

TRANSFORMING
SYDNEY

Transforming Sydney Newsletter October 2014

Welcome to the ninth edition of the newsletter for Transforming Sydney.
The focus for prayer this month is on the sphere or domain of Health and Science.

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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.

What's Inside...

Science and Medicine would have us believe that God our Creator is redundant, and yet:

... a large number of the most eminent scientists of all time, right down to the present, have been believers, often moved or at least reinforced in their belief by their own scientific discoveries. Therefore belief in God is reasonable. It is not just for the unenlightened and ignorant."

(Fr. John Flader on "Atheism and science" in Catholic Weekly, 22 April 2012)

As always, we have a wide range of authors and articles this month:

- ♥ Dr. Lachlan Dunjey; *The Domain of Medicine*
- ♥ Patricia Taylor; *A Healing Experience*
- ♥ Paul Russell; *What is it about death?*
- ♥ Bjorn Schmid; *Global Prayer & Mission Summit - Part 4 - Church*
- ♥ Dr. John Yates; *Family Forever*
- ♥ Lilian Schmid; *Christian Inner Healing Prayer & Biblical Scriptures for Healing*
- ♥ Lilian Schmid; *Alcohol Abuse*
- ♥ Voice of the Martyrs; *Praying for the Persecuted Church*
- ♥ Faceless Generation Ministries; *Rising up a Faceless Generation*
- ♥ Rev. Trevor Byard; *The Church is Greater than the Denominations*
- ♥ Peter Alward; *What happens when you dare to ask God for the impossible?*

The Domain of Medicine

By Dr. Lachlan Dunjey

Medicine is in the frontline of the conflicts Christians face in a world that is moving ever more in an anti-Christian direction.

What are these conflicts? They are part of the Canberra Declaration (www.canberradeclaration.org.au - see "Read the Declaration") that I am hoping all readers will have signed.

Allow me to crystallise:

- ⇒ The rebellion against what it means to be human and created in the image of God
- ⇒ The destruction of marriage – between male and female in life-long commitment as the basis of healthy family and society; the ideal being for children to be brought up by their biological mother and father within the stability of marriage
- ⇒ The threat to freedom – to believe, to speak of what we believe, to teach our children what we believe; freedom to gather together; freedom to preach

What is the ultimate danger of these conflicts? It is that we will have degenerated into a culture of moral decay, with an attitude of people doing what is right in their own eyes, and that ultimately permission to do these things will become compulsion. With permission to sin being granted, permission to speak against it will be denied and indeed has already been denied – we are forced into compliance.

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The Domain of Medicine (...continued)

Remember: *Permission becomes Compulsion*. If we don't agree with what the state declares then we will find our children taken away from us and we will know the reality of persecution simply for acknowledging Jesus as Lord. We will have arrived at *Vanity Fair* as described by John Bunyan in his classic *Pilgrim's Progress* which, as you know, he wrote from prison.

Persecution will come as Scripture tells us – but we have a chance in Australia of holding this back.

Heavy stuff.

Oh dear – don't you get sick of hearing about these dangers? I'm sure this is an audience committed to the fight, but like me, you get weary and wonder if there is any purpose to what we are doing. The complacent church, content in, indeed insisting on, remaining ignorant is not here with us. Let us encourage each other, upholding each other in prayer and spurring each other on.

So how do these conflicts specifically relate to the Domain of Medicine?

1. All of the matters related to the intrinsic value of all human life: abortion; euthanasia; physician assisted suicide; destructive embryo research; cloning; embryo de-selection and eugenics; Down Syndrome genocide; babies accidentally born alive after abortion procedure and left to die; after-birth abortion (infanticide); sex-selective abortion and we could add chimeras – mixing of human and animal genes – and cyborgs – integrating bio-engineering for enhancement.
2. Overriding of doctor's liberty of conscience (www.conscienceinmedicine.net.au) with compulsory participation e.g. in abortion referral. We have the bizarre situation in Victoria where Dr Mark Hobart has been under investigation for having refused – very ethically – referral to abort a baby girl because she was a girl and yet the doctor who actually then aborted the girl – in our view very unethically – has no case to answer.
3. The selective repression of truly informed consent especially the abortion links with breast cancer (www.abortionbreastcancer.com) and post-abortion syndrome (www.mercatornet.com/articles/view/abortion_and_mental_health_science_vs_politics)
4. The health implications of re-defining marriage with respect to the effect on children, the destruction of the traditional family with a mother and a father, and restriction of freedom to bring up our children with our values
5. The threats to freedom of expression in writing and speaking what we consider to be logic and truth especially with respect to medical and public health aspects (www.chooselifeaustralia.org.au/life/challenging-and-confronting-the-evil-application-1) of marriage and family, sexuality and abortion. Threats include hate mail and personal accusation – even black-listing of doctors on Facebook.

Kingdom Issues that arise – where we need to focus

1. Informed consent – particularly telling the truth re complications of abortion: breast cancer, pre-term birth with its own complications e.g. cerebral palsy, and post-abortion syndrome.
2. Freedom of conscience – we are more than just service providers at behest of patient or government – particularly with reference to abortion and euthanasia/physician assisted suicide. Section 8 in Victoria.
3. Abortion. Particularly on basis of sex selection and eugenics e.g. for such things as cleft lips or Down Syndrome and the implied obligation to abort (“genetic outlaws”) and the progression to “post-birth abortion” (infanticide). Also there is the issue of putting babies accidentally born alive after failed abortion aside to die without any treatment.
4. Euthanasia and its slippery slope to involuntary. Physician assisted suicide and the associated drive to approval of suicide if things are too tough e.g. existential distress in the “troubled teenager”.

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The Domain of Medicine (...continued)

5. The discarding of moral restraint in the push of science for destructive embryo research and cloning.
6. The inconsistency between the recognised stand on the health issues of smoking and denying health issues with sexual conduct, e.g. homosexual behaviour and AIDS, and abortion with its long-term sequelae.
7. The exclusion from and marginalisation of Christians within existing professional organisations with the clinical disciplines of paediatrics, O&G, anaesthesia, geriatrics, oncology and palliative care being taken up only by doctors who are prepared to compromise on the value of life – with resulting ethical deterioration of those disciplines (as has happened with psychological bodies excluding “reparative therapy” for people with homosexual orientation).

Common to all domains is the issue of discrimination against all who hold Christian values – as in 7 above. Even though we may argue from a standpoint of “natural law” and history, we are attacked and our arguments dismissed simply because we are Christian.

In medicine this could mean the exclusion from O&G training places for doctors who refuse to do abortions. If euthanasia became legal – or infanticide of premature newborns – it would lend legitimacy to the exclusion from anaesthesia or neo-natal paediatric training places for doctors who refuse to participate in these procedures.

It would lend legitimacy to government setting ethical standards for the practice of medicine with the risk of de-registration of doctors not prepared to carry out procedures prescribed by the law e.g. an anaesthetist not prepared to give anaesthetic to a prisoner being executed.

It then becomes possible for doctors to suffer disciplinary action – including deregistration – not for taking life but for not taking it or even for not suggesting how it might be taken.

