

# Transforming Sydney & National Prayer Strategy for the Ten Domains



TRANSFORMING  
SYDNEY

This year, the Newsletter has a National focus and mission, for Family, Church, and the Ten Domains of the Marketplace

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Note: articles in this Newsletter reflect the opinion and witness of the respective authors, which may or may not align with your own; consider this with Ephesians 4:1-7 in mind.

## Prayer Calendar 2015

Check our 2015 Prayer Calendar for daily prayer points - [www.transformingsydney.org/TSPayerCalendar.html](http://www.transformingsydney.org/TSPayerCalendar.html)

Note also on the end page is a Daily Prayer Calendar for April to pray for Business (Trade & Finance).

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## Pentecost Eve in Sydney

Transforming Sydney and Sydney Leaders

Join us 6pm on Saturday 23 May 2015 at Newtown Mission

*More details over...*

## Prayer for Sydney – Pentecost 2015

### Transforming Sydney and Newtown Mission

By Bjorn and Lilian Schmid

According to Jewish tradition, 7 weeks after Passover (49 days – the ‘Counting of the Omer’) is the time of *Shavu'ot*, a commemoration of the giving of the Torah (the Law) by the Lord God to Moses at Mt. Sinai; when the Law of God was given to the people of Israel (and to the entire world). God’s glory was so great when He descended on the Mountain and spoke the 10 commandments that the people fell back in fear and asked Moses to be their mediator between them and God (Exodus 20).

In Deuteronomy 16, Moses reminded the Israelites of the three festivals that God asked them to keep each year (Exodus 23), the Festival of Harvest (or Weeks) is to offer to God the first-fruits of their harvest, and the 50th day is the Shavu'ot, when the priests would make a wave offering of leavened bread over the altar. Many Jews stay up all night reading the scriptures and praying.

Because of its significance, Shavu'ot is considered by many to be the day on which Judaism was born. The Talmud refers to Shavu'ot as the “marriage day” between God and the Jewish people. On Shavu'ot, Jews reaffirm their commitment to the Mosaic covenant, Jewish children are confirmed, and young adults recommit themselves to live as a Jew and to the study of the Torah.

When the Torah was translated into Greek this festival of “50 days” became *Pentecost*. For Christians this is a celebration of the day when the Church was truly born, the first-fruits of Jesus’ ministry, when we became “married” to God through the receiving of the Holy Spirit, and the New Covenant in Christ, begun on the Passover sacrifice of the Lamb of God, became substantial:

*“This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord.*

*“I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the Lord.*

*“For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” (Jer. 31:33-34)*

John the Baptist prophesied of the first Pentecost when Jesus would baptise with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Matt. 3:11). Jesus confirmed this prophecy with the promise of the Holy Spirit to the disciples in John 14:26. He told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Father’s gift of the Holy Spirit, from whom they would receive power to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:3-8).

On the Day of Pentecost “when it had fully come” (i.e. in the morning after a night of prayer and reading the scriptures), just as promised, the sound of a violent wind filled the house, tongues of fire came to rest on each of them and all were filled with the Holy Spirit. They were given the power of communication, which Peter used to begin the ministry for which Jesus had prepared them. After the coming of the Holy Spirit, the disciples did not stay in the room basking in God’s glory but burst out to tell the world. This was the beginning of the Church as we know it.

*Since the Jewish day starts at sunset,  
Pentecost starts this year on Saturday night 23rd May at 6pm.*

We invite you to join us with many Christians coming together from across the greater Sydney region for fervent prayer to our Lord for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the people of our beloved city.

This prayer event will be held at:

**Newtown Mission, 280A King Street, Newtown NSW from 6pm to 8:30pm.**

Contact:

**Newtown Mission: (02) 9519-9000**

**[www.newtownmission.org.au](http://www.newtownmission.org.au)**

**Transforming Sydney: 0411 562-751**

**[bjorn@transformingsydney.org](mailto:bjorn@transformingsydney.org)**

Let us know you are coming and bring your people; we look forward to seeing you there, sincerely

**Rev. Graeme Tutt (Senior Minister, Newtown Mission) and Bjorn Schmid (Facilitator, Transforming Sydney)**

## Rehabilitation and Die?

By Jack de Groot via Toby Hall

Over the last few months, the Australian public has been racked with anguish at the prospect of two young men in their 30s – Myuran Sukumaran and Andrew Chan – being taken in front of a squad of 10 armed guards (with three live rounds of ammunition between them) to be killed by state sanctioned homicide.

Their deaths may not be immediate. Another bullet may be needed if the first volley hasn't been effective.

The suffering surrounding these two men is deeply disturbing.

We wish it would be otherwise.

We wish that their death sentences were commuted and that they could be allowed to bear witness in life, even if deprived of their liberty and rights.

There is plenty of evidence that they are already well advanced in that respect, despite the fact that, whatever happens, they will never be freed.

The Governor of Kerobokan Prison – where, until recently, both men had been jailed for the past nine years – describes both Andrew and Myuran as model prisoners.

While at Kerobokan, Andrew counselled and mentored other inmates. He studied theology, achieved a certificate in Ministry and ran the prison's English language church service.

Both taught computer skills to other prisoners while Myuran, having completed a Fine Arts Degree while in jail, also taught graphic design and ran a T-shirt printing business, boosting the job skills of his peers in the process.

Myuran also attempted to set up a drug-counselling program.

So impressed by his commitment to leading a changed life, Kerobokan's authorities appointed Myuran a leader among the other prisoners, asking him to liaise between the administration, guards and the inmates.

Most importantly, both have worked very hard at using their experiences to communicate a powerful anti-drugs message which, by all accounts, been successful in helping addicts – both inside Kerobokan and outside the jail – leave drug abuse behind.

Quite clearly Andrew and Myuran have created, and are creating, meaning in their lives.

Their conduct says: "Life, no matter its limitations, is all we have and we have to make it count".

Beyond our shores, the plight of Andrew and Myuran comes at a time when there is wider international debate about bringing an end to state-sanctioned and administered

homicide.

On 5 March, the UN Human Rights Commission recommitted itself to calling for an end to capital punishment (in the same week that Prime Minister Abbott rejected the same UN body's report on our nation's treatment of asylum seekers).

Among the sadness, the groundswell of support among Australians for clemency for Chan and Sukumaran has been heartening.

I am also encouraged that we have been able to communicate our support – for the most part – in a way that has not become xenophobic and anti-Indonesian.

Indonesia is our friend and neighbour. Our strong views are not aimed at the Indonesian people. Our relationship must, and will, endure beyond this episode.

There is hope too that, among everything, the broader Australian community has been able to contemplate death, dying, suffering and the measure we give to life no matter how imperfect, difficult and painful. This is a well to draw from deeply.

It's a sign of the public's maturity when we can see that life – even when limited and deprived of all that we want for it – is still fundamentally worthwhile and good.

If (or when) Andrew and Myuran are executed, vigils of silence, prayer and accompaniment will be held around the country. Families will awake and reflectively talk with their children; teachers will allow the conversation in their classrooms to help give space and meaning to the sad events.

This is as it should be: death acknowledged, silence observed and valued, hollowness felt. Such is the norm when a life is lost.

For Christians, the celebration of Holy Week and Easter gives us a very powerful framework for understanding the value of life.

Jesus' own state-administered execution means we know the suffering, the annihilation and the loss.

The move to resurrection on Easter Sunday can never be recalled without contemplating the Passion of Jesus.

Myuran and Andrew's story takes us to a deeply human place and that is where God is always found, for nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in the Christian.

Their terrible story and desire for life is also a window for other conversations about the promotion of human dignity and human life in all its forms.

That even the lives of those convicted of trafficking in drugs and the poisoning of life are inalienable.

And that life, even when limited and demeaned, has value that is not relative.

\* *My understanding of the process of execution in Indonesia is that there are 10-12 members of the firing squad. Only 3 of the 10 have live rounds of ammunition. This way none of the members of the firing squad know who actually may have "killed" the condemned (see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capital\\_punishment\\_in\\_Indonesia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capital_punishment_in_Indonesia) and references). If the condemned have not died through the fusillade, then the commander of firing squad shoots a final round. A grim and shocking process.*

## Praying for Government

*Marie Ficarra MLC*

I pray that the teachings of St Francis, the patron saint of my parents' homeland Italy, will continue to guide me in my private and public life. I have always found it difficult to live my life trying to change my behaviour any differently with regard to these two aspects of my life. Although inspired every time I pray to St Francis, "Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace" it has never been an excuse for me to avoid the controversial issues that matter to Australians and their way of life.

As a retiring Member of the NSW Parliament having served in local and state government for 28 years, I was preselected and elected on my values, vision, achievements and most of all my ability to connect, understand and communicate people's aspirations, their needs and wishes regarding their quality of life and that of their families. Both state and local governments are chiefly about the provision of services such as, health, education, law and order via policing and our justice system, public transport, community services, infrastructure, safe and efficient roads and so on.

These services are vital to our economy and the provision of jobs into the future. Let us pray for our political leaders nationally and in particular in NSW with an election looming. Let us pray for our Ministers, our Members of Parliament and their collective teams of public servants. I thank God every day for the fine calibre of representatives we have in our Parliaments, especially the Reverend Hon Fred Nile and his colleague Hon Paul Green representing the Christian Democratic Party. Rev Nile with over thirty three years of legislative experience and an expansive community network never fails to amaze me with his energy, passion and determination to serve

his God and his people with every breath in his body.

Let us pray that all our representatives and public servants work for the betterment of our community with courage, stability and purpose. It is a demanding career path that brings its stressful challenges on family lives and personal health. May the Lord give them the strength physically, mentally and socially to enable them to make a positive contribution and find peace of mind, love and happiness in their given roles.

Social issues such as regulating illicit drug use, same sex marriage and adoption, euthanasia and other policies concerning fundamental family values, are showing generational societal change and it is precisely these changes and their social consequences will always be discussed and examined by the majority. The silent majority may not be the Facebook, Instagram or Twitter masses but still they hold the power and they will be heard on such issues. This majority will always require their representatives to make decisions and take positions based on evidence, past experience, sound reasoning and not social trends.

Growing up in the 60s and 70s in typical Australian Anglo Saxon suburbia, from an Italian migrant background and working in a retail fruit, veg and milk bar environment, enriched my love of shared cultures and values. Most importantly, I learned to seek knowledge, understanding and awareness as the road to enlightenment. It was as a teenager that I began to value Australians' strong sense of volunteering within not just my Catholic parish but across many faiths. I could see goodness in many people who may not have been regular church goers but nevertheless lived their lives with generosity and compassion. I realised early not to be judgemental or simplistic in my beliefs.

Keeping an open mind and displaying tolerance and love in our daily lives can move mountains in families and communities. Good deeds to others in God's name is recognised and often reproduced by those around us, especially young Australians eager to learn and understand fulfilment and happiness. These positive feelings swelled in the

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*Let us pray that all our representatives and public servants work for the betterment of our community with courage, stability and purpose.*

## Praying for Government (...continued)



hearts and minds of so many Australians when World Youth Day 2008 pilgrims flooded Sydney. My husband and I were delighted to host three wonderful tertiary students from Malaysia in our home in Cronulla. They and their friends astounded us with their tolerance, faith, camaraderie and generosity of spirit. It seems virtually all Sydneysiders who experienced this great event had comparable reactions. There is so much to be proud about regarding our young Australians, let's never give up on our youth, our marginalised and those in genuine need – St Francis never did.

The expressions of the ox, ass and sheep seem to portray in a special way the love of this wonderful saint. These carved animals that we bring out every year as part of our Christmas nativity scene proudly displayed in our lounge room, have been hand carved from olives of ancient Palestinian lineage by poor

Christians who are doing it hard, like so many religious people in the region where Our Saviour lived his earthly life. Jesus was also in grave danger as a child and the Holy Family fled into exile for over three years in Egypt. Many in our communities continue pray for lifting of ongoing persecution and suffering of Middle Eastern Christians over the centuries. Due to the depravity of IS terrorists they are joined by persecuted Moslems and Jews. Such cruelty and injustice is rightfully uniting the civilised world into action and we must continue to support such efforts vigorously at all levels.

Being a Member of Parliament for over 12 years serving in both the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council of the NSW Parliament, has been an extraordinary privilege and honour. To have come into contact with so many interesting people and community leaders has been such an invaluable experience. My working background which has spanned the healthcare sector at a national and international level along with my time teaching at Sydney University, has enabled me to bring a variety of skills in the service of the people of NSW. Before re-entering Parliament in 2007, I was privileged to be working in the field of gynaecological oncology as general manager of the Australasian arm of a successful multinational corporation promoting improved diagnostic screening for cervical cancer.

Galvanised by hearing that one of my family as well as a very close friend had been recently diagnosed with cervical cancer, I leapt at the opportunity to make a difference in this dynamic corporate role. I travelled widely, mixed closely with many brilliant professionals, clinicians, researchers and concerned politicians and I experienced a most fulfilling life. Through this work I also met my husband Alan, a public health and medical administration specialist, with whom I share a passion about prevention of cancer deaths through timely early interventions. We have many other shared interests and are proud of the success of our loving and caring relationship. Sharing your life with someone you respect and love dearly is such a blessing and I thank God every day through prayer.

Indeed I remain keen to assist in an expanded manner, my many friends in the gynaecological cancer field throughout Australia, once my parliamentary term concludes at the March 2015 state elections.

