad, the ugly and the unexpected when it comes to the impact Christianity has had on the world we live in. A minimum number of tickets must be sold at least two weeks ahead of the screening date to ensure the screening goes ahead. So don’t delay – grab your tickets today – and don’t miss this opportunity to bring the rich history of Christianity to your neighbours. Enough tickets must be sold to ensure the screening goes ahead. Your card won’t be charged until this happens! For further info about venues etc contact Grace at: grace.dellis@biblesociety.org.au

Malawi: The Gospel Rings Out Via Radio

Ninety percent of the population in Malawi listens to the radio for information, teaching and pleasure. A new station, launched by Operation Mobilisation proclaims the Word of God 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It addresses all sorts of life issues, giving answers with faithfulness to the values and message of the Bible. In addition to the six full-time staff, volunteers help produce the programs. Unstable electricity and black-outs are potential issues for the area, but solar powered equipment means that when other stations are off the air, the Gospel is still being broadcast. The opening celebration included worship and praise led by the station choir as well as prayers and speeches offered by clergy, government officials and OM representatives from Malawi and Germany. – Operation Mobilisation
You Can Advertise Here
Call Rachael on 0415 612 646 for help and advice.
Email: office@nlife.com.au

We’re Counting On YOU!
YOUR
Donations Keep Us Going!

Through the generous donations of members of the New Life family, New Life is now available free on request by email to everyone, everywhere, who wants to receive it.

PLEASE CONSIDER MAKING A DONATION:

• By Cheque To: New Life, PO Box 457, Mitcham 3132 Vic.
  (Please make cheques out to: ‘New Life Australia Ltd’.)
• By Direct Deposit To: Account Name: New Life Australia Ltd.
  (Please email editor@nlife.com.au when you direct deposit).
• From Our Web Site: (www.nlife.com.au) using the Make A Donation button.
Sudanese Church Pastor Murdered With Family For Preaching The Gospel

Masked attackers murdered a church pastor in Darfur, Western Sudan, along with his wife and two daughters in the early hours of 2 March 2018. Before killing him, they demanded to know why he had not heeded their warnings to stop preaching about Jesus. The attackers forced their way into Pastor Stephen Toms Abur’s house shortly after 1 am. They assembled the family in the living room and asked Pastor Stephen to explain why he had not responded to their warnings to stop preaching. In response, Pastor Stephen started telling them about Jesus. Barnabas Fund’s contact writes, ‘They became furious and started to kick him and beat him up seriously.’ The attackers then tried to force the pastor to violate his daughters, Rachel and Priscilla. He refused. ‘They then began by killing the girls first, then their mother [Beatrice], and finally the pastor himself. They were cut in pieces as though they were cows.’

A young boy who worked for the family witnessed the murders and only escaped death by hiding in the ceiling of the house. After killing Pastor Stephen and his family, the attackers set fire to the church, where hundreds of Christian converts were sleeping; they have been disowned by their Muslim families and have nowhere else to go. Although some were seriously hurt, none died, which Barnabas Fund’s contact describes as a moment of divine intervention.

Doors Are Closing, But Bibles Are Still Needed And Being Distributed

Bible Society has been raising funds to provide Bibles to the exponentially growing church in China and asks for help while the way is open. ‘There are still not enough Bibles!’ says Sister Han, from Shandong Province, China. Since the establishment of Amity Printing Company in 1987, 80 million Bibles have been printed for internal distribution in China. Yet due to the exponential growth of the church, there remain millions desperate for their own copy. Bible Society therefore asks for help to continue the production and distribution of Bibles in China to meet the growing demand.

‘Regardless of their educational background, they all want to have a Bible with them,’ explains Elder Fu Xianwei, Chair of National TSPM of the Protestant Churches in China. ‘When they are faced with any difficulties or during their quiet moments, they want to read the Bible to know more truths and the teachings of God.’

For the last three decades, Bible Society and their supporters have been raising funds to provide Bibles to the burgeoning church. These Bibles have been distributed legally through local churches, an avenue that remains open to this day. Can you help us while the door is open?