Now some will be inclined to play down the significance of the Victorian legislation and just urge doctors to give the appropriate referrals. But the push for personal autonomy and demand for services to be provided by doctors as mere service providers will not end there. It will inevitably involve Physician Assisted Suicide (PAS) at the very least. (See June 2011 Liberty of Conscience <http://www.medicinewithoutmorality.info/>)

Strategy for change

1. Influencing current professional organisations by participation, encouraging those already involved and encouraging others to be involved.
2. Lobbying medical organisations and government individually and by formation of lobby groups e.g. Medicine with Morality <http://www.medicinewithmorality.org.au/>
3. Even formation of competing professional organisations as in USA with the *American Association of ProLife Obstetricians and Gynecologists* and the *American College of Paediatricians*.
4. Getting Medical Defence organisations onside re Kingdom Issues 1&2. These are basically insurance organisations but have taken a role in preventive education.
5. Equip MPs who are already seeking to overturn bad legislation.
6. Target and persuade existing MPs to promote good legislation and to overturn existing bad legislation (as did the Clapham group to William Wilberforce).
7. Enter parliament or become involved in one of the Christian parties.

In common (again) with all domains we must be bold in telling truth. I read somewhere recently “To stand for truth becomes an act of defiance, if not treason. Moreover, the defence of what formerly needed no defence becomes a basic duty. We have to take a stand for the obvious, when all around us common sense and moral clarity go missing.”

The consequences of the attack on truth are so serious in terms of threats to freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom to bring up our children with our own values (and not be subject to “diversity/sensitivity re-training”). The push to silence with all the weight of the law (Section 18C Racial Discrimination Act) any voices raised in protest – (continued on Page 4)

The Domain of Medicine (...continued)

and to label such voices as lacking sensitivity, as hate speech, as being vilifying and discriminatory – is common to all domains.

General principles that undergird our involvement at a personal level rather than “domain” level are as below in an article I wrote for “*Luke’s Journal*”, the journal of the *Christian Medical and Dental Fellowship of Australia* (Vol.16 No.3 Dec 2011).

What is the role of the Christian doctor in community?

Within his or her chosen field of medicine wherever that happens to be geographically it is to be the best and Christlike, serving God in humility.

Within the family it is to seek for God to be glorified in all aspects of marriage and parenthood.

Within the Church it is to be a leader – not necessarily in name – in matters medical and ethical affecting the Church community. It is to seek excellence in all things for the glory of God and promote strong and faithful service in all aspects of mission. It is also I believe to be a watchman in local, national and global affairs and present a strong Christian worldview.

Within the medical profession it is to be aware of the threats to the future of medicine especially in ethical standards and the doctor-patient relationship with active involvement depending on the opportunity and the call.

Within the community I believe there is a place to demonstrate excellence for the good of society. This includes promotion of physical and mental health in all its aspects, healthy families, helping the disadvantaged, and promoting a global consciousness with respect to all who are at risk or disadvantaged.

But there’s more. I believe it is also to be a voice to warn when the health of family and community is at risk – the watchman role again – and to engage in such action as is necessary to counter those risks. It is to educate re the issues especially “defining” issues that shape our future, the Christian responsibility we all have in voting, understanding political party policies and agendas and understanding our preferential voting system. All this undergirded by an awareness that some politicians elected with fixed ideas and agendas are not amenable to reason and hence must be voted out. This is more than “just leaving it to God” and absolving ourselves of responsibility – we who know and understand where the battle is will pray re the battle in the heavenly realms and also take the watchman role, warning and educating.

Prayer

A burden for all the above concerns and conflicts.

For wisdom in strategy, reacting and being pro-active, for the Glory of God to be manifest in the Domain of Medicine.

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<http://chooselifeaustralia.org.au>

<http://medicinewithmorality.org.au>

<http://thebeltoftruth.org.au>

<http://www.thepeoplescharter.net.au/>

<http://www.repealsection8.net.au/>

<http://www.conscienceinmedicine.net.au/>

<http://www.doctors4family.com.au/>

... to seek excellence in all things for the glory of God and promote strong and faithful service in all aspects of mission ... to be a watchman in local, national and global affairs and present a strong Christian worldview.

A Healing Experience

About half way through 2011 my husband Philip experienced a severe vertigo attack one evening just as he was about to go to bed. His dizziness increased rapidly followed by uncontrollable vomiting.

Eventually we called an ambulance, and in hospital the usual treatment to relieve nausea and vomiting from such an attack made no difference. Next morning a neurologist performed a positional manoeuvre which began to relieve the nausea gradually. It was advised Philip be kept in hospital until he was completely steady on his feet. While in hospital for those few days, some routine tests were run, and a young neurology intern showed concern about a sound he picked up behind Philip's ear.

After more examination it was thought there may be a malformation in an artery in the dural cavity. Further tests confirmed this diagnosis, and after a subsequent visit to a neuro-surgeon, a cranial angiogram showed that there was indeed an arterio vascular malformation (AVM). The specialist felt Philip was in no immediate danger, and suggested a follow up appointment in 12 months' time.

Our GPT was not happy with this advice, and suggested we obtain a second opinion. The physiotherapist who runs the gym Philip attends suggested the same, and supplied the name of another neuro-surgeon.

Reading the same angiogram, this neuro-surgeon advised that surgery was immediately necessary, and that Philip was at risk of not living through the next 12 months. He said the operation, involving sealing off the vein that the AVM was affecting, would be a fairly straight-forward one, with a very small percentage of risk, (5%) but that the risk of leaving it unattended was much higher.

The operation went ahead the following week.

After the operation, (which took nearly 5 hours, instead of the expected 1-2) we were given the serious news that things had not gone well. The op. on the offending vein had been successful and the surgeons had gone ahead to address the AVM in the artery. But, apparently Philip fell into that 5%, that none of us expect to be part of.

During surgery, Philip's blood pressure had suddenly dropped to zero, for some minutes. The medical team pulled out all the stops and every facility available - gave him a complete blood transfusion, etc. Through all this his heart kept beating.

When we first saw him after all this he looked dreadful and we thought we had lost him. The medical team had him hooked up to everything imaginable and were trying to stabilise his blood pressure.

They warned us that the next 12 hours would be

critical, and looked very serious. We sent out urgent requests for prayer not only for him but for all those attending to him.

I retired for the night to the motel in the hospital grounds to try to get some sleep. I turned to my set reading in "*Living Light*" for that day. Here's what it said:

LIVING LIGHT: 20/12/11

Have faith in God / You can never please God without faith. / With God, everything is possible.

Was I too weak to save you? Is that why the house is silent and empty when I come home? Have I no longer power to deliver?

This plan of mine is not what you would work out neither are my thoughts the same as yours! For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than yours, and my thoughts than yours / I will open up the windows of heaven for you and pour out a blessing so great you won't have room enough to take it in!

The Lord isn't too weak to save you. And he isn't getting deaf! He can hear you when you call! / 'O Lord,' he cried out to God, 'no one else can help us! Here we are, powerless against this mighty army. Oh, help us, Lord our God! For we trust in you alone to rescue us.'

We felt we were doomed to die and saw how powerless we were to help ourselves; but that was good, for then we put everything into the hands of God, who alone could save us, for he can even raise the dead.

Mk.11:22 Hebr. 11:6 Mt. 10:26 Is. 50:2 Is. 55:8,9 Mal. 3:10 Is. 59: 1 2 Chron. 14:11 2 Cor. 1:9

I could hardly believe my eyes when I read this - that a little devotional book written over a hundred years ago, could have *that particular reading on that particular day*. I slept well that night.

Within 24 hours it was a completely different picture. I could hardly believe what I saw the next morning in ICU - Philip was conscious, his blood pressure was gradually stabilising, he was eating his first sandwich and having an orange juice and saying "Get me out of here".