Alan and I have been proud to volunteering with the establishment of the Australian Gynaecological Cancer Foundation ([www.agcf.org.au](http://www.agcf.org.au)) to the point where a national launch is expected in the first half of 2015. This charitable foundation will address research funding issues for all gynaecological cancers, raise funds at the national level and support all types of cancer research.

Gynaecological cancers are not rare. Every day in Australia, 12 women are diagnosed with a gynaecological cancer and about 4 women will die from one, accounting for 9% of all female cancer deaths. The rate of diagnosis is



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## Praying for Government (...continued)



*A belief in God and his goodness is an extraordinarily powerful force in our communities, our nation and the world.*

increasing and will do for years to come, because of population ageing. About 9,400 Australian women living today have been diagnosed with ovarian cancer, 23,300 with uterine cancer and 15,300 with cervical cancer.

Like everyone, my life has had many testing moments that involved people once very close to me, people I should have been able to trust. Fortunately, feeling the enduring love and guidance of my father and mother, my family and friends, I have been able to pass through those challenging times without displaying bitterness or seeking retribution for felt injustices. I know that my parents, who raised me in the shelter of our Christian faith, can rest in the peace of Christ with the knowledge of how I have performed and what their daughter is achieving in her public and private life.

My faith has stayed as strong as ever and probably benefitted from adolescent exposure to the diversity of faiths that represents the real world. That exposure has continued and intensified because of my many years in public life. A belief in God and his goodness is an extraordinarily powerful force in our communities, our nation and the world. Challenges to faith come in many forms and I am often alerted to gratuitous, sarcastic and unwarranted comments in the media regarding my religious views or those of my political colleagues whom I respect.

I will not be covered into silence on more substantial social policy issues by fear of such attacks. I am considered by many, including myself, to be a conservative politician. Although I am not particularly prone to parading my spiritual sentiments, the public record has documented my opinions on many issues. They are solidly grounded on my university based scientific training, my broad experience of life and my faith and I don't mind making this obvious when necessary. My approach in life is to consider all evidence before making judgements. Sometimes my judgement leads me to support the status quo while

more evidence is gathered. I reject so-called reforms that seem to me to be initiated by ideology, promoted by propaganda and hastened by expediency and thoughts of the next election timetable.

In my personal life, I try to take Holy Communion every week, as I have since my first. I am proud of the support I have always given my local parish wherever I have been living, currently St Aloysius, Cronulla. I respect all who follow and live out what they believe in the peaceful, loving ways that true Christians and loving non Christians should. My faith has strengthened me but has never made me a religious bigot.

Political life forces endless reflection on what really matters. In doing this, I deeply appreciate the sound foundations of my thought processes, in the moral and factual teachings of my parents, my teachers, my spiritual guides and my colleagues. So I will go on in my faith and use the certainties it brings to my advantage, freeing my mind to deal with problems that can be addressed through analysis of evidence.

My faith gives me both the felt need and the courage to speak out against oppression,

intolerance and injustice, even if these expressions of opinion might cost me the support of those proponents of expediency and compromise. I will not retreat in the face of any threats to isolate and vilify me because of my faith-based positions. In the words of the hymn so many Christians sing with strong conviction, here in the love of Christ, I stand.



# “IN ALL THY WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE THE LORD AND HE SHALL DIRECT THY PATHS”

## (Proverbs 3:6)

*Rev Hon Fred Nile MLC*

Almighty God has richly blessed my life through my faith in my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is amazing that at so many critical points in my life, God directly intervened in a miraculous way.

Many years ago, when I was praying about the challenge facing our Federal and State Governments, I had a remarkable vision. In this vision I was sitting in a ringside seat at a boxing match when the referee asked for someone to get in the ring and fight a large, powerful boxer. God said to me, “get into the political ring and fight God’s enemies” – which I did!

On another occasion a retired solicitor, whom I had never met, rang me and said he was praying about selling his house at Gerroa and God spoke to him saying “Sell your house to Fred Nile for him to use as a sanctuary”. Elaine and I said yes and he helped us to buy it with a loan.

One day Nabi Saleh, a prominent leader of Hillsong Church whom I had never met, rang me and said that God had told him to offer his help to me. I readily accepted this offer for our Christian political party.

So often, when one ministry was concluding, I would receive a phone call from someone I did not know offering me the leadership in a challenging sphere, ie National Christian Endeavour Director; Director of Billy Graham Crusades, Director of the NSW Board of Evangelism; Director of NSW Methodist Newness Campaign, Director of the Festival of Light-CSO. God was “directing my paths” for which I praise Him.

I thank Almighty God that, as a non-Christian young man, He led me to the Revesby Evangelical Congregational Church in 1951 when I was drawn to a very attractive girl on the Church tennis court – Elaine Crealy who I married in 1958. To join the Church Tennis Club I had to agree to attend a weekly Church Service, which I did, and accepted Jesus Christ as my Saviour, through the faithful Gospel preaching of the late Rev Simon Buttle.

***I fully expected to die in some form of Christian service, perhaps as a missionary. I expected to witness to wild natives in South America, but instead I was to witness to wild politicians!***

Again, God led me when in January 1955 I felt a direct call from God to leave all and follow Jesus. In fact, when I asked God what do you want me to do – what kind of ministry – the answer from God was “Will you die for me?” I replied “no, I want to live for you!” But eventually I said “yes, I am willing to die for you”.

I fully expected to die in some form of Christian service, perhaps as a missionary. I expected to witness to wild natives in South America, but instead I was to witness to wild politicians!

However, my controversial ministry has involved death threats and bomb threats as well as a bullet fired through lounge window and other incidents.

These threats, including the current threat over the Islamic issue has often involved police offers of security because they were aware of the threats. I have never approached the police because I continue to trust the Lord, as I have for over 64 years.

It might seem a contradiction but I was and am extremely patriotic and like my father, wanted to follow his example and serve my nation, especially with the threats from the warlike Communist Soviet Union. My father had volunteered to serve in the British Army when he was 17. He served in the trenches of France from 1916-18 where he was wounded by machine gun fire. He served in the famous Gloucestershire Regiment whose motto was “Never Retreat, Never Surrender”. It even had its Regimental badge on the front and back of their caps for when they were surrounded the enemy would know who they were fighting!

So, even though I was a Christian I first joined the Army Cadets and then volunteered when 17 for fulltime National Service in the 13th Battalion; Ingleburn Army Camp near Sydney in 1952. I then volunteered to remain in the Army



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## IN ALL THY WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE THE LORD (...continued)

Reserve from 1952 to 1972 where I became an Infantry Company Commander, not a Chaplain.

I greatly enjoyed my Army Service and the opportunity to conduct Army Church Parades and Bible Studies.

After that dramatic call from God I attended (1956-57) a missionary training institute – the Melbourne Bible Institute (MBI) now Victorian College of the Bible. Then, (during 1958-64) the United Faculty of Theology (Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Colleges) at Sydney University.

My two training opportunities were totally different, the MBI was evangelical, evangelistic and Bible believing! The United Faculty of Theology was a very liberal Theological College.

After 5 years of training in the United Faculty and my successful passing of all my examinations, the Principal called me into his office and said he had bad news. He said you have to study for another year before you graduate.

I was shocked and asked why. He replied “Because you still believe the Bible is true”. I think they were hoping I would just drop out but I accepted their challenge to try to change me but, praise God, they failed. I believe it was part of God’s plan to test me and make me even stronger in my faith and belief and to prepare me for the spiritual battles in the NSW Parliament for over 33 years!

I was finally ordained in 1964 and served in various Churches, first as an evangelical Congregational Minister and then in the new Uniting Church in Australia. However, I resigned from the UCA in 2003 when the UCA voted to ordain practising homosexuals and I re-joined the Congregational Churches where I was honoured to be elected Australian President in 2006. I served in this capacity until 2014.



1994 Fred and Elaine, and family Stephen, Sharon, Mark and David, at Gerroa

Elaine and I always thanked Almighty God for all His blessings on our marriage and on our family in spite of the difficult financial circumstances with a low Minister’s stipend. Sadly, Elaine went to be with the Lord (not sad for Elaine) in 2011 after a battle with cancer of the liver. God blessed us with four children, 3 sons (Stephen, Mark and David) and 1 daughter (Sharon).

I am very proud of my children. Two of my sons, Stephen and David, served in the NSW Police Force and Mark qualified as a school teacher with his Degree and Diploma in Education and my daughter had successful managerial positions and in social work, particularly caring for children from broken homes.

Now we have eight wonderful grandchildren, Jessica, Joshua, Montana, Jack, Matilda, Elijah, Lily and Briarna.

After being married in 1958, Elaine and I moved to many suburbs as part of our ministry during our 53 year marriage. These suburbs included Newcastle, Bexley, Gladesville, Ryde, Gerroa and Kogarah Bay.

Our ministry had many blessed highlights such as when I served as National Christian Director conducting youth leadership training seminars in all states; the opportunity to organise the 1968 Billy Graham Crusade was a wonderful privilege with over 20,000 decisions for Christ in only 8 Crusade Services when 150,000 people packed into the Showground; organising 8 day Evangelistic Crusades in Newness NSW with hundreds of young people accepting Christ as Saviour throughout NSW.

The Festival of Light – Community Standards Organisation gave me many opportunities to promote purity, love and family life with



1968 Fred with his boss Billy Graham

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# IN ALL THY WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE THE LORD (...continued)

massive rallies in Hyde Park with 35,000 in 1974 and in 1976.

Finally, I was asked to nominate for the NSW Upper House in 1981. To my complete surprise was elected with 225,000 primary votes! I have now served in the NSW Upper House for over 33 years.

During this time I have Chaired many important Parliamentary Inquiries into a wide range of issues including Bullying in WorkCover NSW, Newcastle Rail and Planning, Mr Fluffy Asbestos etc.

I was thrilled in 1988 when Elaine was also elected and served with me for nearly 14 years. Together we



1976 Festival of Light Rally, Malcolm Muggeridge



1991 NSW Legislative Council: Rev Fred Nile and Elaine Nile (on right side)

achieved a great deal including compensation for innocent victims of AIDS.

But God still had his hand on my life after Elaine died of cancer trusting in Jesus Christ to welcome her into Heaven. I praise God He gave me a wonderful Christmas present when I married Silvana Nero on 15th December 2013. Silvana is a lovely, dedicated, Christian campaigner.

Now I am ready for the next battle, as I lead our Team CDP, with Rev Dr Ross Clifford, for the next Upper House Election on 28th March 2015 with a great team of CDP Candidates.

I will serve if elected for a suitable time and then hand over to my successor Rev Dr Ross Clifford my Number Two Upper House Candidate on our Upper House Ticket.

My Number Three Candidate is Peter Tadros; my Number Four Candidate is Simon Khouri.

Let us continue to pray that God's Will be done on Saturday 28th March 2015, for His Glory.



1990 Kings Cross Rally



1994 Family World News 1994 - 2014



2014 Sydney Holy City March

## What Children at Risk Need and How the Church Can Help Them Best (part 3 of 3)

### *Lausanne Consultation on Children at Risk*

**Quito, Ecuador, 17-20 November, 2014**

*Contributing Paper by Ruslan Maliuta*

#### **Conclusion: Taking the Initiative and Assuming Responsibility**

For the Church to take the lead and make the maximum impact in responding to the growing crisis of children at risk in its many manifestations, a number of strategies need to be developed and adopted on global, national, and local levels. The Church needs to strategically focus on advocacy, policy and system development, and best practices with resource mobilization to impact the situation with children at risk both globally and locally. These strategies deserve more in-depth discussion, yet but I would like to simply outline some key areas to consider

#### Advocacy

The Church needs to regain the position of being the primary advocate for children in adversity. In order for this to happen the Church's position on key related issues, including desirable outcomes, has to be clarified and clearly stated. Because the Body of Christ consists of many different groups, a strategic collaboration is required between key denominations and agencies on all levels. Essentially the global Church needs an equivalent of the UN Convention on Rights of the Child, not to compete with the UN's document but to complement it with a clear Biblical foundation and guidance for the global Christian community as it relates to serving children of the Whole World. But this process is much more than just coming up with a document that everyone would agree upon. As Shiferaw Michaels states in his paper: "Incremental changes and improvements on "practices, behavior or attitude"<sup>13</sup> cannot bring solutions to the issues involved with children at risk. They call for "significant, quantum improvements" that call for paradigm shifts." The Church needs to identify paradigm shifts that have to take place and make them a significant priority.

One example of a needed paradigm shift comes from the area of orphan care. The Church has to take the lead in promoting a family-based approach to helping orphans and vulnerable children, especially given the Biblical foundation for family, adoption, and caring for the fatherless. Unfortunately, in a number of countries the Christian community is far behind the government and NGOs both in recognizing the need for family-based approach and in aligning its programs and activities accordingly. But there are also positive cases when the Christian Church nationally has taken a stand on these issues and was able to significantly influence the situation with children at risk in their nation. In Ukraine in 2012 the national Council of Churches and Religious Organizations, which represents 90% of believers in the country on the range from Orthodox to Catholic to Evangelicals, came up with a joint statement on *Protecting and Caring for the Orphans and Vulnerable Children, Preventing Abandonment of Children, and Ensuring the Right of the Child to be Raised in Family*<sup>14</sup>. This is just one aspect of a major paradigm shift that took place in the country during the last decade regarding this issue.