SUDAN: ‘A Prisoner Of Christ Jesus’

Charged with being a spy, Czech missionary Petr Jasek endured a 14-month imprisonment in Sudan where he was severely tortured. But during his confinement he was able to lead 40 fellow inmates to faith in Christ, according to God Reports. As an Africa director for Voice Of The Martyrs, Mr Jasek went to Sudan for four days to document the persecution of Christians. He was there 445 days. At Khartoum Airport immigration staff found a duplicate passport that Mr Jasek carried for security purposes. He was immediately arrested and imprisoned, where he was regularly beaten, water-boarded and referred to as ‘filthy pig’ or ‘filthy rat.’ Mr Jasek describes his cellmates as being desperate and hopeless, but he says it was wonderful to see the changed lives of those who committed themselves to Christ. He finally was granted a pardon by Sudanese President Umar al-Bashir and returned to the Czech Republic.

EGYPT: President Urged To Protect Christians

Christian charity Release International is urging Egypt to protect its persecuted Christian minority. They have asked the re-elected President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi to begin his second term in office by demonstrating a commitment to treat Christians as equal citizens and grant full religious freedom. Release Chief Executive Paul Robinson told the ASSIST News Service that Egypt has the largest remaining Christian community in the Middle East, despite continuing persecution, which Christians often call ‘the pressure’. That ‘pressure,’ he says, stems from long-term cultural discrimination, affecting the job prospects of Christians, their access to public life and their ability to build and even repair their churches. Release has urged the President to intervene to stop Christians being driven from their homes and that churches be protected from shootings, bombings and arson. Through its international network Release International serves persecuted Christians around the world.

– Global Christian News
– ANS
There are times when I can readily identify with the feeling expressed by Asaph in this psalm, and am therefore greatly comforted by the fact that God has included it in His inspired Word – it reassures me that He understands my condition, even when I can’t.

There is nothing more frustrating than being tired through lack of sleep, yet lying awake in bed, unable to get to sleep. Ideally, this ought to present me with a good opportunity to pray – but even that can be a struggle. As Asaph expresses it: ‘You kept my eyes from closing; I was too troubled to speak.’

In these circumstances, it is good to reflect on this wise advice from the Apostle Paul: ‘In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.’ (Romans 8.26-28).

How comforting this is. I am struggling with my confused thoughts keeping my brain active, but unproductive, longing for rest and ‘escape’ from it all, but incapable of finding the rest in sleep that I so desperately need. But I realise that the God who made me is the God who controls all my circumstances – and He understands my problem enough to include Psalm 77 and Romans 8 in His revealed truth.

More than this, He has graciously caused His Holy Spirit to dwell within me to enable me to process the whole thing. What a wonderful God He is! Not only does He explain to us how it all works – with Him in complete control, working everything for our benefit because He loves us and cares about us and for us, but He also provides us with the wherewithal to guarantee that we don’t muck it all up because of the confusion of our sinful hearts and minds.

With Asaph, I can say to this God, ‘You kept my eyes from closing; I was too troubled to speak’ because I know that He does this in order to draw me closer to Himself, and to keep me aware of my complete dependence on Him, trusting Him to get me through in spite of my struggles and confusion!

FOR REFLECTION:
When you can’t sleep, do you count sheep or do you talk to the Shepherd?

Romans 8.31-39 His Love ...

Words Of Wisdom:

The cruel torture of crucifixion couldn’t silence Jesus’ prayer. The crushing stones couldn’t silence Stephen’s prayer, but I wonder what has silenced your prayer for your enemy. So love your enemies, pray for your persecutors.

John MacArthur
(Love your Enemies, part 3)

Websites Worth Watching:
https://www.facebook.com/fromhisfullness/
From His Fullness Ministries

SEEN ON FACEBOOK:

“Say much of what the Lord has done for you, but say little of what you have done for the Lord”
C.H. Spurgeon
Michael Kruger argues that the 2nd Century was a crucial period for the survival and shape of Christianity, neither of which was a foregone conclusion at the start of that century, considering the contending forces both internal and external to the early Christian movement. The Apostles were dead and the New Testament writings were not yet fully assembled as a clearly demarcated canon. Kruger shows that a series of significant transitions took place during this century, and that Christianity at the end of the century was different in a number of ways from what it was at the start, and had taken a pattern we would recognise today. For example, the church was less Jewish and more gentile, having become ethnically and socially diverse.