As I left the hospital at lunch time they took him out of ICU and back to the ward and he was eating his first meal with relish.

His mental and physical faculties were tested about every hour and he passed with flying colours. In fact, I didn't know whether to laugh or cry when he said that if they asked him once more who was the Prime Minister of Australia he'd punch someone.

That was December 2011. Philip spent Christmas in hospital, then came home. Doctors have expected him to be left with a number of after effects, none of which are present. He has experienced a slight form of dyslexia when reading - but this is improving.

God has truly given us a miracle - but at the same time has shown us how to trust Him no matter *what* the outcome.

Patricia Taylor, July 2012

What is it about death?

Embracing the inevitable.

Every family experiences death at some time. More inevitable than taxes and the only thing apart from our births that we all genuinely have in common.

There's no blueprint for death; it is as individual as each of us. Having said that, if we were to receive bad news that a friend had been diagnosed with a particular terminal illness, many of us would be able to bring to mind some thought of what that might mean for our sick friend. Ill-informed or otherwise, it's simply human nature.

There's a great deal about the discussion on end-of-life and euthanasia and/or assisted suicide that, similarly, brings to mind concepts, ideas and even experience that forms our thinking.

Hardly surprising then, that when the spectre of impending death does insinuate itself, we think naturally back to earlier experiences.

Two recent deaths near to my family spring to mind. They may or may not reflect the experiences of others, but I hope they're instructive and thought provoking.

One, a relative of my wife, was a courageous death by any standard. An aging husband with an ailing wife, he trenchantly refused palliation for his condition because he did not want anything to put at risk his ability to care for his beloved. Some in the family counselled him to accept at least some intervention to relieve his significant pain. He refused.

There was and would be no risk that his wife would not be cared

for; but that really wasn't the point. He had cared for his lifelong love and he simply couldn't bear to think it otherwise. No-one who knew him would have been in any doubt about his resolve, nor would anyone have doubted the clarity of his decision. His was an end-of-life 'choice' – and a heroic one.

The other involves the recent death of the father of a dear friend who pre-deceased him by about a year. He was in his 92nd year and, in his own words, had wished that he was gone.

He had, some years previously, been a member of a pro-euthanasia organisation. But in conversations over this past year it became clear that, though he was frustrated at his longevity, he was quietly resigned to a natural end.

It came a little more slowly than the doctors expected as his body began to wind down following a brief illness. His care and the provision of comfort at a local palliative care ward were exceptional. Friends, including my wife and I sat with him in turn.

Sitting with him one evening in the quiet of a dimly lit room, I found myself entertaining thoughts that took some time to resolve. His intermittent breathing had me wondering whether the next breath would

be his last and wishing that it might be so; that he might be finally 'at rest'.

How do such thoughts sit with my opposition to euthanasia, I wondered? Is it right to think such thoughts and for what reason? Sure, attending to his care and support over the last year had meant changes to our family routine; his slow demise had intensified the attention. Was I subtly and even unconsciously thinking of myself?

Death is as individual in its character as life itself. Even though the trajectories of particular ailments can be predicted to some degree, the very character of each person and of their relationships to others makes each situation unique.

In my own thinking while by our friend's bedside, I recalled a story once told to me by a palliative care expert. He didn't 'name names' of course, but the details struck me in a different light now.

He told of the relatives of a dying person flying in to be at their bedside and asking whether anything could be done to 'speed up the process' because they had an overseas trip booked in the very near future. This struck me as being very callous when I first heard it and it may well be that this was the case. But it might



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About death (...continued)

also have been of a different and less sinister character.

The impending death of a loved one is an emotional rollercoaster. The mind can easily move from the immediacy of care and support to thoughts of funeral arrangements, who needs to be told and, yes, how all of this affects our routines and even plans made earlier that may now need to be shelved or re-arranged. There's nothing in death that doesn't create some inconvenience.

The anecdote from my medical friend could easily have been an unguarded thought of someone who was struggling to process all of the above and maybe more. It may have had no more import than to articulate the reality that he or she was struggling in their grief and concern.

Another generic story that one often hears is of the last and distant relative that turns up at the deathbed when they hadn't been seen or heard of by their relative in sometime. It's easy to be caught up in the oft-heard judgement that they're only there because of a possible benefit from the estate. Real or not, the judgement is harsh. There may be many reasons why the relative was estranged; their 'turning up' may well be genuine.

In these last days and moments in the life of a loved one, things may be said that, outside of that

situation, might appear harsh or malicious. Even the 'can we hurry this up' comment may not be a call for euthanasia but simply a clumsy expression in dealing with an uncomfortable emotion. But it does serve to show how fragile those moments are and to caution against legal euthanasia based simply on the fragility of human nature and the possibility of subtle coercion that is implied.

The death and dying of a loved one is a testing time for families. So much will be going through their minds. There will be those who simply want to sit, talk, and pray with the dying. Others will want to make sure that the necessary phone calls and arrangements are made. Ultimately, everyone deals with such situations differently.

Let's make space to allow us to focus on our loved one and space also that makes our outward expressions of love and grief – no matter what form they may take – accepted for what they are.

In our modern world we have a tendency to want to control everything about our lives. Death laughs at this and puts it in its place. Our demise is something that we cannot command totally. The slogan 'my life - my choice', for example, is empty and hollow. Defying and denying nature, it attempts to rob us of the complexities of death and dying and the necessary 'timeout' from the daily grind that is meant

to provide space for love, caring, grief and resolve and a focus, ultimately, on the enduring nature of relationships and the fragility of our human condition.

When it comes, embrace it; sit with it. In all of its pain, grief and awkwardness it's not only inevitable it can also be a great teacher and healer. The measure of our grief is a measure of our love shared in death as it was in life.

Dylan Thomas expressed this wonderfully in his poem to his dying father. In *Do not go gentle into that good night*, he pleads with his father to continue to fight for his life while, at the same time, recognising the inevitability of death (the good night). His reflections seem also to be saying that his father has reason to live and no reason to die.

There's a deep and confronting honesty here in Thomas' clearly mixed emotions but something also in the reality that death defies reason in so many ways. We are often left to wonder at why. That such questions ultimately cannot be resolved or explained is simply how it is; it defies our emotions and challenges us to accept it for what it is: that good night.

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"Exit International doesn't have the right to death coach people and put families through such unspeakable grief. But I know there are more out there. It's just a matter of time."

Judi Taylor, Daily Mail Australia, 26 July 2014



Global Prayer & Mission Summit

(by Bjorn Schmid, all scriptures quoted are in the New International Version unless otherwise noted)

We've looked at what is genuine Revival & Unity, and the Vision for the Summit. This month lets look at what is 'Church' - this is a well-discussed topic of course, and this is not the place for theological discourses, but it is good to look back and see what our Lord and one of the first church leaders said about 'Church'.