Another example of a paradigm shift that should take place is on the issue of abortion. The Church is known globally for fighting against abortions but unfortunately does not as often see the need for supporting struggling families after children are born. What would happen if the Christian community would not only criticize the practice of abortion, but also mobilize its resources to offer tangible support for any woman that agrees to keep the child, or find a family for any child whose mother or biological family is not willing or able to raise her? In this way, the church would

**What would happen if the Christian community would not only criticize the practice of abortion, but also mobilize its resources to offer tangible support for any woman that agrees to keep the child, or find a family for any child whose mother or biological family is not willing or able to raise her?**

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<sup>14</sup> <http://vrciro.org.ua/ua/statements/184-zvernennya-vrciro-shchodo-zahystu-i-pikluvannya-pro-ditey-syrit>

## What Children at Risk Need (...continued)

support children's healthy relationships with caring and nurturing adults, whether biological or adoptive.

The Church should be more celebrated for what it is for, not what it is against.

### Policy and System Development

By embracing an active position, the Christian community can positively influence the child welfare system in its country. Generally speaking, there are three types of countries in this regard: those with a very developed child welfare system, the ones that are actively developing one, and the countries where the system is primitive, not functioning, or virtually non-existent. Usually this correlates with the economic development of a particular country. In cases of developed countries, the Church is often facing a challenge of the child welfare system having developed with some elements that are not in keeping with Christian teaching, resulting, for example, in children being placed in adoptive families that may not be considered suitable or healthy. Once again, the way to deal with it is to be a prophetic voice that calls for systems that operate in children's best interests while also offering tangible solutions to the country's most pressing social challenges.

For example, in the UK the Evangelical Alliance launched a campaign, Home for Good, to find adoptive parents for all foster children in the country's child welfare system as well as to encourage Christian families to become foster parents. As a result of the campaign, in Southampton alone 70 churchgoers applied to be foster parents.<sup>15</sup> In the countries where the system is still being developed the Church has a unique opportunity to help shape it to reflect Biblical values and principles. In Ukraine the Alliance for Ukraine without Orphans, along with the Committee of Social Ministry of the National Council of Churches and Religious Organization, participated in the development of the National Strategy on Preventing of the Social Orphanhood.<sup>16</sup> And in places where the system is not present or malfunctioning, local churches must do their best to fulfill many of its functions. Sometimes they will be the only ones to do so, especially in poorer countries in Africa and Asia.

### Best Practices, Mobilization, and Resources

As I already noted earlier, there are examples where the Christian community led the way in developing solutions that eventually were adapted by the government and secular NGOs. The Church needs to go beyond advocacy and system development, as important as they are, and identify, develop, and multiply best practices when it comes to different areas of serving children at risk. While advocacy and system development usually take place on global and national levels, implementation is always local. Advocacy without solid best practice and active mobilization of all necessary resources is utterly insufficient.

The global and local Christian community should be, as they already are in some cases in the US, Ukraine, UK and other countries, both the think tanks and laboratories of best practice in the area of serving children at risk.

I would like to offer a few words as to what the Church can do in places where churches are few or absent or where the church exists in hostile environments. There are still some things that can be done to impact the well-being of children at risk. And the best part is that these practices are also completely applicable to the situations where Christians are fully present and welcomed.

First, Christians should pray for children at risk, their families in the communities and countries where they live and around the world. Prayer is essential for any and all of the church's work to be effective. Secondly, the Church can advocate for the children in their local settings and also at the global and regional levels, to influence policies that in turn may transform the situations in their respective countries. Thirdly, the Christian community can offer tangible and effective solutions to help these countries and communities where the church is small, nearly non-existent or

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<sup>15</sup> The Baptist Times. Homes for Good becomes independent charity.

[http://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/413252/Home\\_for\\_Good.aspx](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/413252/Home_for_Good.aspx)

<sup>16</sup> <http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/609/2012>

## What Children at Risk Need (...continued)

persecuted.

For example, in China, UK-based charity Care for Children spent 17 years working to help the government develop a foster care system that by now resulted in over 250,000 placements.<sup>17</sup> Being committed Christians and also top-level professionals in their field, they didn't come to China to "evangelize" yet the government of China has seen the success of the approach and openly recognized the crucial role Christian community plays in achieving this, especially because the majority of foster parents turned to be Christians from the house church movement! What an example of living witness and testimony to the power of Christ to transform the lives of families.

During recent decades the Whole World in general and the church in particular have certainly made some progress in both identifying the global challenge of children at risk and responding to it. Yet much more needs to be done. We live in a unique point of history with some unprecedented opportunities for the global church in the areas of communication, mobilization, networking, and alignment of active ministry. Millions of children around the world are suffering and waiting to experience true love and care. We, as the Body of Christ, have never been in a better place to meet this need. It is time to think deeply and act effectively, both globally and locally.

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.edp24.co.uk/lifestyle/photo\\_gallery\\_the\\_norwich\\_man\\_who\\_introduced\\_fostering\\_to\\_china\\_1\\_3545908?usurv=skip](http://www.edp24.co.uk/lifestyle/photo_gallery_the_norwich_man_who_introduced_fostering_to_china_1_3545908?usurv=skip)

## WATCHMEN SCHOOL OF INTERCESSION

The **Australian Prayer Network** has established a Watchmen School of Intercession for the purpose of training up Christians in how to pray for our Nation and the Nations of the world as well as for the Church in Australia and beyond.

The School begins with a Foundational Course spread over 6 sessions which is usually held as a 2 day intensive. This course is suitable for both experienced prayers and/or those wanting to simply know more about the discipline of prayer and how it relates beyond our personal relationship with God, as a tool that God uses to change the world around us.

The topics of the Foundational Course are:

- Session 1** - **How prayer works**
- Session 2** - **Intercession – a lifestyle that changes your world**
- Session 3** - **Understanding the spiritual DNA of your community**
- Session 4** - **Spiritual Authority the key to spiritual breakthrough**
- Session 5** - **Principals of small group leadership and participation**
- Session 6** - **How to hear God's voice**

The course is being made available to Churches, other Christian ministries and established prayer groups/networks across Australia. There is no cost for the Course although we ask that a free will offering towards the ministry of the Australian Prayer Network be allowed to be taken at each School held.

After completion of the Foundational Course participants, should they so choose, will be able to undertake further Intermediate and Advanced courses which will be offered over the following two years. Each of those courses will also be of 6 to 8 sessions duration. Whereas the Foundational Courses will be held locally, the Intermediate and Advanced courses will be centralised to State and National level to enable participants to learn with other praying people from across their State and the nation as a whole.

Local Pastors or other ministry leaders who would like to host a Foundation Level Course should make contact with us to discuss your needs and how we may be able to assist in meeting these needs.

*Yours in Christ,*

*Brian Pickering, National Coordinator, Australian Prayer Network - [prayer@bigpond.net.au](mailto:prayer@bigpond.net.au)*

## 822 Gathering in Jerusalem



*From Rev Roy Zhang*

The 822 Gathering, held on Nov 10 to 13, 2014 at the International Convention Center (ICC) in Jerusalem had about 3400 attendants from more than 20 nations. About 1500 from 'Greater China', including Taiwan, China, Hong Kong and Macau, among which about 800 were from China.

The name of this 822 Gathering comes from the prophecy of Zechariah 8:22, "Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD" It is regarded as a global continuation of national reconciliation, unity and transformation movement started in Canada 1995. It is called Family Journey or Homecoming Movement in Greater China and in Asia since in 2001 as the healing flow was released to Asian nations. Family Journey testimonies were given by senior fathers or key leaders from nations and regions such as Canada, Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, German speaking nations and Japan where repentance, unity, reconciliation, healing and transformation has been taking place.

The highlight was undoubtedly, the repentance and reconciliation of Jewish national spiritual fathers or key leaders towards the gentile Church of the nations, the repentance of Arabic spiritual fathers and key leaders towards Israel and the Jewish Body of Christ. This is of special significance in light of the fact that replacement theology started from Egypt. We saw the reconciliation between Jew and Arabic Body of Christ, and covenant making of the global gentile Church to the Jewish Body of Christ, as led by the Arabic spiritual fathers/mothers and key leaders. Also the spiritual fathers/mothers and key leaders from all the global nations, together declaring the reality of the one new man of Ephesians 2:11-22, and 3:6.

The visionary leader of this global movement is Dr David Demian from Canada. He has strong apostolic and prophetic anointing and is gifted in activating repentance, unity and reconciliation. He carries an apostolic calling from the Lord to prepare His Bride for His second coming. Rev Dr Gideon Chiu is Dr David's senior pastor at Zion Church, Vancouver, Canada, where this global Homecoming Movement started from Rev Dr Gideon's home at her palm size.

According to Dr David Demian, the Gathering is to fulfill the DREAM of our FATHER and the Chinese Body of Christ to provide a womb and travail to help give birth to the baby of repentance and reconciliation and breakthrough. Video archives of 822 Gathering are highly recommended for personal watching. See: [www.822call.org](http://www.822call.org) Here one can observe the on-site experience of high praises on the venue by worshippers and musicians and dancers from Canada and nations, including Jews and Arabic worship leaders. Broadly speaking, this is part of the restoration of the Tabernacle of David in worship and in spirit, but it is also a preparatory presentation of the global Bride for her Bridegroom.

However, this Gathering is not just a single gathering event, but a journey begun in 1995 in Canada. It is a **Homecoming Movement** from Canada, moving to the sun rising nations in Eastern Asia and on to the sun setting Jerusalem. Since September 2013 Dr David along with senior fathers and key leaders from the nations took five trips to Israel to break down barriers and to build up relationships and trust. This 822 Gathering is not a just a gathering event on the stage, but more of a re-presentation of what already has happened in the pre gatherings where the trust and relationship among the Jews and Arabic leaders and the key leaders from the nations have been established at a family / covenant level.

In summary, we His family are preparing a dwelling place for our Father to dwell among us as His children; for Christ our King to rule and reign among us, and for His global Bride to be prepared, as we brothers and sisters from the nations and from Israel love each other as one family.

That is our vision for China and our prayer for Australia and New Zealand, and all the Asian Pacific nations.

Shalom,

Roy Zhang

On behalf of Rev Dr Gideon Chiu



The **Centre for Public Christianity** (CPX) is a not-for-profit media company that offers a Christian perspective on contemporary life. We seek to promote the public understanding of the Christian faith by engaging mainstream media and the general public with high quality and well-researched print, video and audio material about the relevance of Christianity in the 21st century.

Check latest events at <http://publicchristianity.org/about>

## Jesus the King of Truth – a Public Matter

Before the Roman Governor Pilate, Jesus testified to being a King on a mission. He said quite simply to Pilate that his mission was ‘to testify to the truth’ (John 18:37) adding that everyone on the side of truth would listen to him. Jesus stepped into public life, to private lives, to every life and brought life with him. Jesus also made a public stand on unpopular truths often offending the religious community at that time because his stated mission was to testify to the truth.

Ironically the person we know as ‘The Truth’ (John 14:6) was crucified for the crime of blasphemy (John 10:33). It seems to me that truth, in its many forms, continues to be publicly crucified and an alarming number of people today are still being slaughtered for ‘blasphemy’. Selah.

Just as those who loved him most dearly stood by his side at the cross, the church is also called to take that posture today; to stand on the side of truth - especially with those suffering *for* the truth. The idea of taking sides is inherently political and unpopular, and yet it is also quite Biblical. This is not a rigid right/left stance of course; it’s about standing by *his* side, wherever *he* is. Truth does have a position and it’s our mission to find it. If we are to be like him, surely we will also testify to the truth.

Engagement in the political domain by followers of ‘The Truth’ is so very critical today. The Scriptures are clear that truth is intimately acquainted with freedom and freedom is both personal and political. As Jesus and many other religious minorities have found, exercising personal freedoms, particularly freedom of belief and freedom of speech, may result in political consequences. One could go as far as saying life itself is political.

The Apostle Paul tells us that ‘it is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm then and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery’ (Galatians 5:1). ‘Stand firm on freedom’ is the central message. In fact the whole Biblical narrative is about a journey to freedom. The Israelites escaped physical slavery in Egypt and this paints a picture of the realistic struggles others encounter in their escape from spiritual slavery. We are told to keep our eyes up and fixed upon the ‘free Jerusalem above’ who is ‘our mother’ (Galatians 4:26). We really were born to be free! But this wonderful gift we enjoy called freedom was intended to be publicly shared for the benefit of all and also for the preservation of freedom itself.

Whether its drug or porn addiction enslaving citizens; slavery to one’s own life at the expense of caring for the lives of the unborn and elderly; slavery to the dollar; sex slavery or groups like ISIS who are slaves to cruel and demented doctrines that sanction the enslavement and persecution of others; there has never been a better time than now to raise the banner for truth in the public domain as the guardian of freedom.

Using our public voice is both a privilege and a responsibility. To remain silent may not just be irresponsible, but may be judged as a sin. Yes, we can sin through our silence by neglecting to speak up and tell the truth ‘when we hear a public charge that isn’t true.’ (Leviticus 5:1) That’s a weighty thought!

Think about the unborn children that currently have no dignity or right to life.

The law tells us that their life doesn’t count. How many Victorian’s remain silent about the physical dismembering and abortion of healthy unborn children which may be legal right up to the time of their birth in Victoria? Perhaps God may count this silence as a sin against us? Could the church be collectively guilty of expending time and money to fill churches while remaining silent about this callous cruelty toward the unborn? It appears that being a voice for Godly morality that values all life as inherently precious may be an offense and too sensitive to mention, while taking innocent life does not offend. Do we offend God? If the church is commissioned to save life shouldn’t it be a voice to save these precious infants too?