**Christianity was popular among women and the well-to-do.** On the other hand, the oddity of Christianity evoked persecution and condemnation (for atheism, cannibalism and incest!). Both forms of opposition found a counter-response in the work of the Christian apologists. Famous martyrs of the period include Polycarp and Justin Martyr. Over the century, church leadership evolved from New Testament style plurality of elders/bishops in a local church to one bishop, such as promoted by Ignatius of Antioch. Private homes, large and small, remained the standard Christian meeting place in the 2nd Century, or in some cases structures such as a barn or bathhouse were used. Kruger discusses the standard features of early Christian gatherings for worship.

Kruger effectively disputes the thesis of F. C. Bauer that there was really no such thing as orthodox Christianity in the 2nd Century. Though there was a diversity of heretical groups claiming the title 'Christian', this does not mean that ‘orthodoxy’ is merely the religion of the victors in this struggle for dominance. In fact, what we would regard as the essential truths of Christianity have an ancient pedigree that goes back to Jesus and the Apostles, and these truths were summed up in what is known as the Rule Of Faith. Orthodox and mainstream Christianity, represented by its bishops and found at major church centres, dominated the landscape of this century.

**Though most Christians could not read,** 2nd-Century Christianity was a bookish movement, with the public reading of Scripture occupying an important part in gatherings for worship. Early canonical texts were punctuated and paragraphed to assist those who read out loud at these gatherings as well as the understanding of hearers. Kruger provides an exposition of other Christian literature being written (eg the so-called Apostolic Fathers, apologetic works, published sermons) and the many apocryphal works excluded from the New Testament. Early Christian book production favoured the codex over the scroll, as a way of binding different canonical books together and in order. Early Christian literature was copied by professional scribes and widely disseminated among a close network of churches. At this time, we begin to recognise the emergence of the core of the the New Testament canon, and this helped the church to combat heresies like Gnosticism and Marcionism.

Kruger effectively counters the arguments of those who want to argue that there was no canon until the 4th Century. This is also strong evidence that ‘orthodox Christianity’ was not an invention and result of 4th-Century debates. In other words, the 2nd Century was decisive in shaping what the Christian Church was to be, and this century has much to teach the church of today that (in the West at least) finds itself in a post-Christian world. As in the 2nd Century, the required response today is bold apologetics, devotion to Scripture, Christ-centred worship and a willingness to suffer.

**This well-researched book will be a boon to all who seek clarity about early Christianity.** In it we hear the voice of reason amid a cacophony of wild contemporary claims about the church supposedly having taken a wrong turn in the 2nd Century.

– Greg Goswell
Mission editors, bloggers, social media maverks, writers
- the icloud, international mission media, medium size missions

3rd year
MC - Rev Bob Thomas, editor New Life

One day in Melbourne
10.30am - cuppa - 11.00am start
12.30pm - lunch provided—55 min.

Morning session
issues affecting your - computer hardware, software and networking capabilities, the cloud and mission mobile phone technology ……

Afternoon session
International mission media - Ben Campbell
African Enterprise Australasia
Medium mission media - Ashley Saunders - Family Voice
Small groups coordinated by Peter Brookshaw
Finish 4.00pm

Fly in, fly out - or early dinner with an associate / family - fly home last flight!

Capt. Peter Brookshaw

Venue
Craigieburn Salvation Army
75 Interlink Dr - 20 min from airport

Date
Saturday 19 May 2018 - 10.30am

Email RSVP — Tuesday 11 May 2018
Enquiries 0419 917 713
Name, State, Publication, Blog, Interest

To register
info@markt.id.au

No charge
Everyone is donating their time
All digital conf. Lunch is donated
Craigieburn Salvation Army the venue