Church

... *epi houtos ho petra oikodomeō egō ho **ekklēsia***

... *on this rock I will build my **church**,*

kai pylē hadēs ou katischuō autos

and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. [Matthew 16:18 Mounce Reverse-Interlinear New Testament]

This is the first recorded place in the gospels where Jesus uses the Greek word 'ecclesia' to describe His church and bride (although this may be an original translation from spoken Aramaic). Here is a definition of 'ecclesia':

ἐκκλησία, -ας, ἡ Greek transliteration: *ekklēsia* Simplified transliteration: *ekklesia*

Frequency in New Testament: 114

Glossary: church, congregation, assembly; a group of people gathered together

Definition:

church, congregation, assembly; a group of people gathered together. It can refer to the OT assembly of believers (Ac 7:38), or a riotous mob (Ac 19:32), but usually to a Christian assembly, a church: as a totality (Eph 3:10), or in a specific locale (Col. 4:15). **In the NT a church is never a building or meeting place**

A popular assembly, Acts 19:32, 39, 41; in NT the congregation of the children of Israel, Acts 7:38; transferred to the Christian body, of which the congregation of Israel was a figure, the Church, 1 Cor. 12:28; Col. 1:18; a local portion of the Church, a local church, Rom. 16:1; a Christian congregation, 1 Cor. 14:4

(from www.teknia.com/greek-dictionary/ekklesia)

Scholars debate in this passage whether Jesus is building His church on Peter or Peter's confession (or both), but regardless this statement is a proclamation of victory from the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. As God promised through the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel that He will restore the Jews to their land for His glory in spite of their unfaithfulness, He has chosen to build a new assembly of those who receive the divine revelation and confess that Christ is Lord. This assembly or 'church' of Christ-confessors will never be defeated by death or hell.

Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death. [Revelation 2:10-11]

Paul often speaks about the church in a locality or in a group setting, either singly or multiple, but he also refers to it as a single entity, e.g.:

For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. [1 Corinthians 15:9]

Paul also compares Christ and His church to a husband and wife, see what he says in Ephesians 5:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church - for we are members of his body. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. [verses 25-32]

So now we have a context for the church as both bride and body of Christ; 'This is a profound mystery' - indeed!

Last month we looked in detail at 'Unity of the Body of Christ', that God has made unity a priority ("...so that there should be no division in the body" - 1 Corinthians 12:24) and the need for unity is fairly obvious ("If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand." - Mark 3:25), but how do we live here and now as church? What guidance is there from the fathers of the church?

Returning to the beginning of chapter 5 in Paul's letter to the Ephesian church he says:

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. [verses 1-2]

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. [verses 8-11]

Be very careful, then, how you live - not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. [verses 15-17]

So walk in the love of God that includes the sacrifice of ourselves for each other as an offering to Him ("I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God" - Romans 12:1), live in and of the Light ("Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." - Romans 12:2a), and seek God's will and walk in it ("Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will." - Romans 12:2b).

That's a tall order - again, how do we do this? Our very learned friend Paul continues in Romans:

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. [12:3-5]

Earlier we read how Paul described himself to the Corinthian church: "For I am the least of the apostles" (1 Corinthians 15:9) Paul has every right to be prideful of his knowledge and experience as a Pharisee - he was after all the star pupil of Gamaliel (Acts 5:34, 22:3) - the greatest teacher of the law at that time (something like doing a PhD at Oxford or Notre Dame, not at all like the relatively uneducated original apostles of Jesus, who probably had at most the equivalent of a few Certificate IVs and perhaps a Diploma between them). He was then visited by Jesus on the road to Damascus and later elevated by God to Apostle to the Gentile nations, led multitudes of people to Christ and many miracles were given through his prayers; how much humility can he have had really? Do not forget that he was also a Roman citizen - something that amazed many secular leaders he encountered.

And yet, time and time again, Paul demonstrated his humility by boasting in nothing "except Jesus Christ and him crucified." (1 Corinthians 2:2) He accepted to be beaten, mocked, despised and kicked out of cities, and did not allow himself to be a burden to any community of the faithful; often supporting himself by making tents.

Paul believed in being Church wherever he was, not just doing Church on the Sabbath or in home gatherings.

Shouldn't we all aspire to be like Paul? Can we excuse ourselves because we were not at Pentecost? Paul wasn't in the upper room. Can we excuse ourselves because we're not educated like him? But Paul trusted the Holy Spirit and frequently decried human teaching. Can we say we're not perfect enough? Paul said he wasn't and claimed only the grace of Christ's righteousness.

"Christians from other denominations? I can't handle them!" you say, "They have so many strange traditions and hang-ups - I can't do it!" Ok, take two concepts now and call Jesus every morning until you feel better. **You don't have to love the whole Church at once - just the parts of it that God has placed you among.**

1. He will give you strength and wisdom to fellowship with your brothers and sisters - the Church - if you ask Him, as this is in his will for the Church: say to yourself "I can do all this through him who gives me strength." [Philippians 4:13]
2. Put to death any pride or superiority as Paul did - act in love and patience, and persevere - this is the victory you need for yourself, for the Church, and for our King who says:

Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.

The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on them my new name. [Revelation 3:10-12]

Read also this article: <http://kingdombuildersbusiness.wordpress.com/2014/10/17/the-key-is-humbleness/>

Next month - Prayer vs Mission.

Family Forever

These articles written by Dr. John Yates were issued in February 2014.

Church as Family

Personal Matters

Apart from the impact of my own family of origin my greatest griefs in life have been experienced in the Church. So when the Spirit started to challenge me recently to turn away from “them and us” thinking about our local congregation this was very difficult to hear. Such thinking contradicts the basic unit in which God has placed us all, family.

I was deeply challenged on a pastoral visit to one of the older members of the local congregation as he kept referring to “our family up the hill”. We are all both pleasantly and painfully aware that once you’re in a family that’s it! All humans intuitively understand that family bonds are not restricted by space and time and a true family has no place for an inner or outer circle. The challenge of fully embracing the Church as my family has issued in the following reflections.

Family Vision

The bonds of self-giving love we see in natural families owe their origin to the love the Father, Son and Spirit share for one another (1 John 4:8). Central to this love is the way the Father and Son know each other. Jesus emphasised this mutual knowledge by teaching, “I know my own and my own know me, just as the *Father knows me and I know the Father*; and I lay down my life for the sheep.” (John 10:14-15). The “knowing” of Father and Son is one of deep personal intimacy.

In praying about this knowing I received a picture that helps communicate how the Father and Son fully love what they see in each another. If two mirrors are aligned together at their base at an angle of 45 degrees each mirror sees itself reflected in the other. The Father perfectly sees himself in the Son, and absolutely loves what he sees, just as the Son perfectly sees and loves himself in the Father. From eternity the mirror of each of their lives has been flawlessly aligned in the Holy Spirit. This picture relates to a deep experience I recorded last year in Cambodia:

Praying in my filthy street in Phnom Penh it was if I could see in the Spirit what the Father saw when he looked at the cross, I could see that he did not look *at* the cross so much as look *through* the cross, through the absolute purity of heart (cf. Matt 5:8) of the sacrificial Son dying for the world. What he saw was himself, he saw the fullness of his own glory perfectly imaged without any defect, distortion, corruption or stain.

Made as God’s children in his image and glory when we see ourselves as we truly are in the divine likeness we will fully love ourselves *in* God (Isa 43:6-7 cf. 1 John 3:2). The place where such self-recognition occurs is the Church as the Body of Christ. Christ’s presence in his Body is the mirror in which we see ourselves as the Father sees us. To see and love who we are as God sees and loves us in the Church presents an enormous challenge.

Jesus’ Family

In declaring, ““My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.”” (Luke 8:21) Jesus made it clear that his deepest bonds of affection were with the community of God, and not with his family of origin. He confirmed this as a priority for all believers by saying, “““If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.”” (Luke 14:26).

Referring back to our mirror image, the Holy Spirit is always working to align the Church with Christ her head so that in him we may behold our true glory (Eph 5:23-27). “And *all of us*, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.” (2 Cor 3:18).