I was reminded recently that we are not a secular democracy at all but rather a representative democracy. Shouldn’t Christians be representing the most vulnerable in society by exercising their God given freedom to speak? Is this a talent we should bury? (Mathew 25:25)

There is a high cost to not exercising our Christian responsibility and democratic right as citizens to speak up; not only are innocent lives cut off in our own cities but around the world people are being tormented day and night by persecutors who neither know nor love the truth or freedom. Life and liberty is at stake.

What we are witnessing in the heart of the current global terrorism tsunami is the same silencing spirit that leads to

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## Jesus the King of Truth – a Public Matter (...continued)

death. It manifests in a revival of ancient blasphemy and apostasy laws. We should learn from world events that silencing people and forbidding freedom of belief and expression only leads to totalitarianism.

Muslim Brotherhood leader Yusuf Qaradawi told Arabic TV, “If (they Muslims) had gotten rid of the punishment (usually death) for apostasy, Islam would not exist today.” Nonie Darwish adds “Repression is a sign of philosophical weakness...only systems that can survive in openness and freedom can be considered strong, for freedom is actually the furnace in which systems and ideas are tested.”\*

That was the same furnace prepared for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Yet they were free enough in themselves to step into it when judged and tested as ‘apostates and blasphemers’. They stood firm and were rewarded for this.

### The societal pillars of truth and freedom must be upheld ... it is silence that consents to the construction of the house of totalitarianism.

There is nothing new under the sun. The societal pillars of truth and freedom must be upheld or totalitarianism will reign; in Biblical speak that’s bondage. Whether it’s the rise of Leftism silencing any critique of current abortion legislation, or critique of the fatherless and motherless children produced as a result of same-sex parenting, or the rise of Islamism calling for international criminalisation of speech against Islam - it is silence that consents to the construction of the house of totalitarianism.

The pillars of the Islamist house should come as no surprise: they are blasphemy and apostasy laws; minds and tongues committed to silence. While the free lay down their life to uphold truth and freedom, blasphemy and apostasy laws take the lives of people for exercising this freedom. One law gives life and the other takes it. The Samson weapon that will pull down those Islamist pillars of blasphemy and apostasy is freedom. Who can understand this if not the people of truth? Who else is better positioned to be a public voice on life, liberty, faith and family?

We should remind ourselves that all laws are based on some moral or ethical premise. Jesus’ followers who exempt themselves from interest in public life are merely leaving the impartation of morals and ethics to others. Economics is also based on a philosophy that the Bible speaks to. If the Biblical standard is that ‘children should not have to save up for the parents, but parents for the children’ (2 Corinthians 12:14) should we remain silent in the face of legislation that may result in what former Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson described as intergenerational theft? If we seek an inheritance our self should we not be prepared to leave one for the next generation? Our silence is not good enough when we follow the one who embodies ‘the Word of truth’.

The church is called to be a prophetic voice in society and is a guardian of spiritual truth. Should we be in the public square? The good book says ‘Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty’ (2 Corinthians 3:17). If the spirit of the Lord is not in the public square can we really expect to enjoy liberty? Shouldn’t our mission be to make sure it is!

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\* <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/3572/islam-apostasy-death>

## National Day of Prayer for Defence 2015 - Saturday, 28 March 2015

The Military Christian Fellowship of Australia is hosting a National Day of Prayer for Defence on **Saturday, 28 March 2015**.

Additional information is available on the Military Christian Fellowship of Australia website ([www.mcf-a.org.au](http://www.mcf-a.org.au)).

Contact Officer: Mrs Lisa Thomas

Military Christian Fellowship National Staff Worker

Telephone: 02 6266 4950

Email: [mcf.office@defence.gov.au](mailto:mcf.office@defence.gov.au)



## Beyond The Walls

By Andre Van Eymeren

A few weeks ago I had the honour of attending a World Vision Australia (<http://goo.gl/mdPRq4>) Conference, themed *Beyond our Walls*. It was a gathering of Church leaders, not that I consider myself a church leader, although according to Parker Palmer and his book on vocation, *Let Your Life Speak*, we are all leaders from where we sit. The gathering essentially a collection of World Vision partners was in part a thank you for the support and also an encouragement to move beyond the traditional walls that the church has erected for itself, which is the space that World Vision often occupies as it seeks to resource development around the world.

To aid in this exploration World Vision commissioned the McCrindle Group (<http://www.mccrindle.com.au/>) to do some research on the Church's perception of the community, as well as the community's perception of the church. The findings have been compiled into the Church Communities Australia Report.

The good news is that respondents are saying that the church is doing positive things. However it goes down hill from there. These good things don't seem to have relevance for them as individuals or their family, particularly when it comes to 7 key areas including their; spiritual, mental, social, relational, vocational, financial and physical wellbeing. This despite 61.1% of the population identifying as Christian. The research showed that over a month only 15% of the population will attend church at least once. 85% won't enter a church, so as a culture bearer, the church's voice and influence is diminishing.

The research went onto explore the blockers to engagement on both sides of the wall. From the community's side there is a poor perception of church. Tod Samson, a leading Australian Marketer and presenter with the Gruen Transfer (<http://goo.gl/CzcVd>) was stated as saying in effect, that Australians love the product but not the retail outlet. The church is seen as exclusive and that it just does its own thing. It's also seen as hypocritical. Other factors for non-engagement include a lack of relevance and people's general busyness.

From the church's side, reasons stated for non-engagement include busyness, fear and a lack of confidence. Perhaps feeding into the lack of confidence there are deeper issues at play that church leaders would be perhaps unaware of or at least reluctant to explore in such a survey. One of these is discipleship, which is the teaching, training and mentoring of someone to emulate a master. In the church's case that master is Jesus. He models world engagement in his approach to the poor and marginalized of his day. In subtle and not so subtle ways he challenged the systemic evil that prevented people from moving out of poverty. He was a proponent of an alternate politic, an upside down worldview if you like that saw the marginalized empowered to participate in society.

I see one of the key things missing for the church is a robust understanding or theology of these things and God's broader concerns (including but not only personal salvation) and the lack of a spirituality that allows these things to be shown as inherently relevant to the world around us.

The research snapshot finished with a look from the church perspective on how responsive church ministries, services, communication and outreach were to church attendees (93%), local community (74%), 21st Century context (64%) and global events (57%). Again the sliding scale could indicate a number of things from busyness to a poor understanding or even lack of desire to engage with ideas and programs outside of the immediate needs of the congregation.

The news for the church isn't all doom and gloom. Long time ABC journalist John Cleary pointed out that journalists as a group are not biased against the church, but they look to maintain a critical distance as part of a search for truth. They are not there to tell anyone's story as such but to portray that truth. Unfortunately the caveat to this is that journalists working in a commercial framework are prisoners of the guidelines they are given. Also by nature they are suspicious of anyone that appears to be trying to sell them something. Cleary exhorted the leaders in

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## Beyond The Walls (...continued)

the room to remember that we are 2-3 generations on from the church and the world being able to communicate effectively and that the church's message will not be conceptually understood and in fact it might even be the wrong message.

Where once the community was happy with right belief being expressed, people now more than ever are looking for right action. The conference was very grateful for the presence of Deputy Opposition Leader Tanya Plibersek, who had asked for special leave from parliament to attend. Carrying personal integrity, sincere genuineness and a willingness to listen, Tanya provided a light to what has become a very dark political landscape. She encouraged the church to pick up on issues that show this right action, such as entrenched

**Where once the community was happy with right belief being expressed, people now more than ever are looking for right action.**

poverty, equitable access to schooling and for the church to join with community leaders that speak up for those who don't have a voice. Interviewed by Tim Costello, Tanya expressed her dismay at the lack of response from the Australian community to the \$11.2 Billion cut from the foreign aid budget. She commented that whilst Labor was committed to getting back to the target 0.5% of GDP it would take some time, should they come to power at the next election.

Tim Costello, CEO of World Vision, well known in the media as preacher and activist wrapped the conference up well. His summary included the comment that preaching only makes sense in context, effectively in the context of action. If the church adopts this, then it and the community may be able to move to a point of meeting, perhaps just outside the walls or even on the boundary.

*Andre is an experienced community development consultant, trainer and practitioner. Over the past 20 years he has been part of building community from the inside. This has seen him and his family live and work in marginalised and hurting communities in South Australia and Victoria. Added to this Andre has been involved in projects across Australia, working extensively with local councils, schools, faith groups and the not for profit sector. He holds an undergraduate in Ministry and an MA focused on faith and community development.*

## GOD KNOWS

- \* **When you are tired and discouraged from fruitless efforts...**
- \* **God knows how hard you have tried.**
- \* **When you've cried so long and your heart is in anguish...**
- \* **God has counted your tears.**
- \* **If you feel that your life is on hold and time has passed you by...**
- \* **God is waiting with you.**
- \* **When you're lonely and your friends are too busy even for a phone call...**
- \* **God is by your side.**
- \* **When you think you've tried everything and don't know where to turn...**
- \* **God has a solution.**
- \* **When nothing makes sense and you are confused or frustrated...**
- \* **God has the answer.**

- \* **If suddenly your outlook is brighter and you find traces of hope...**
- \* **God has whispered to you.**
- \* **When things are going well and you have much to be thankful for...**
- \* **God has blessed you.**
- \* **When something joyful happens and you are filled with awe...**
- \* **God has smiled upon you.**
- \* **When you have a purpose to fulfill and a dream to follow...**
- \* **God has opened your eyes and called you by name.**
- \* **Remember that wherever you are or whatever you are facing...**
- \* **GOD KNOWS!!!**

*Love and Shalom  
In Jesus Christ  
Pastor Paul Ciniraj & Mercy Ciniraj,  
Baseeliya, Devalokam (P.O),  
Kottayam-686004, Kerala, INDIA.  
<http://pciniraj.wordpress.com>*

## My Best Friend Has Bipolar

by Anonymous

### Introduction

I hope as you are reading this, that you are one of the 'lucky ones', untouched by mental illness. In church it's easy to see someone who has a broken arm, receive prayer and healing. It is much harder for the 'church' to pray for someone with an illness unseen - a broken mind. Mental illness carries a lot of shame within society. It remains hidden in our churches. In this age of fractured family values and the 'christian family unit' so often broken, churches should be equipping themselves with tools to heal the broken-of-mind, and understanding mental illness. It should be in every church's interest.

Here are some statistics for Australia (source [www.blackdoginstitute.org.au](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au)):

*Depression has a high lifetime prevalence - one in seven Australians will experience depression in their lifetime. Depression has the third highest burden of all diseases in Australia (13.3%)*

*Bipolar I disorder may be experienced by up to 1% Australians over their lifetime. The lifetime risk of Bipolar II disorder is up to 5% (with rates higher in women).*

*Men are at greatest risk of suicide but least likely to seek help. In 2010 men accounted for over three-quarters (76.9%) of deaths from suicide however, an estimated 72% of males don't seek help for mental disorders.*

*Attempted suicide is also an important issue with estimates that in Australia over 60,000 people a year attempt to take their own lives, the majority being women. It is recognised that the number of suicides and attempted suicides is likely to be underreported for a number of reasons including the practical problems of determining a person's intentions, reporting problems and the stigma around suicide and self-harm.*

### My Story

My best friend, my husband, has Bipolar. I've lived with it for 15 years. The ups are always so exciting and the downs are so demoralising and depressing, sometimes suicidal.

I was always attracted to 'adventure' and always been a bit of 'thrill seeker' within limits of my own boundaries. So when I met this handsome man in church one day, I found him 'exciting.' Each time that we went out he was 'thrilling to be with'. It was like being on a ride. When he was 'high' he was full of life, adventure, goals, dreams, vision, and extremely creative. He spoke like an Evangelist and was good looking and smart. Was this too good to be true? Reality was; yes it was too good to be true. What was hiding behind that big smile, on the inside was a person hiding their 'down' to the world. I didn't realise his up personality was actually 'mania'. I didn't know anything about mental illness and just thought something was a bit 'weird' about him but nothing that Jesus couldn't heal.

**What was hiding behind that big smile, on the inside was a person hiding their 'down' to the world.**

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bipolar\\_disorder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bipolar_disorder));

*Bipolar disorder, also known as bipolar affective disorder, is a mental disorder characterized by periods of elevated mood and periods of depression.*

*The elevated mood is significant and is known as mania or hypomania depending on the severity or whether there is psychosis. During mania an individual feels or acts abnormally happy, energetic, or irritable. They often make poorly thought out decisions with little regard to the consequences. The need for sleep is usually reduced. During periods of depression there may be crying, poor eye contact with others, and a negative outlook on life. The risk of suicide among those with the disorder is high at greater than 6% over 20 years, while self-harm occurs in 30-40%.*

The old saying 'what comes up must come down' is a fitting metaphor for Bipolar disorder. I suppose it's similar to someone drinking and being the life of the party, then the next day being hung-over, except brain chemistry instead of alcohol (or it's spiritual depression). Depending on how bad the person has it they can go up and down a few times in a day. One episode could be a few days, a week, a month.....

There is always the thrill of the up, however long it lasts for. A few hours, a few days, it's like being at a nonstop party. Usually there can be non-stop staying awake 24-48 hours. It's a 'manic creative time'. I read an article once that said people with bipolar while on an 'up' usually think they have super-powers or are super-human. My man is a super-achiever. His mind is like a super computer at times. I accounted his 'weirdness' to his extremely creative and genius personality. There's nothing wrong I assured myself about his "downtime" and we got married after a whirlwind romance.

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## My Best Friend Has Bipolar (...continued)

I suppose we didn't address his personality sooner as the 'up' was usually used for business (great results and success were achieved). No-one questioned his all-night work ethic (and all day as well). When he got great results he was applauded in front of church for his 'successes'. The world was watching, we were riding the 'high' but we were also riding the 'lows' and it was the 'big secret' that no-one knew about, except our closest friends.

I don't remember a time when he has been able to 'will-fully' get himself out of a depression. We have prayed, and prayed, and prayed. We have just 'ridden the wave' of depression over and over again for years until we sought help. I feel like I have been weathered by these storms of depression over the years. After each one passes, I ask, How many more Lord? Is this the last one? When is he going to be completely healed from this illness? Is he going to come out of it? Do I have to rise up and take over the leadership of the family while he hides in a hole of depression again? My mind struggles to find answers. I rode the waves for so long because the ups were always so thrilling. It made the downs not look so bad, or at least they could be ignored as I knew they would pass. There would be an awakening soon. An up was on the rise (sooner or later). If I only knew we could have gotten help.

Because of these 'lows' I didn't know about mental illness the only thing I knew to do with him but drag him to church and get the pastors to pray over him. Some of the lows were manic-depressive, some even suicidal and he would sleep for days after a manic 'up' episode. I would not see him for days as he was hiding/sleeping in his bed being manic depressed. I would put on a false smile so everyone thought we were ok. I would find activities for the kids to do, so they wouldn't miss him too much. I would just cover for him and tell people, "He's not feeling well". Sometimes he was so manic, depressed and crying there was no way he could turn up and do a 'normal' days' work.

I'm an organised personality type some of the time. I would find that he was leading the household when he was up but when he was down I would suddenly be the leader. The 'man of the house had disappeared, down an emotional pit. I managed; the household, the children and looked after 'Daddy'. I explained to everyone that he's not feeling well, and that's why we would cancel at the last minute, not turn up for social events, miss church, and be out of contact.

I would feel like a single mother. I would be on my own - running around with my children for a few days of the week - until he would awaken from his depression. I was on my own a lot as no one really understands mental health issues unless they have been there. Unfortunately it carried a lot of shame from the community, friends and family (and church members). Many people do not understand bipolar. People think he just needs to 'get over it and get back to work'. Or 'just memorise scriptures' and you will be healed etc. Unfortunately because of his condition he has pushed lots of friends away so we don't really have many anymore. He is uncomfortable in social settings and in family gatherings so we don't do them. If anyone got too close they would find out he wasn't 'normal', oh the shame that carried.

***Many people do not understand bipolar. People think he just needs to 'get over it and get back to work'. Or 'just memorise scriptures' and you will be healed***

All I could do was pray that he would 'get out of the depression'. Sometimes the depressions were extremely severe and I would start to think 'what if he doesn't get out of this depression'? Does that mean that I would have to go out and get a job and also run the household? I was deeply concerned. Riding on the 'rollercoaster of emotions' of his life.

Out of our married life, 15 years, I think perhaps 5 of those years he has been in depression.

I tried the 'faith' movement on him. The 'say it, believe it, claim it', but it didn't work. I found that certain people or situations would trigger him into an up or trigger him into depression. His cup was ½ empty most of the time (negative), instead of ½ full (positive mind-set). My mind-set was always positive and I didn't understand what was going on in his mind for him to be so depressed and negative. I just thought Jesus was going to heal him. Why not? My Jesus was big enough to heal him. Jesus was my strong tower through those years. I always believed; "One day he will be healed, and we can start moving forward in our destiny."

The trouble was that wasn't God's plan for him. I got a prophetic word once in a private prayer group that Jesus wasn't going to heal my husband the way I thought. Jesus was going to heal him alongside medical intervention. I was so devastated. It was the one thread that was holding our marriage together, my strong tower was crumbling. At home his bipolar was getting worse. Under that smiling face was someone that was suicidal, and he had been for a long time. The thought crossed my mind. "What if he did commit suicide" - what awful heart-wrenching thought. We all love him dearly, doesn't he know it? Everything looks fine on the outside, why was he thinking to think such dark thoughts?

As I internet searched depression I found a few sites. Then I found [www.beyondblue.com.au](http://www.beyondblue.com.au). There I rang a number and spoke to someone that advised me to seek medical help for my husband.

The person on the other end of the phone asked me if I was superwoman? How was I looking after the household and the

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## My Best Friend Has Bipolar (...continued)

children and looking after my manic husband with no skills or training on depression or suicide? There was help on the outside, that I didn't know about and it was only a few phone calls away. There were even help-groups (that I never got to) for families with mental illness. That meant I'm not the only to have a family member go through a mental illness. I suddenly found I was not on my own. I wish someone had told me 15 years ago, how to heal bipolar.

We also found [www.blackdoginstitute.org.au](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au) website that is a helpful information centre for depression. We printed mood charts, and he mapped his behaviour over a few weeks. For the first time in our marriage, he saw his behaviour was manic. Before he did these charts he thought his behaviour was 'normal'.

My husband was put on a 'medical plan' and medicated. It sounds awful, but it's not, it's a process, and we have been able to pray through every step of the way with him. For the first month he was a zombie and sleep a month away, he looked like he was 'drugged'. Then slowly he became 'normalised'. He has been stable now for one year. If he misses his medicine, it is pretty obvious as after a few days the maniac is back. Most people that are manic don't believe they are. They don't think they need help.

My husband is still creative. The medication has not stopped him being creative, nor smart. It just makes the highs less high and the lows less low, which means my husband is no longer suicidal.

A "Medical Plan" means calling [beyondblue.com.au](http://beyondblue.com.au) and finding a 'mental health GP' in your area. The GP then goes about finding a specialist for the condition, a physiologist and also a counsellor. This 3- way accountability means that the person stays on track with the medical plan.

Here are some things I have found on the journey. Hopefully this is of some help.

- They don't remember the depression or how dark the depression is or how long it goes for when they awaken from it.
- I have found that they need to 'brain dump' everything that is going on their minds, good and bad and talk them out. If they cannot talk about things, get them to write them down on a piece of paper and work through them. A lot of things he thinks about are easily resolved to my mind but not to his. If they want to keep it private, get them to do a mind map of everything they are thinking and talk it out with a counsellor. Even once a day, if they are thinking too much.
- Learn what their emotional triggers are. A trigger is something that reminds them of a past trauma. It could be a person, a place, events or situation with an emotional response. A trigger can cause them to feel overwhelmed with an over-emotional response.
- I don't know what to do (except pray) most of the time, so I ask him to ask Jesus to help. Jesus is helping us one day at a time.
- Don't be on your own, find a spirit-filled counsellor. Get some friends or prayer group at church to pray and intercede with you while you are on your journey of healing. Seek help while you are feeling 'well'. The little steps to healing, are big steps in the eyes of God.

*My husband was put on a 'medical plan' and medicated. It sounds awful, but it's not, it's a process, and we have been able to pray through every step of the way with him.*

*Just step out of the dark. Into the light and Jesus will shine on you.*

If you are feeling suicidal contact Lifeline's 24 hour crisis support service on 13 11 14 or seek immediate help from a GP, psychiatrist or a psychologist.

**Generate** is the premier provider of School Chaplains in NSW, managing over 150 Federal Government Funded School Chaplaincies.

Generate partners with schools in the recruitment, training, supervision and ongoing professional development of School Chaplains. This ensures the placement of high quality Christian Chaplains who are well equipped to support young people and strengthen local communities.

Transforming Sydney is partnering with Generate to bring awareness of the role of Chaplains and the great opportunity for local combined churches to place Generate-employed SRE (Scripture) teachers in NSW state secondary schools.

For more information and how to help please go to

[www.generate.org.au](http://www.generate.org.au)





# Monthly Update



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2015

BCC Outreach Ministry

P. O. Box-11 • Khulna-9202 • Bangladesh.

## NEWS THIS MONTH

### Mission Trip Big Success in Nepal

“Of all the mission trip I’ve taken, this year’s was the best,” remarked Rev. Mike Murray on Thursday night as he reflected on the trip. Indeed, it was a good trip as the team of five taught in the Bible School along with teaching at three seminars plus area churches.

**Ministry Team:** Newton Sarkar, Rev. Jeffrey Oo. Rev, Carl. Rev, Mike. Rev, Gosto.

The team spent one week in Chobar, Nepal at Blessed Bible School where they taught Christian leadership and Bible to 12 student pastors.

The largest gathering was with Teens for Christ, a one day seminar where 214 teens were present. All five taught on Christian commitment.

There was also a pastor’s seminar on Sunday, February 1 at Prerana Church in Kathmandu with 68 present. The program concluded with a Woman’s Conference at Anugrah Full Gospel Fellowship which had more men in attendance than women.

The team spent most of the time teaching and preaching. But there was time for fun and fellowship. They toured several of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the Kathmandu Valley.

The team arrived January 28th and departed Feb. 13th. The annual event significantly impacted Christians in Nepal, especially leaders.

## IN PICTURES



**Pastor Newton is Preaching in Pastor’s and Leaders Conference in Katmandu, Nepal.**



**Pastor Newton from Bangladesh, speaks to the students at Blessed Bible School in Chobar, Nepal.**



**Seems like food and Christianity go together as there was plenty of food abound at event. The Youth Conference of Feb. 8th was well attended by 214 youths in a program Teens for Christ Nepal.**

## OTHER’S

If you have a heart and calling for ‘Missions’ we have a **vacancy** for Director of Operations to oversee the work in our Mission Fields. Please email or write to us (address below).

If God is stirring your heart today to help His people and you would like to go out to the mission fields to touch and change lives, please do contact us. Do continue to pray for us in your churches, homes, cell groups and family altars. If you would like us to pray for you, do drop us a line or leave a message on Facebook and we will be happy to pray for you. As God moves you to sow into His Kingdom and you wish to contribute to our ministry, please send cheques/money order to:

**BANGLADESH COMMUNITY CHURCH.**

Address: Flat: 10/B/1.  
Rupali Building.  
Lake City Concord.  
Khilketh. Dhaka-1229.  
Bangladesh.

Email: [bccbangla@gmail.com](mailto:bccbangla@gmail.com)

Bank Account holder:  
Newton Sarkar

Bank Account No:  
120-101-43331

Name & Address of Bank:  
Dutch Bangla Bank Ltd  
(Khulna Branch)  
Khulna, Bangladesh.

(PLEASE EMAIL BANK-IN SLIP TO US)

Swift Code: DBBLBDDH



**BCC MINISTRY IN BANGLADESH**

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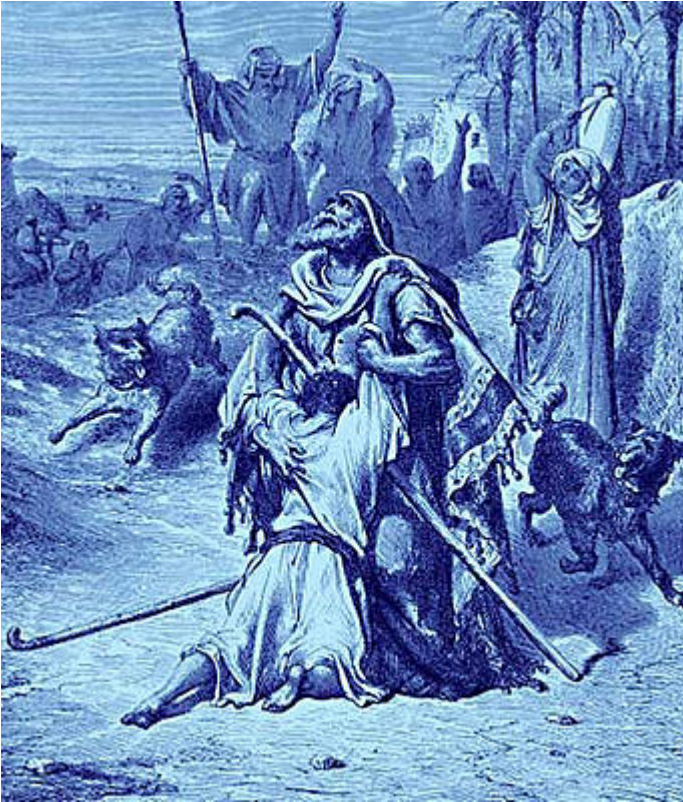
**Pastor Newton Sarkar**

### **Prayer Request & Thanks Giving !!!**

1. Thank to God for our save Journey and God has given lot of Blessings.
2. Please Pray for Nepali Pastor’s and Leaders that God will give them more resource.

## The Prodigal Son

By Fr Yuhanna Azize



### 8 March 2015 (Sunday of the Prodigal Son)

This parable is so well known that one can almost say it is too well known. A man has two sons, one of them is restless, takes his share of the estate early, leaves the parental home, wastes every cent he has been given in a squalid and carnal lifestyle, but then “comes back to himself”. He wakes up to who and what he has become. He returns to his father, expecting nothing, but being welcomed with open arms, generous gifts, and most of all, unconditional love.

This evening, I would like to take one aspect of it which is too much overlooked, and that is the reaction of the elder son, the one who stayed at home, and who, when his younger brother returned, became jealous and bitter, reproaching his father with playing favourites.

It is intrinsic to the nature of parables that the story is, in sense, mystical: it works on several levels. On one level, this parable is about Jewish history (the younger son is Israel, while the elder is Judah). At another level, it is about Christian history, where the younger brother represents people like us, the Gentiles, and the elder brother represents the Jews, who felt that it was not right that Our Lord should proclaim salvation to the Gentiles. Now, however, I will focus on the envy and the bitterness of the elder brother.