In our individualistic world it is easy to miss that this is a corporate image. Similarly, the call of “apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry” is a call to assist the Spirit in his work of community alignment. For the word translated “equip” bears the sense of aligning broken bones so that they may heal (Eph 4:13). A truly aligned Body will be full of mutual love, acceptance and nurture; a mature Body heals itself, “the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.” (Col 2:19). The way to such maturity lies through our brokenness.

A Broken Body

You can only be and love who you are in God when you see yourself where God sees you, in the Body of Christ. Over the years I have experienced in the Church many cases of conflict, abuse, depression, anxiety, envy, lying, bitterness, divorce and suicide, these are all *symptoms* of our identity confusion as to who we are as a family. Whilst many parts of the Church stress victory, overcoming and success it is our very brokenness that holds the key to the release of our self-healing properties as Church; “confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed” (James 5:16), “the body...*builds itself up* in love” (Eph 4:16). When shame at sin blocks confession and paralyses the growth of the Church we

Family Forever (...continued)

know that our love is not mature. For this there is only one remedy, love revealed in suffering.

Paul speaks of “my sufferings *for your sake*, filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions *for the sake of his body*, that is, the church” (Col 1:24), and “what I am suffering *for you*” (Eph 3:12). By this he makes it clear that he is willing to die for the sake of his brothers and sisters in Christ. This is the true love we all need to share if we are to see ourselves as God sees us in the Body. When a commitment to suffer for others fills the Church the Holy Spirit is bringing about the most powerful alignment. As his aligning Jesus with the Father's will to die for others led to resurrection power, so our Spirit-led laying down our lives for each other will manifest God's glory amongst us (Eph 3:12; Heb 9:14). “Us” is the family of God. The lesson is clear, as Jesus painfully gave his life for the Church so must we.

Conclusion

The countless natural families are mortal, the one eternal family has God as Father through Jesus in the Spirit's power (Eph 4:4-6; Heb 2:10-11). As we see our family identity mirrored in God's life we as Church will begin to live out the reality that the bonds between us as brothers and sisters in Christ are more powerful than the bonds of natural blood relation (John 1:12-13). Here on earth only the community of the Church can provide *unconditional love* and nurture for its members from the cradle to the grave (cf. Matt 5:46). When the bonds of love in Church-as-family are more powerful than the broken bonds of dysfunctional family ties then the people of God will be visibly healed.

To fulfil this vision the Lord is calling forth spiritual fathers/mothers who will image a leadership in suffering for the flock that others may imitate (Phil 3:17; 1 Thess 1:5-7). Such genuine shared sacrificial love will hold great persuasive power in leading many Australians into the family of God, and we will send out many missionaries ready to sacrifice themselves for parts of the Body yet unborn.

Unbelievable

Personal Matters

Lately my heart has been filled with tension, restlessness and annoyance at the half truths spoken by spouses in struggling marriages, believers wilfully disobeying God and deception in the Church. Observing *internal inconsistencies in my own life* as well as in others seems at times to be driving me out of my mind. As a young Christian I experienced this as the gap between my head knowledge and my heart experience, today I sense it as a gap between Jesus' true goodness and the small measure of his revealed glory in our lives (Eph 3:20-21). Praying over this the Lord unexpectedly reminded me of certain traumatic experiences in early life. As a teenage at home my opinions were at times treated as *unbelievable*; simply not worth taking seriously at all. This most painful experience has led me to ask, “How does God our *Father* feel about being treated as *unbelievable*?” for this is exactly how we treat him whenever we knowingly disobey his Word. The believability of the Father is at the foundation of what it means for the Church to be a forever family.

Here on earth only the community of the Church can provide unconditional love and nurture for its members from the cradle to the grave.

Unbelief Everywhere

Satan convinced Adam and Eve that the limited glory God had given them rendered his commands unworthy of belief (Gen 3:1ff). From experience of suffering has been taken as evidence of divine unfaithfulness (Ps 14:1). Even the splendour of nature and the brilliant design of our own humanity fail to convince us of the trustworthiness of the Creator (Rom 1:18ff). Though delivered from Egypt by marvellous signs Israel failed to enter the Promised Land because of “an evil, *unbelieving heart*...hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.” (3:12-13 cf. Jer 17:9). Sin has rendered us insensitive to the tenderness of God (Rom 1:31; Eph 4:18; 2 Tim 3:3). The tissue which binds families together is sharing in one another's pleasures and pains; in denying that God has pleasures and pains *over us* we have cut ourselves off from knowing the Father. Left to themselves human beings experience “God” as distant, but the scriptures testify that the LORD finds our unbelief intolerable; he “was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and *his heart was filled with pain*.” (Gen 6:6). Only Jesus has ever truly come to terms with this divine empathy and fully known God as Father.

Believability

Christ's command ““Believe in God; believe also in me.”” (John 14:1) makes him the centre of the believability of God. The reality of the Father is revealed in the fullness of the pleasures and pains of the humanity of the Son; ““he who has seen me has seen the Father”” (John 14:9). Jesus once described those who kept his Word as his family (Luke 8:19-21), but when all deserted him in his hour of need the bonds of family seemed terminally broken (John 1:11; 14:27). A measure much more vast than sharing in the pleasures and pains of *ordinary life* would ever be strong enough to bind humanity to God as family. The agony of crucifixion and the joy of resurrection *are* the bonds which unite us to God and reveal him as a believable

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Family Forever (...continued)

Father. The cross reveals that the impact of our unbelief on God is pure sorrow, the resurrection manifest the delight God has in being humanity's Father.

Jesus' terrible cry "'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?'" (Mark 15:34) exposes in suffering human flesh that God's own heart is truly filled with pain (John 1:18). Separation means the inability to feel what God feels, the death of divine-human empathy. To fully enter our fallen condition Christ must experience that for those "without faith it is impossible to please...God" (Heb 11:6); "my righteous one shall live by faith, but if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." (Hebrews 10:38). If the cross is the revelation of what our unbelief does to God, the joy of the resurrection is the manifestation of the Father's pleasure in Jesus' persevering faith (Luke 23:46; Rom 1:4; Heb 12:2). In fully entering into the pains and pleasures of life with God *on our behalf* Jesus is our reconnection with the Father and the one in whom the family of God exists forever. Jesus total empathy with lost humanity must shape the life of the Church today.

Agony and Ecstasy

Our spiritual union with Christ's identification with lost humanity is the key to *making God believable* in our world (Col 1:24). Paul's life brought many to faith because he imaged the bond created between God and us in Christ, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep." (Rom 12:15); "Who is weak without *my feeling that* weakness? Who is led astray, and I do not burn with anger?" (2 Cor 11:29 cf. Acts 17:16; Rom 9:2). These are words from *the heart of a spiritual father* delighting in his children, disabled by the suffering of his offspring and zealous to reclaim his errant progeny. The drama of fully entering into the agony and ecstasy of others is a mirror of the divine love which binds together the family of God for eternity (Col 3:14). This drama must be reclaimed amongst us.

Prophetic witness is the only way in which spiritual transformation can come to the Church in Australia for the sake of the world. The Body needs men and women of who unembarassingly image in their personal anguish and joys that when we treat the Father as unbelievable the impact on him is unbearable, but when we trust him his delights are immeasurable. This is to image the death and resurrection of Jesus; it is to live the gospel. Such a manner of life is the cure for the fractures of Christian marriages, the healing of congregational disunity and the power to reverse conformity to the values of this world. By this mode of life the Word of the Lord moves from unbelievable to fully believable (Acts 6:7; 12:24).