Each Sunday we have to place ourselves in the Gospel of the day, and we can easily enough see ourselves as the Prodigal Son. But although it may not be so obvious, and even less welcome, we are also each in the position of the elder son. Every living person has felt jealousy and envy, and anyone who imagines that they have not, is deluding

themselves.

Some people are jealous about good looks: I remember two solicitors I worked with. Both of them were considered good looking, but one of them was widely seen as rather stunning. The other one was envious of her, and never lost a chance to run her down. She never said that she was jealous. She certainly never even referred to the woman’s looks. But she often criticised her work, and what she said and did. Further, she was patently vain and competitive. Everyone at the office could see what was going on: they said that if the first one hadn’t been so good looking the other one would not have been concerned to run her down.

Other people are more inclined to become jealous about money and careers: they get disappointed and bitter, if someone does better than themselves. I once heard someone say: “I went to university to get a good job, and that idiot got off the boat from Lebanon, yet he could buy and sell me from his spare change.” It happened to me once that I went for a job, didn’t even receive an interview, and the next thing I knew, someone with half my qualifications had bagged it and sent a self-congratulatory email. I must admit, I did express my jealousy, but once I had, I was ashamed, and I hope that I have changed or at least am changing.

Rest assured, at least once in our lives, we will all get jealous: sometimes it is something as small as the fact that someone is speaking with someone we like. It’s as if we make an unspoken demand that people can’t be friends unless we give them permission. We say: “Can’t she see through him? Can’t she see what he’s after? I am genuine, but that person is a fake.” Or we get jealous if we buy something for \$100 and then someone buys the same thing for \$50.

Although we all feel jealousy, our minds are very good at disguising it. We don’t admit that it’s jealousy we feel: we say that the other person hasn’t deserved what he has. We say that it is unfair that this person should have advantages and promotions handed to them, and other people who work harder and have more merit, get none of them. We disguise our jealousy by saying that we’re not jealous for our own sakes, we’re concerned about fairness to others.

Whatever excuse we give, whatever pretext we can come up with, we should never forget that jealousy is a sin because jealousy leads to resentment, resentment leads to hate, and hate kills love stone dead in our souls.

We are responsible for what we do, and others are responsible for what they do. We cannot judge others, much less condemn them. We don’t stand in their shoes, to fully understand their mind, their motives and their intentions. Much less do we stand in the place of God to judge their consciences.

We need to expose the roots of our jealousy. That means trying to weed out the pride and selfishness which leads to the belief that I should receive everything just because it is me, and I am special. I need to see that I am ordinary, and that to be ordinary is to be loved by God – and to return that love is all that really counts.

To return to the parable, the Prodigal Son was not suffering from jealousy when he returned to his Father. Why not? Be-

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## The Prodigal Son (...continued)

cause he had found humility. He had overcome selfishness.

To end on a practical note, we could take one occasion when I have been jealous of someone, and even if I cannot change my jealousy to love on demand, I can say a small prayer for them, and I can ask God to bless them. If I can do that once, the second time I do it, it will be easier. And eventually, we will overcome jealousy, and like the Prodigal Son, we will have the humility to return to the Father seeking forgiveness of sins.

*In Memoriam.*



*The two spider webs in this picture appeared on the Sunday morning of our recent spiritual retreat for those discerning vocations to the priesthood (22 February 2015).*

### **“He came back to himself”**

The above was delivered as a sermon on the Sunday of the Parable Son (Luke 15:11-32), in the Season of Lent. Rather than tamper with its integrity, I will elaborate one vital idea in this extended footnote.

The critical turning point in the parable comes when the Prodigal Son is said to have “come back to himself”. This is his awakening. Translations of Luke 15:17 are diverse. Some miss the mark altogether with renderings such as “When he came to his senses ...” Most, however, such as the KJV, read: “And when he came to himself ...” Perhaps more artistically, the Douay-Rheims offers: “And returning to himself ...”. This achieves the right effect, because the

inner action of awaken-ing to God is both a lifting of the spirit, and a returning to a place we have in our souls, but from which we have become estranged.

The Greek phrase is *eis heauton de elthōn* ... “to himself re-turning, or coming”. The verb in question, *erkhomai*, does not mean “to come”, the way that the English verb does. Rather, it has the root sense of “arriving or moving to a destination”, and so the dictionary glosses it as “come, go back, return”.

“Coming to one’s senses” just means having a sane idea. It is not sufficient, in this context, to convey the truth that we are made for God, and to desire to be with him for eternity. It is inadequate to express that only spiritual joys are completely satisfying, and that carnal pleasures bear in themselves the seeds of disillusionment (a truth which Buddhism understands, but which, by and large, modern philosophy has missed).

If we are satisfied with creature comforts and worldly pleasures and excitements, it is because we have unnaturally narrowed our world, we have lowered the skies above our heads. But the real me and the real you wants God because He is perfect and complete reality. We are made to desire that unity with Him which is appropriate for us in our condition.

We do not know the greatness of that unity: but something within us senses that it is an enticing and all-desirable mystery. To deny this is to wilfully close one’s eyes to the light we have within. St Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians prays for his friends: “That Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts; that being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth; to know also the charity of Christ, which surpasses all knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.” (3:17-19)

To “come to myself”, then, means to no longer be turned out-wards to and identified with the changing world of distractions, addictions and fascinations, but rather, to be grounded in the soul, which is made for God and knows that.

In the terms of the parable, we are living in a “far country” whenever we are lost in passion, caught up by the momentum of our associations, or swept along by uncontrollable emotions. We register that we are trapped. Our only chance is to “return to ourselves”. That means to turn to God.

The way to “myself” cannot be taught in words. It is learning how to gather myself, collect myself, and raise my sights, by the grace of God. It is a supernatural road which begins for us wherever we are. But we must seek it and walk it in faith.

*This was written by a Maronite priest. Of your mercy, please pray for him.*

## SPIRITUAL AWAKENING - PART 2

(by Ps Trevor Bartley)

As we change, so the church changes and, ultimately, the world changes, as we become more like Christ, so the church increasingly reveals her high calling as the Bride of Christ and as more and more people are attracted into a relationship with Christ, so society itself comes to look more and more like the Kingdom of God. Can any calling be higher than this? Can any ambition be more magnificent?

What does the Bible tell us to do about a spiritual awakening?

### Romans 13:11-14

*Besides this you know what [a critical] hour this is, how it is high time now for you to wake up out of your sleep (rouse to reality). For salvation (final deliverance) is nearer to us now than when we first believed (adhered to, trusted in, and relied on Christ, the Messiah).*

*12 The night is far gone and the day is almost here. Let us then drop (fling away) the works and deeds of darkness and put on the [full] armor of light.*

*13 Let us live and conduct ourselves honorably and becomingly as in the [open light of] day, not in reveling (carousing) and drunkenness, not in immorality and debauchery (sensuality and licentiousness), not in quarreling and jealousy.*

*14 But clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah), and make no provision for [indulging] the flesh [put a stop to thinking about the evil cravings of your physical nature] to [gratify its] desires (lusts).*

After you pray this prayer have a time of reflection, think about making a physical and spiritual motion of surrendering to Jesus and changing your perspective on what a true spiritual awaking really means for you.

### Prayer

*Loving Heavenly Father, we pray that by your Holy Spirit, we your people may be moved to take hold of the deep unity that you have so graciously given us already in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*Mould your church into a living unity transcending race, class, denomination and all else that divides us and continues to tear apart the Body of Christ in this age.*

*We thank you for that immeasurable love through which, in the Cross of your dear Son, you made possible our unity in His Body, the church, and we stand in awe as we contemplate both the joy and privilege of being part of His Body and the responsibility of being the arms, legs and mouth of Christ in today's world.*

*Forgive us the sin of forgetting this great fact. Forgive us for so often treading underfoot your gift as we allow worldly divisions and prejudices to set us against our fellow Christians, and thereby tearing apart Christ's body and frustrate your work of reconciling the world to yourself and its people to each other in your family. Forgive us for continually going our own way and following our own plans and desires.*

*Remove from us all worldliness and pride, from which strife and division proceed. Lead us to always put your will before our own plans and desires. Mercifully grant us true repentance and so lead us to experience that glorious fellowship and profound unity of spirit, mind and will that we can enjoy when we focus on you. In Jesus name we earnestly pray. Amen.*

Play a reflective song like – Healing prayer.

### A TIME OF SELF EXAMINATION

Reflect on the past week, asking yourselves whether there have been times of spiritual growth or of stumbling.

What has assisted in your growth?

What has been a cause for stumbling?

Have you been a faithful witness for Christ?

Commit these questions to the Lord honestly and allow Him to reveal to you the growth arias and help you overcome the arias you stumbled in. By committing yourself to evaluating you days you are heading towards a life of spiritual

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## SPIRITUAL AWAKENING - PART 2 (...continued)

awakening. So many times we just go about our life without ever seriously considering our spiritual and physical walk until something goes wrong.

Start a daily time of examination of the previous day and a time of meditation.

*The key to finding a true spiritual awakening is in hearing the voice of God and submitting to that voice.*

### A TIME OF MEDITATION

Meditation what is it? – How many of you think it is a mystical thing?

I believe that the one area we are not disciplined in enough, is mediation and spending time with God in His quiet place. The key to finding a true spiritual awakening is in hearing the voice of God and submitting to that voice. Let me spend some time helping you with some disciplines in meditation. If it helps I have written a book on 'How can I hear the voice of God?' This is found on my website [trevorbartleyministries.org](http://trevorbartleyministries.org)

#### Psalm 1:1-3 AMP

*Blessed (happy, fortunate, prosperous, and enviable) is the man who walks and lives not in the counsel of the ungodly [following their advice, their plans and purposes], nor stands [submissive and inactive] in the path where sinners walk, nor sits down [to relax and rest] where the scornful [and the mockers] gather. But his delight and desire are in the law of the Lord, and on His law (the precepts, the instructions, the teachings of God) he habitually meditates (ponders and studies) day and night. And he shall be like a tree firmly planted [and tended] by the streams of water, ready to bring forth its fruit in its season; its leaf also shall not fade or wither; and everything he does shall prosper [and come to maturity].*

In the original Hebrew, the word for meditation means:

To murmur, to ponder, imagine, mourn, mutter, roar, speak, study, talk, utter, to converse with oneself and hence aloud, to contemplate, commune, complain, declare, meditate, muse, pray, talk with, to revolve in the mind, to premeditate.

The emphasis is consistently on speaking the Word out loud. We can see then that meditation means far more than simply thinking about something. So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. (Romans 10:17)

#### Psalm 119:97, 99

*"Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day." "...For Your testimonies are my meditation."*

#### Ephesians 1:17-18

*That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened.*

Meditation enables God to reveal Himself in a deeper way, that is, directly to our spirits. We can have an encounter with the power of God's Word within our own life, which speaks to our own personal situation.

### EXAMPLES OF MEDITATION FROM THE BIBLE

#### Genesis 24:63

*"And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening."*

#### Joshua 1:8

*This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.*

Meditation is a lifestyle - Meditation is a healthy habit to develop

#### Psalm 119:11

*Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.*

#### Psalm 19:14

*Let the word of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.*

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## SPIRITUAL AWAKENING - PART 2 (...continued)

### 1 Timothy 4:15

*Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.*

### HOW AND WHEN SHOULD WE MEDITATE?

#### Psalm 1:2

*“But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night.*

Psalm 1 and many other scriptures tell us that the person who wants to be blessed will meditate day and night in God’s Word.

#### Deuteronomy 6:5-9

*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words, which I command, you today shall be in your heart; you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

Consistent repetition of scripture will feed our spirit, and help concentrate our minds on spiritual things. Meditation on the Word of God is good spiritual food and a discipline that will enable us to renew our minds as we are commanded to do in Romans 12:2.

#### Romans 12:2 AMP

*Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind, [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].*

If you are truly seeking a spiritual awakening, you need to look at what influence you are allowing in your life and really consider your daily disciplines.

How should we meditate?

Seven steps;

1. Select a passage or verse, and write it out (Psalms 1:1)
2. Understand the context of the passage or verse
3. Memorise it
4. Examine the key words
5. Run it through your mind
6. Make it a talking point with God and others
7. Examine how it can be applied to your life

#### Psalm 1:2-3 NKJ

*Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; “But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season. Whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.”*

© Ps Trevor Bartley

[www.trevorbartleyministries.org](http://www.trevorbartleyministries.org)

*If you would like a copy of my book 'The elementary teachings and doctrine of Jesus' mention this article and I will give you a 25% discount.*



## IS THE WRITING ON THE WALL?

The transition from 2014 to 2015 has seen many prophetic words about the coming year. Whilst some voices are declaring that the Lord's judgement is about to be extended from His people to His world, others are envisaging a year of divine reversals, breakthrough and new beginnings.

The Hebrew year from October 2014 through 13 September 2015 is widely recognized as a shemithah (Sabbath) year. The same pattern given by God to mark the days of Israel was also given to mark their years (Deuteronomy 15:1,2 & Leviticus 26:33-35). Shemithah years occur every seven years as an economic reset year: debt is eliminated and slaves go free. It gives the land a chance to rest. As is the case with most of the Lord's commandments, blessings would flow to those who obeyed them (and curses on those who didn't). The fact that the last two shemithah years – 2001 and 2008 – culminated in global financial crises is seen by some (including the author of the best-selling 'Harbinger' – Jonathan Cahn) as evidence that the laws which applied to the children of Israel may still be at work in our world today. (For more detail on this theory, see his new book 'The Mystery of the Shemithah').

Perhaps the key to comprehending the apparently contradictory prophecies about mankind's immediate future lies in the word shemithah itself. It is derived from the Hebrew 'shamat' meaning 'throw down'. Paradoxically, the shemithah is also associated with release – from debt, from slavery. The distinctive nature of God's judgement which comes out time & time again in His Word is that it is a judgement, yes, but a judgement unto life.

A connection is also being made between this understanding of the times and another phenomenon. The next Feast of Sukkot (Tabernacles) will be ushered in by a 'blood moon' (total lunar eclipse) on September 27th? Not just any blood moon but a super blood moon. This occurs when the moon is at perigee – closer to the earth than at any other time of the year. Given that it will be centred over Israel, it will appear 14% larger than a regular full moon there. There has never been a super blood moon on this Feast following a shemithah year before.

The Jewish Talmud (book of interpretation) states: "When the moon is in eclipse, it is a bad omen for Israel. If its face is as red as blood, (it is a sign that) the sword is coming to the world." In other words, it is a portent of judgement or war in their view.

In Genesis 1:14, we read that God created the sun, moon and the stars not only to give us day and night but also as prophetic signs. During the period from April 2014 to September 2015, there will have been a 'tetrad' (four) of these blood moons, each one of them falling on the full moon festivals of Passover or Tabernacles. As stated, however, only the last one will be visible from the Land of Israel. (Astronomical signs are not considered by the prophets to be significant unless they are).

The above photograph gives you some idea of what will be seen (weather permitting) from Jerusalem on the evening of September 27th. As you can see, it is going to be an amazing spectacle. Whether this means that the writing is on the wall or not, it certainly fuels the widespread sense (even amongst our secular friends) that 2015 is going to be a watershed year for us all.

Should you wish to explore this understanding of the times further, you would be welcome to join our tour of Israel at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles in September-October this year. For more information, visit [www.cmj.org.au](http://www.cmj.org.au)

**Martin Weatherston, Chair, Church's Ministry amongst the Jewish People.**





### WITH JESUS AT SUKKOT

**24th September - 7th October 2015**

HOSTED BY MARTIN WEATHERSTON & REV'D JOHN SIMONS




A unique tour that allows us as disciples and pilgrims to experience the liturgical richness of the Biblical fall feast of Sukkot (Tabernacles) and anticipate the second coming of Jesus of Nazareth. We will spend most of our time based at historic Christ Church Guest House in the Old City of Jerusalem. In addition to worship, lectures and tours our fourteen days will have a good amount of free time for you to explore the Holy City on your own and soak up the atmosphere of the holiday. During Sukkot Jerusalem is an exciting place, filled with Jewish people as well as Christians from every corner of the world. Join us as we rejoice in the hope of the kingdom of God.

## Joining God's Intercession

By Paul Collins

Intercession is to stand in the place of another in prayer before God. Some of the great intercessors in the Bible were Abraham (Genesis 18:20-33); Moses (Exodus 32:9-14); Daniel (Daniel 9:219); Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:2-11). Christians have been given the great privilege of joining the Lord in His intercession for this needy world for which He died. What a privilege we have been given to be a part of miracle answers to prayer effecting individuals, families, communities and nations. We are told to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). In other words, it is intended for us all to have a lifestyle of prayer. This involves praying, consulting and being directed by the Lord. What a life – living in the supernatural realm with God where "all things are possible". Prayer is the launching pad for miracles. The Lord is looking for those who are willing to intercede.

*"And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor [no one to intervene on behalf of truth and right]... Isaiah 59:16 (AMP).*

### Intercession by Jesus

The greatest example of intercession is the Lord Jesus, Himself.

*"Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us" Romans 8:34.*

The death of Jesus on the Cross was the ultimate act of intercession. He was not dying for His own sin and guilt, but for ours. He was representing us, bearing before God the Father, our sin, the judgment we deserved, the curse that was upon us. As He hung upon the Cross He took all the effects of Adam's sin which we had inherited, all the sins that we have committed ourselves, and all the effects of the sins that others have committed against us. That was the final act of intercession for the sin of the human race – never to be repeated (Romans 6:10). The great need in the world today is to know, understand and personally receive the full atoning work of Jesus for each and every one of us. Then the call upon each one of us now as His believers is to get the message, this glorious Gospel, out to this dying world.

### Jesus' continuing ministry

*"Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them" Hebrews 7:25.*

The ministry of the Lord Jesus in Heaven right now is as our eternal High Priest (Hebrews 7:21-8:1; 4:14-16), interceding before the Father for us to come into the full expression of all He has accomplished for us through His finished work on the Cross and for us to reach the world with this great salvation truth.

*"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" Romans 8:26-27.*

His ministry of intercession now is also expressed through us, His Body upon the earth. The Holy Spirit helps us to enter into the anointing of intercession. This is expressed in a number of ways:

### Bearing the burden of the Lord

In prayer, the Holy Spirit may lay a burden on our heart so that we can feel the Lord's heart as He intercedes for a particular situation (Luke 19:41-42). He brings the same challenge to us today that He brought to His disciples in the Garden:

*"Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" Matthew 26:40 (read vs 36-45).*

### Identification with others

Many times the Holy Spirit can give us the capacity to so identify with the needs of a person, or people, as to actually feel what they are going through. This helps us to pray through to victory for them.

*"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way fulfill the law of Christ" Galatians 6:2.*

### Spiritual labour to bring to birth

This is expressed in the deep groanings of the Spirit to bring something to birth in the spiritual realm. The apostle Paul said...

*"Oh, my dear children, I feel the pangs of childbirth all over again till Christ be formed in you"*

*Galatians 4:19 (Phillips) (see Romans 8:26).*

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## Joining God's Intercession (...continued)

### Warfare against evil spirits

This intercession is involved in the proclaiming of Christ's victory against all the powers of darkness arrayed against people's lives (Ephesians 6:10-20). Jesus declared, *"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work"* 1 John 3:8.

### Look Out -The Church is Praying!

Intercession carries a special anointing from God and is behind every revival in history.

The Church's mission is to change lives, families, communities, cities and nations through prayer. We are given the great example of the early church in Acts 4. In the face of imprisonment and great persecution, with one heart they lifted their voice to God in prayer (verses 18-24); they confessed Who is in control (verse 24); they requested boldness to speak His Word (verses 29-30) and to experience His power (verses 31-33). They were joined in unity together with the same heart and purpose and God answered their prayer:

*"After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. All the believers were one in heart and mind...With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and much grace was upon them all"* Acts 4:31-33.

They turned the world upside down in their day (Acts 17:6). This is now *our* day!

*Paul Collins, with his wife Bunty, have been training leaders for the Body of Christ in Asia for over 50 years. He is Chairman of Fountaingate Christian Foundation and President of the Online Bible College which has 50,000 students in 160 countries. Everything is provided free of charge.*

[www.onlinebiblecollege.com](http://www.onlinebiblecollege.com)

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[www.churchlink.com.au](http://www.churchlink.com.au)



***In the face of imprisonment and great persecution, with one heart they lifted their voice to God in prayer ... They were joined in unity together with the same heart and purpose and God answered their prayer***



I greet you with the love and peace of Yeshua! I would just like to let you know that Carmel Friends Inc. will be hosting the Conference "Sar Shalom" on 9 May at the **C3 Conference Venue at 120 Silverwater Road, Silverwater**. On this occasion, the speaking platform will be shared between Ps Peter Tsukahira from Mount Carmel in Israel and Ps Yousef Dakwar, Pastor in charge of an Arabic Christian Assembly in Israel. Their presence together is a great testimony of the reconciliatory work of Yeshua and how peace can rule among fractured societies.

Please visit and register at our website

[www.carmelfriends.com.au](http://www.carmelfriends.com.au)

To keep yourself up-to-date please like our facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/carmelfriends>

I look forward to your presence at the Conference. Please feel free to share the news of the Conference with your family, friends and church so that they too may be blessed with this timely message.

In the most precious and blessed name of Yeshua, Adam Tedja 0419 263 888

## SISTER FRANCIS and the WELSH REVIVAL

*By Rev. Robert Evans*

Sister Laura Francis was one of the very notable characters who appeared in the early history of the Central Methodist Mission in Sydney, now known as Wesley Mission. She was one of the original group of “Sisters of the People,” which was formed in 1890 by the Rev. W.G. Taylor, superintendent of the Mission.

Up until 1898, her work consisted in bringing a prayer and a word of cheer to the sick, and whatever help she could to the poor. But in the slums of Sydney were found many orphans and disadvantaged children. These contacts with children led to the beginning of the C.M.M. work in caring for children, in which she was also involved for a while.

In 1898, Sister Francis left Sydney to lead a struggling Rescue work in Auckland – The Door of Hope, which she transformed by involving a number of the wealthy businessmen of the city, although at the cost of her health.

Starting in 1901, for 18 months she travelled in the United States, England and Europe, inspecting Rescue activities in many towns and cities. In 1904, she began work in New York, at the famous Water Street Mission in the Bowery, but again her health was affected, and she left early in 1905.

Because she was a free agent at this time, she was able to spend a month in Wales during the height of the Welsh Revival, attending some of the meetings led by Evan Roberts and his female singing group, which accompanied Roberts to many places, taking part in his meetings. She met him, and discussed some of the happenings with him.

The Welsh Revival of 1904–5 was undoubtedly one of the most astonishing and spectacular spiritual revival movements in recent centuries. Although the real history of the movement is much more complex, the Revival is popularly thought to have begun in December, 1904, through the ministry of a young coal-miner-cum-theological student named Evan Roberts.

During one of the prayer meetings which led up to the Revival, Roberts prayed with great fervour, “Lord, Bend me!” The answer that came to him was that God wanted him to go back to his home church and share simply with the congregation the message of surrender to God. His home church was the Calvinistic Methodist Church in the town of Loughor, South Wales.

The minister would not allow him to address the congregation, but announced at a young people’s meeting that Roberts would address an after-meeting to which any could stay who wished to hear what was said. Seventeen people stayed for it. Roberts said, “I have a message from God for you.

- You must put away any unconfessed sin.
- You must put away any doubtful habit.
- You must obey the Spirit promptly.
- You must confess Christ publicly.”

The seventeen responded, and more meetings followed. From this the Revival exploded around most of Wales in a very short time.

Those who were not “in tune with the Spirit” described these meetings as pandemonium, unbridled emotional excitement, or as a long series of interruptions. Others who were more attuned to the leadings of the Holy Spirit described the meetings as perfectly orderly under the leading of the Spirit of God, in prayer and praise, singing and testimony.

It was estimated that 100,000 people joined the churches in Wales upon profession of faith during that year. The miners stopped swearing at the pit ponies, so that the ponies could no longer understand what was being said to them. Working shifts in the mines started with praise and singing. Conversions occurred amongst all ranks and levels of society. Suddenly there was no crime. The police had nothing to do, so they spent their time providing male quartets to sing at church services when asked. Magistrates had no cases to try. The number of illegitimate births plummeted. Many of the publicans became bankrupted because they had lost most of their customers, but the churches were overflowing with enthusiastic worshippers. Soon, revivals broke out in England and Scotland. Within a few years, news arrived from mission fields around the world of outbreaks of revivals, especially where Welsh missionaries were serving, but in many other places also.

This visit had a profound effect upon Sister Francis for many years, as one would expect. Within weeks she led evangelistic missions in several English towns, telling of what she had seen and learned in Wales. By June, 1905,

(continued next page)

***Conversions occurred amongst all ranks and levels of society. Suddenly there was no crime. The police had nothing to do, so they spent their time providing male quartets to sing at church services when asked. Magistrates had no cases to try.***

## SISTER FRANCIS and the WELSH REVIVAL (...continued)

she was back in Sydney, telling the story of Wales. The leaders of the C.M.M. set her apart to conduct evangelistic missions in Sydney and in country towns. She was full of what had happened in Wales, and hoped and prayed fervently that the Spirit would be poured out in her meetings in New South Wales as well.

At first, the missions she conducted were described as being led by a visiting Sister from the C.M.M. After a few years, the N.S.W. Methodist Conference's Evangelistic Committee appointed a full-time evangelist (The Rev. A.E. Walker from 1910 to 1912, and then Raymond Preston), but they also appointed Sister Francis to lead other missions for them as well. This arrangement continued right through the First World War.

She saw many conversions in these missions, mainly in country New South Wales, and reports about some of the missions were published in *The Methodist*. In some of the missions she saw glimpses of the "unusual success" that she had hoped and prayed for, although recurrent ill health also dogged her. For example, the Sydney Central Mission Souvenir for 1908 contained the heading – "Our Sister Evangelist" – and the following statement:-

"Little needs to be written of the noble and self-sacrificing work done during the past two and a half years by our beloved Sister Francis. Her name has become an honoured household word in most of the Circuits of the State. North, South and West she has gone forth to woo and win the people for the service of her Lord. Everywhere she has been successful. In some Circuits seasons of Pentecostal blessing have been witnessed. Many hundreds have entered the Enquiry Room at her meetings. In all she has conducted Missions in twenty-eight Circuits, in every one of which she would be welcomed at a second visit." This statement was followed by a call for a second evangelist, with expectations of a reaping time to come.

The year 1911 saw a change, because she spent the year in Dunedin, helping the Methodist Church there in its mission and Rescue work in that city. But, upon her return, more calls came for her evangelistic work around N.S.W.