Conclusion

The death and resurrection of Jesus tells us how *much our Father wants to be believed*. Tragically, multitudes in Western society have disassociated themselves from the family of God because the Church has separated itself from the agonies and ecstasies of common life. The current Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse carries a prophetic message for the Church; institutions have no heart. Families however do have a heart, and only the family of God is in a position to heal the dysfunctionalities of natural families, the racial divisions and the organisational indifference plaguing Australian society. The life of Jesus shows us how open God is to human life and challenges us to a radical new openness to one another and his Father. Unbelief is the root cause of all the pains of God and Man, belief is the route to unbridled joy, "Though you do not now see him, *you believe in him* and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory," (1 Pet 1:9). It is time to turn once more for help to Jesus, "the founder and perfecter of faith" (Heb 12:2). Christ's empathy with humanity extends to transforming unbelief into trust. Let's agree to pray together; "'I believe, help my unbelief.'" (Mark 9:24).

Looking for an excuse to visit Perth or want to hear Dr. John Yates? Check out the events below.

The Bride of Revelation

With our nation facing a crisis over the essential nature of marriage the Church urgently needs to rediscover the end-time vision of the Marriage of the Lamb presented with such power in the book of Revelation.

Over 4 teaching sessions Dr. John Yates will share prophetic insights from his recent trip to Patmos, and the region of the seven churches addressed in Revelation.

Red Door Community Church

Unit 4/33 Hammond Rd, Cockburn Central WA 6164

Friday 24 October 7.30-9 pm,

Saturday 25th October 9 am-1 pm

<http://cross-connect.net.au/events/>

This is a free event.

**BLOW THE TRUMPET...
SOUND THE ALARM...**
Joel 2:1



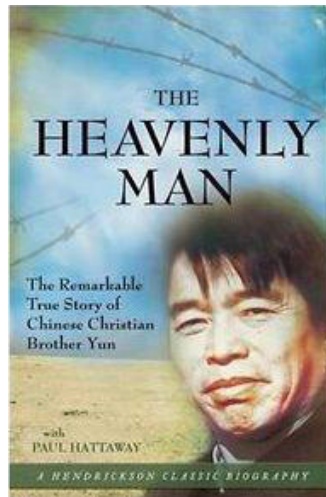
An urgent call to join together across the denominations in fervent united prayer for the persecuted church & the nations

SAT 15TH NOVEMBER
WESLEY UNITING CHURCH
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7PM-9:30PM
STRATEGIC PRAYER
FOLLOWED BY REFRESHMENTS

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The Forest Interchurch Prayer Network

Transforming Sydney Christian Movement

Christian Inner Healing Prayer & Biblical Scriptures for Healing

(Compiled by Ps. Lilian Schmid from different resources)

"The Lord is close to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." Psalm 34:18

Definition of Inner Healing

Inner healing is a ministry that seeks to deal with inner emotional pain. This inner pain may be present due to negative life experiences. An example of this is someone who was badly treated by one or both parents during childhood. They may have been sexually abused or perhaps just generally ignored - not properly valued and loved. In the thoughts of those who practise inner healing ministry the negative experience is the cause of emotional pain which the victim carries with them long after the damage occurred. If someone suffered rejection in childhood there may be evidence of this in the present. Perhaps that person may find it difficult to love others or perhaps they may experience depression or a negative life attitude due to the damage.

The belief that there is value in inner healing ministry is based on Biblical truths. In Psalm 34:18 we read "The Lord is close to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." It is clear from this and many other scriptures that we can be hurt by others and by circumstances in our lives. It is also clear that God loves us and cares for us in an active way. He listens to prayer and is able to answer. He is also able to intervene and heal. Isaiah 53:5 prophesies about Jesus and his redemptive work on the cross. It says "...by his wounds we are healed." This statement refers to the damage that is done to us through the sin that we commit. This restoration includes healing from the negative effects of sin committed against us or from the effects of damaging situations. If we accept that we can carry hurt from past (and present) experiences and that God cares about this and is able to heal us it makes sense to pray and invite the Spirit to come in healing and help those who are damaged.

It should be made very clear that proper diagnosis of a person's problems requires wisdom and sometimes medical help also. The problems that people experience can be wide in their nature and furthermore come out of a large range of experiences and causes. For example someone may suffer from evil or obsessive thoughts as a result of either demonic influence or Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. However both may be the case and if so inner healing prayer may not be appropriate; the treatment of OCD by a medical professional may be sufficient. Later the demonic problem can be dealt with because there is no longer a foothold for the enemy to exploit. One example is someone suffering from depression. This may have no root cause as such but is due simply to a chemical imbalance in the brain and requiring drug therapy treatment. However in our opinion it is highly conceivable that the onset of such a condition could have roots in negative past experiences. If the person receives ministry for those past hurts it is possible that their depression will alleviate.

As has been said wisdom and an unbiased and balanced approach are needed as we ourselves seek help or as we seek to help those who suffer from emotional and mental problems. Without looking for a complete solution from any one particular source of help (be that inner healing prayer medical treatment of depression or any other approach) it should be possible to find the right form(s) of treatment. Furthermore time itself has a healing effect as does our own relationship with God and contact with His loving presence. Also strong friendships and relationships with others - which is important for our wellbeing in any case - can further act to restore the confidence of those with damaged emotions.

How Inner Healing Works

Inner healing ministry would start with conversation and counsel with the person who is suffering to try to establish the cause of that person's problem. It is advisable to have two people to pray and counsel if possible. Even if there is only one person available to minister that person should usually be of the same sex as the counsellee to prevent any sexual distraction. An exception might be if there is a situation where this would be inadvisable. For example the counsellee may have a homosexual inclination and a member of the same sex might cause a distraction to the ministry process. It should also be noted that if there are two people counselling and one is of a different sex to the counsellee this may inhibit the counsellee from conversing freely about some areas of their experience or problem. A solution to this may be to have counselling and prayer sessions held separately or for the other member of the prayer team to arrive at a certain time once conversation has taken place just to pray.

Counsellors should carefully consider the possibility of a mental disorder or condition being present in the counsellee which may need treatment. If a disorder is present or is actually diagnosed this certainly does not mean that inner healing is therefore unnecessary. Above all prayer ministry should endeavour to be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and words of knowledge from God which can provide insight into the cause of a person's problem and

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Christian Inner Healing Prayer & Scriptures (...continued)

some of the ways in which they may be helped. The Holy Spirit is invited to visit the person in the present and take away the pain and negative effect of hurt from the past.

God is able to meet us at our point of need and only He knows in the fullest sense what we are experiencing and the true causes of our problems. It is important to approach inner healing ministry tentatively and humbly so as not to inadvertently "place" problems upon people which may not be the true source of their negative emotional symptoms. An example of this is a counsellor who states outright that a person's current condition for example depression is definitely caused by their mother's lack of love for them in childhood and inner healing ministry should be pursued - however long it takes.

Practical Implementation in the Church

In any given church there may be a lot of emotional need and potentially a significant demand for inner healing ministry. For a church with little knowledge or experience of inner healing it is likely to be a sizeable challenge to start to train her members in this ministry. However if the church does want to help people in this way it is important that at least some basic training and guidance be provided by the leadership. Leaders have a responsibility to ensure that people are helped and not harmed by those ministering. Courses in inner healing ministry are run by some churches and organisations. You can hopefully find information about such courses by running searches related to your country through some of the major Christian index sites.

Although prayer ministry made available in a Christian meeting does not have the benefit of individual discussion and counselling for a person's problems it can still be very beneficial to people. Furthermore if one-to-one ministry is not available in a church due to lack of training or people resources then prayer ministry which is regularly available during or at the end of meetings does at least provide an opportunity for help. Whatever the type of needs people have they can receive help from God in this way. If those responding to an invitation for prayer want to share with the person praying for them what their need is this sort of targeted prayer is particularly helpful.

Those ministering should pray with sensitivity and love. It is important and wise to strictly follow a rule that those ministering should pray for members of the same gender to avoid accidental touch or sexual attraction resulting from close proximity. We are all human and such rules are essential. An exception to this rule might again be in the context of several people praying for an individual and there being at least one person of the same gender as the receiving person. This would be coupled with very sensible placement of touch if the member of the opposite gender praying is laying on hands. For example touching the shoulder but not the chest area (this is certainly the case for women!). In conclusion there are cultural and commonsense considerations which will influence how a church runs its prayer ministry.

Biblical Scriptures for Healing

Isaiah 26:3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed, on thee, because he trusteth in thee.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Phil 4:7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.

Psalms 144:1-2 Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my finger to fight. My goodness and fortress: my high tower, And my deliverer: my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me.

Jeremiah 15:21 And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible.

Revelation 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lord, And the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto death.

Psalms 27:1 The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid.

Isaiah 41:10 Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed for I am God, I will strengthen thee; yea I will help thee; yea I will uphold thee; with the right hand of my righteous.

II Timothy 1:7 For god hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

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Christian Inner Healing Prayer & Scriptures (...continued)

Hebrew 13:5-6 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Psalms 118:1-2 I will Love, thee O Lord my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

Psalms 61:2-3-4 From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. for thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever; I will trust in the covert of thy wings

Luke 10:19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Isaiah 54:17 No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteous is of me, saith the Lord.

Exodus 15:26 He said, If you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you."

Exodus 23:25 Worship the LORD your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you.

Deuteronomy 7:15 The LORD will keep you free from every disease. He will not inflict on you the horrible diseases you knew in Egypt...

Kings 8:56 Praise be to the LORD, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses.

Psalms 91:16 With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation.

Psalms 103:3 Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits--who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases.

Psalms 107:20 He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave.

Psalms 118:17 I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the LORD has done.

Proverbs 4:20-23 My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body.

Isaiah 41:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isaiah 53:4-5 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Jeremiah 1:12 The LORD said to me, You have seen correctly, for I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled."

Jeremiah 30:17 But I will restore you to health and heal your wounds,' declares the LORD, 'because you are called an outcast, Zion for whom no one cares.'

Joel 3:10 Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weakling say, 'I am strong!'

Nahum 1:9 Whatever they plot against the LORD he will bring to an end; trouble will not come a second time.

Matthew 8:2-3 A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. I am willing," he said. Be clean!" Immediately he was cured of his leprosy.

Matthew 8:17 This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases."

Alcohol Abuse

(An article written by Ps. Lilian Schmid.)

There was a little girl who was always responsible for keeping the family secret. Her mum and dad had a very destructive relationship- they were alcoholics. From an early age little Janet had to shut the front door and go out into the world pretending all was OK in her family. Sometimes it was a relief for her to go to school and leave all the shouting and fighting behind her.

Her father was a loud, overpowering man. He usually came home late in the evening after he had been drinking at the hotel and when she and her brother heard him coming they would go to their bedrooms. Her mum and dad would continue drinking and before too long there would be an abusive argument with both yelling and shouting. It was very painful for Janet to hear her mother being called NAMES. She felt very sorry for her mum and knew she must protect her by keeping up appearances and ignoring the fear.

Her father was always verbally abusive but sometimes he was physically violent too. When she was around twelve years old she was terrified by the sounds of a horrible argument and then her mother's desperate cries coming from the bathroom. Even though Janet felt physically sick because she was so frightened, and she would not normally interfere, the gravity of the situation compelled her to act. Her mother's distress was evident when she went into the bathroom and saw her father attempting to strangle her mother. Janet shouted at her father to stop, which he did. He then pushed Janet out of the room. As she retreated to try to finish her homework Janet was shaking because she felt upset.

Keeping such secrets and holding the fears at bay didn't leave much opportunity for Janet to enjoy a normal childhood. She grew up to be her mother's protector and emotional supporter and not feeling she had a place in the world in her own right.

Janet is married now but she doesn't have a good marriage life and she is seeking counselling.

Symptoms of Alcohol Abuse

The following symptoms are associated with abuse of Alcohol

- ⇒ Temporary blackouts or memory loss
- ⇒ Recurrent arguments or fights with family members or friends
- ⇒ Continuing use of alcohol to relax, to cheer up, to sleep, to deal with problems
- ⇒ Headache, anxiety, insomnia, nausea, other unpleasant symptoms when you stop drinking.
- ⇒ Flushed skin and broken capillaries on the face, a husky voice, trembling hands, chronic diarrhoea, and drinking alone, in the mornings, or in secret.

These symptoms are specially associated with chronic alcoholism.

People have been brewing and fermenting alcoholic drinks since the dawn of time. Alcohol is poisonous to human systems and is considered a drug. Nearly 100,000 Americans die each year as a result of alcohol abuse, and alcohol is a factor in more than half of the country's homicides, suicides, and traffic accidents. Alcohol abuse also plays a role in many social and domestic problems, from job absenteeism and crimes against property to spousal and child abuse.

Chronic alcoholism is a progressive, potentially fatal disease, characterized by an incessant craving for, increased tolerance of, physical dependence upon, and loss of control over drinking alcohol. The physical dependence on alcohol may or not be obvious to other people. While some chronic alcoholics get very drunk, others exercise enough control to give the appearance of coping with everyday affairs in a near normal way.

Alcoholism can also lead to impotence in men, damage to the foetus in pregnant women, and an elevated risk of cancer of the larynx, oesophagus, stomach, pancreas, and upper gastrointestinal tract. Heavy drinkers typically have impaired function, and at least 1 in 5 develops cirrhosis.

Alcoholism is particularly insidious among young people and the elderly, in part because the symptoms are not easily recognized until the affected person becomes truly alcohol dependent.

Support for Recovery

Despite the contention that alcoholism is a disease, not a weakness of will, the social stigma still lingers specially for WOMEN. Many alcoholics deny that drinking is a problem, and family and friends who cover up (like Janet's story) an alcoholic's behaviour only help stifle any incentive to reach out for help. It is vital for family and friends to learn about alcoholism and to motivate a loved one to seek help.

Group support helps many alcoholics lead normal, productive lives. Many Americans and Australians are members of Alcoholics Anonymous. Many people seeking help found it from Christian support groups and they succeeded to become sober and turn to God to overcome their addiction.

Some of this research is from the Medical Advisor "Time Life"

A few questions:

1. What do you think of Janet's story?
2. Do you believe that Jesus is able to help you and heal if you had similar upbringing with Alcoholic parents like Janet's?

We are here to help you Please give us a call.