Sadly for the historians, many of her Missions were not followed by published reports. But, some were noticed. The following notice would have been provided by the Secretary of the Methodist Conference's Evangelistic Committee, included with a much longer report about the work of Raymond Preston conducting missions in towns on the Clarence River.

***"In the afternoon young people's service, some 12 children came forward with a desire to accept Christ as their Saviour. At night, many of the Christians reconsecrated themselves to God, and a 'season of refreshing' was experienced."***

"Sister Francis reports a splendid work in the Canowindra Circuit: 'A season of rich blessing at Cranbury and Lockwood. Many precious souls have been led to Christ and are rejoicing in knowing Him as their precious Saviour.' The weather militated against the attendance at this Mission, the roads being heavy and the nights being dark; but the blessing of God came upon those who were there. Most of the converts were young people, one a Roman Catholic.

Sister Francis's programme is full to the end of the year, with the exception of one month, from October 17th to November 14th, most of the Circuits engaging her services have taken her for a month, as it is found more satisfactory work is done during the longer period. For the

above dates, early requisition must be made, and they will be given to the first applicant. Sister Francis began a ten-days' mission at Grenfell on Sunday, July 26th. An early morning prayer meeting of the workers gave an excellent start for the day, and the services were all well attended. In the afternoon young people's service, some 12 children came forward with a desire to accept Christ as their Saviour. At night, many of the Christians reconsecrated themselves to God, and a 'season of refreshing' was experienced." (*The Methodist*. 1 August, 1914.)

Eventually, as she grew older, and as indifferent health intervened more frequently, she went back to concentrating upon hospital visitation in Sydney, and it is for this work that she is mainly remembered. Another factor which would have saddened her, was that slowly less and less Circuits were inclined to organize evangelistic missions of this kind. Thankfully she did not live to see the day, in our own time, when Methodist evangelism has completely disappeared in Australia. She died in Sydney in December, 1946.

*Resources for this article have come from the Uniting Church Archives, mainly from a file prepared by our then Archivist, Mr. Daryl Lightfoot, following requests from family members interested in their own history. Also the National Library of Australia's "Trove" website has been used, and we acknowledge this with our thanks.*

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*The website contains the text of many of my books and which can all be downloaded, as well as many other things of interest.*

## Daily Prayer Calendar for April - Business

By Alex Cook, Founder of [www.wealthwithpurpose.com](http://www.wealthwithpurpose.com)

### Day 1: Kingdom Mindset in Business

That Christian business people will realise that they are on the frontlines of mission, by reaching out with the Gospel to their staff, suppliers, investors, customers, competitors. and many more. Pray that:

- √ They will put Christ as head of their business
- √ They will see themselves as Business Missionaries
- √ They will be prayerful for their staff, suppliers, customers will come to Christ - that they will be prayerful and strategic with these relationships

### Day 2: Use their business to change culture

That Christians in business will realise the enormous opportunity to shape culture with our businesses. Pray that:

- √ They will put into place deliberate strategies to influence culture
- √ They will become influential and respected in their industry
- √ Government and others will seek their advice and Christian wisdom

### Day 3: Look at people the way Christ looks at them

It is easy to judge to others. It is necessary that we look at people the way Christ looks at them, with his amazing love. Pray that they:

- √ Have a heart for people, the way Christ does
- √ Seek to genuinely serve others and meet their needs of those we encounter at work.
- √ Treat people in our workplace the way Christ would

### Day 4: Run their business by Kingdom Principles

We live in the days of situational ethics and loose standards of behaviour. Pray that:

- √ Christians will have impeccable business ethics
- √ They shine the light into the darkness
- √ When mistakes are made, that they will be repentant and seek to make restitution
- √ They stand firm in the face of ethical challenges

### Day 5: Build Devotional time into their business

Christians need to spend time with the Lord of All. Pray that they:

- √ Bring the presence of God into their workplaces
- √ Start devotional groups in their workplace to support each other, worship and draw other staff to a relationship with Christ.
- √ Be regular and disciplined in spending time with God.
- √ Have a genuine desire to spend time with the God that adores them.

### Day 6: Handle money with Integrity

Financial integrity is a big problem in society, with now unstable economic systems and financial markets. Christians have often been sucked into doing things the world's ways:

- √ Christians will handle money God's way
- √ That they will be 100% honest with all their financial dealings
- √ That they will pay taxes properly and not cheat

### Day 7: Shun Debt

Excessive Debt is causing massive problems around the world, and many Christians have bought the lie that debt is normal, harmless and necessary. Pray for:

- √ A biblical understanding of debt (it leads to slavery)
- √ That they will seek to get their business out of debt asap
- √ They will create a debt reduction plan with God's wisdom
- √ They will learn to shun debt

### Day 8: Building Kingdom Networks

That Christian business people will get together to support, encourage, pray for each other. Pray that:

- √ Build Kingdom Business People networks
- √ That they can assist each other build God honouring profitable businesses
- √ Hold each other accountable to ensure best practice and the highest ethical standards

### Day 9: Use their Wealth for Kingdom Impact

Business is in a tremendous position to build wealth. Wealth brings temptations and new challenges. Pray that:

- √ God will pour out wealth on Christian businesses that can be trusted to manage the money God's way
- √ That business will use their wealth to extend God's kingdom and take the gospel to the end of the earth.
- √ That Christians wont be drawn into the world's methods, but will instead will live their lives and run their businesses according to God's word.

### Day 10: An outpouring of Resources on Kingdom Businesses to be used by God

God is the source of all our provision and can meet our needs. Not only can he meet our needs, but he is the God of more than enough. Pray that:

- √ Businesses will understand that God is the source of all provision
- √ That they will remember that God is a God of abundance
- √ That God will pour out his resources on Christian business people so they can bring glory to him and transform their communities.

### Day 11: Become Multipliers

The principle of multiplication is an overlooked Christian principle. To have a meaningful impact on our society we can't rely on addition, but need to multiply, be it our churches, our ministries and our businesses. Pray that:

- √ Businesses will learn how to apply the principle of multiplication. Be it using the internet, franchising, licensing and myriad of other ways.
- √ That God would multiply Christian businesses for his glory
- √ That the multiplication will lead to additional financial resources being made available to fulfil the great commission.

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## Daily Prayer Calendar for April - Business (...continued)

### Day 12: Business impact in their Local Community

Most businesses are not global, but rather operate locally and are involved with the lives of their local community. Pray that:

- √ Bless local communities with sponsorship of kingdom events (e.g. sponsor Christmas carols)
- √ Meet needs of local communities (Help local charities)
- √ Provision of financial resources and business know-how to local communities.
- √ Lift their local communities out of poverty - through the application of biblical principles.

### Day 13: Business to conquer Poverty

Business is in a powerful position to reduce and even eliminate poverty. Pray that:

- √ Businesses will create new jobs
- √ Businesses to meet needs
- √ Businesses to provide education to those trapped in poverty
- √ Businesses to employ and have compassion on those with special needs

### Day 14: Intimacy with God

Being fruitful and effective in business requires spending time with the creator. We serve a God of unlimited resources, creativity and power

- √ Seek God for divine strategies
- √ Build complete trust in God
- √ Spend time with God in prayer and the word daily
- √ They will realise God is above and able to assist with their circumstances

### Day 15: Reach the Lost

Every day business people come into contact with many people. From shareholders, to suppliers, customers and of course staff. Pray that:

- √ They will be deliberate about building genuine relationships with those they mix with and reach out to meet those people's needs.
- √ That they will love those they mix with and extend God's grace to them.
- √ That they will have a heart for the lost, seeking to reach them with the Gospel at every opportunity.

### Day 16: Be Profitable

Businesses fail unless they make a profit. Profit is a good thing from God and can be used for kingdom impact. Pray that:

- √ That Kingdom minded businesses will be enormously profitable and put that money to work for God's kingdom.
- √ That in building a profitable business, they will not compromise on business principles that God lays out in his word.
- √ That people will come before profits and that in tough

times, Christian business people will do everything in their power (with God's divine assistance) to avoid making workers redundant.

### Day 17: Do Business Supernaturally

God wants to help us start, grow and manage our businesses supernaturally. Christians need to dedicate their businesses to God and seek him for divine wisdom. Pray that:

- √ Depend on the Holy Spirit to guide their business.
- √ For God's supernatural power to open doors
- √ Supernatural results that glorify God

### Day 18: Influence & Transform Government

Marketplace Christians are in a position to influence Governments across the globe. In some countries the Government actively seeks Christian input to solve those nations problems. Pray that:

- √ Christians will rise to positions of influence within the public sector to influence Politicians with Godly policies.
- √ Christians in the marketplace to use their influence to impact the policies within their sphere of influence, such as their industry.
- √ That marketplace Christians will become more actively involved in the political process, be more vocal, and seeking to deliberately impact the direction that the Government takes on many issues.

### Day 19: Christian Entrepreneurship

We need an army of Christian entrepreneurs using their business and creative abilities to build amazing, God honouring, world changing businesses. Pray that:

- √ God will raise up an army of Christian entrepreneurs fulfilling their calling in the marketplace.
- √ That God will pour out remarkable business ideas, wisdom and solutions on Christian entrepreneurs so that they can create world class, kingdom impactful businesses.
- √ That entrepreneurs can use their skills and gifting to bless their local Churches and to help ministries thrive.

### Day 20: Provide Solutions

Business people are in the position of being able to provide creative solutions to some of the world's biggest problems. Pray that:

- √ For God's creative genius to be poured out on marketplace believers
- √ For God's people to provide unique solutions to resolve:
  - Poverty
  - Business problems
  - Corruption
  - Disease
  - Relationships / Marriage problems
- √ For Christians to step up to the plate and actively seek to solve some of the world's problems with God's guidance.

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## Daily Prayer Calendar for April - Business (...continued)

### Day 21: Influence

Marketplace Christians are in a place of enormous influence. From the simple act of having a positive influence on a work colleague, to a position of authority that can influence an entire business, media, culture or Government. Pray that:

- √ Christians seek to influence those in their work environment by honouring God through serving others.
- √ Christians will be elevated into positions of responsibility where they can influence an entire business, industry or Government.
- √ To not misuse their power when they get into a position of influence. That they will remain humble.

### Day 22: Dealing with Corruption

Corruption is a common problem throughout the world. Christians need to shine the light on all corrupt practices, and weed out corruption in their area of influence. Pray that:

- √ That marketplace Christians will not engage in corrupt practices
- √ That Christians will shine the light on corrupt practices
- √ Seek to eliminate corrupt practices from their communities, cities & nations

### Day 23: Know and Fulfil their Calling

We are all called by God for a purpose. Many Christians go through life without really knowing their purpose in life and the specific calling that God has for them. Pray that:

- √ Marketplace Christians will seek God for their divine assignment
- √ That they will actively seek to fulfil the assignment that God has for them
- √ That God will awaken the body of Christ to their individual roles and responsibilities and to the specific calling that he has for them.

### Day 24: Spiritual Covering

The Devil knows that Holy Spirit empowered Christians in Business are dangerous to his purposes. Pray that:

- √ Marketplace Christians realise they are vulnerable without God's protection
- √ Seek out people who will commit to praying for them and provide the spiritual covering that is so needed.
- √ That God's supernatural hedge of protection will be over kingdom businesses.

### Day 25: Strong Marriages & Family Life

In a society that is relentlessly attacking marriage and family life, Christians need to be role models for God's model of family life. Pray that:

- √ For those married, that God will protect those marriages from the evil one
- √ That Christian marriages will be a role model and template for our society
- √ That children will be safe and nurtured and wont be lost in the rush of marketplace life
- √ That families will stick together and support each other as they seek to live out their role in the marketplace
- √ Provide workplaces that are family friendly.

### Day 26: Rest

On the 7th Day God rested. To function effectively marketplace Christians need to get rest. Pray that:

- √ They will have a proper rest at least one day each week. Have a Sabbath day where they spend time with the Lord and with their families.
- √ That they will learn to rest in God - hand it all over to the Lord of All - let him control the direction of the business.
- √ Encourage and allow their staff to take time out from work and rest, and to seek and trust in God for their lives.

### Day 27: Reliability & Dependability

The Bible calls us to excellence, and to work as though we are really working for God. Pray that:

- √ Marketplace Christians will be the most dependable and reliable workers in the workforce.
- √ That secular society will cry out asking for Christian workers because they will be known as the people who can get the job done.
- √ That Christians will be known as people who keep their word, turn up on time and honour their commitments.

### Day 28: Seek First

We are called to "seek first God's Kingdom". Pray that:

- √ God will be first in their businesses. That their businesses will be evidence of God being first in their life.
- √ That business people understanding that by putting God first (in everything), that he can and will meet their needs.
- √ That God will raise up an Army of marketplace Christians who put him first irrespective of the cost. That they will take up their cross.

### Day 29: Christians in the Media

One of the major battlegrounds is Christians who work in the media. The media is increasingly pushing an anti-Christian agenda. Pray that:

- √ God will raise up warriors to stand firm in the media and to produce wholesome content
- √ For Christians to shine the light on the many lies pushed by the media.
- √ For Christians to have influence over the media and for the Christian voice to be heard accurately and clearly.

### Day 30: Prepare for Battle

The marketplace is a battlefield where Christian men and women are on the frontlines. Pray that:

- √ God will create a spiritual battle mindset amongst believers, who are desperate to take back ground that the Devil has stolen.
- √ That God will surround Christian business people with angelic protection
- √ That divine strategies will be revealed for winning the battle within the marketplace
- √ That multitudes of business people will bow the knee to King Jesus!

*Next month - Law and Justice*