Praying for the Persecuted Church

“Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you endured in a great conflict full of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded.” [Hebrews 10:32-35]

Donate now to *Christmas Care Egypt 2014* and other initiatives to help, love and encourage persecuted Christians by providing Bibles, ministry tools, medical aid and advocacy at www.vom.com.au/make-a-donation



Voice of the Martyrs
Servants of the Persecuted Church

**Christmas Care
EGYPT 2014**

Bringing joy to children of the persecuted church

For \$25, you can give a Christmas gift to a child of the persecuted church in Egypt.

Why Christmas Care?

Christian children are unavoidably vulnerable victims of persecution, experiencing trauma, grief, hardship, and attacks because of their faith in Jesus. By sponsoring a Christmas Care pack, you can share the hope and joy of Christmas with children who are targeted for their faith

See www.vom.com.au/news/2013-christmas-care-report and www.vom.com.au/news/the-impact-of-christmas-care for more information.

MIDDLE EAST: Pastors who Stay in War Torn Areas Find Great Harvest

When Islamic State overruns a village in Syria or Iraq, or even a city of two million people such as Mosul, many will flee, creating a huge flow of refugees to surrounding areas.

But a few Christian pastors have made the courageous decision to stay behind and minister to Christians and Muslims. “They all know they’re at risk, especially if they’re a visible leader,” says Steve Vanvalkenburg, Middle East director for Christian Aid Mission.

He recently received a heartbreaking report from Aleppo, Syria, that underscores the danger. Pastor Imad, who chose to remain for the purpose of sharing Christ, was shot in the head by extremists two weeks ago. His wife has disappeared, likely kidnapped. They both came to Christ from Muslim backgrounds.

Vanvalkenburg doesn’t begrudge those who leave, often to protect their families, but he has great esteem for those who make the conscious decision to remain behind.

“They stay because they have an opportunity to share Christ like never before. For years they’ve prayed for a spiritual breakthrough and now they are seeing it. Their friends and neighbours have never been so open to the Gospel.”

Source: Assist News Service

♥ Praise God for making Himself known during this time of violence and unrest.

(continued next page)

Praying for the Persecuted Church (...continued)

- ♥ Praise Him for the courageous men and women who stay, to faithfully preach the Gospel; pray for their protection.
- ♥ Pray to our Lord who knows and sees all, for the wife of Pastor Imad and others like her. Ask God to thwart the plans of IS and bring an end to the brutality.

PAKISTAN: Dozens of Believers Accused of Blasphemy

Fifty-five Christians were recently accused of blasphemy following an argument over a graveyard. Local Muslims registered a case against the 55 Christians in the Tehsil Samandri district of Faisalabad after the believers had begun to prepare part of an old Muslim graveyard for use by those of their own community.

The Christians insist they had received permission from a sympathetic Muslim landowner to use that part of the graveyard, which was located on his property. Despite permission being granted, the accusing Muslims attacked the Christians and pressed charges. Police then arrested 14 of the believers, including a 12-year-old child. The others have yet to be detained.

Those who were accused had initially approached the Muslim landowner about using the land for burials because their own graveyard was full, causing them to resort to using the same plots two or three times. The Christian graveyard is a fraction of the size of the Muslim one, which covers 24 acres.

Ministry partners of Release International, sister mission of Voice of the Martyrs Australia, recently provided food for the family members of the 14 detainees. They reported that the families are too scared to leave their homes for fear of attack. However, they are hopeful that they have succeeded in persuading the police to change the charge from blasphemy to a lesser one.

Source: Release International

- ♥ Pray that the false charges levelled against these believers will soon be dropped and each detainee released.
- ♥ Pray for the protection of other Christians in this community, that God will shield them from any possible assault.
- ♥ Pray that Pakistan's blasphemy laws will either be repealed or amended to prevent them from being misused to settle personal grievances.

NIGERIA: Boko Haram Violence Rages On

Gunmen entered the village of Manjakwa in the Hawul local government area of Borno state and ordered residents either to embrace Islam or be killed. The insurgents were said to have invaded Shaffa and Tesan Aledeh, which are predominantly Christian communities, on Wednesday evening, 10 September. Before they left unchallenged, they vowed to return if their ultimatum was not met, and killed two retired army officers and an ex-policeman.

Meanwhile, it has been five months since more than 270 schoolgirls found themselves in the clutches of the Islamist militants. Their abduction sparked global outrage and a huge campaign calling for their rescue.

In the first days after the abduction, 57 of the girls reportedly managed to escape from their captors but the remainder are still being held, despite the efforts of the Nigerian government and other international forces including the US, Canada, France, the UK and Israel.

Tragically, at least 11 parents of the kidnapped girls have been killed by militants or died of illness.

More than 2100 people are reported to have been killed by Boko Haram since the girls were taken.

Sources: The World Post, Release International, Punch

- ♥ Please pray for protection for vulnerable Christian communities in northern Nigeria, especially villages in the Hawul area.
- ♥ Pray the Lord will end the torment suffered by the kidnap victims; pray they will be restored to their families.
- ♥ Pray for an end to the violence being perpetrated across northern Nigeria by Boko Haram and other militants.



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Rising up a Faceless Generation

(FACELESS GENERATION MINISTRIES INC - www.fgm.org.au)

We are often asked why we chose to call our organisation Faceless Generation Ministries. It is not merely a name or title God placed in our hearts but we believe that this is a generation and identity which is important for these end times.

In a world where people are increasingly becoming lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, arrogant and ungrateful (as written in 2 Timothy 3:2), God wants to rise up an army of people who radiate the heart and character of Christ and bring glory to His name alone.

Being part of a faceless generation can be summed up in the following verse:

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Philippians 2:3-4)

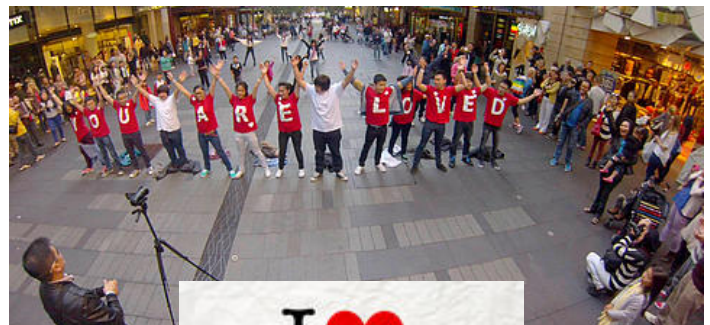
If we take the time to delve into God’s heart, His greatest desire is to see every soul turn back to Him and find salvation in His Son, Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of His Kingdom, it is important that you and I represent who God is to the world, demonstrating His unconditional, altruistic and sacrificial love, His mercy, generosity and humility.

Over the last 5 years, God has given us the privilege and opportunity to spread the message of God’s love through the “LOVE FOR AUSTRALIA” campaign. Some of the past events have included:

- ♥ Love For Australia Festivals: These festivals have mainly been held within the Blacktown City Council area in NSW. Our ministry has a heart to bless and reach out to the Indigenous community and low income families through these events. At a typical festival we offer the community free food, drinks and groceries; jumping castles, petting zoos, pony rides, games for the children, prize giveaways, and much more.
- ♥ Distributing food, drinks and blankets to the homeless within Sydney’s CBD



- ♥ ‘YOU ARE LOVED’ flash mob dances: This is a creative and fun event where we dance to a song about God’s love in various public locations such as universities, shopping centres and populated tourist attractions.
- ♥ Giving away thousands of free bracelets to the general public with the writing “YOU ARE LOVED – JOHN 3:16” and “SOMEONE CARES FOR ME”
- ♥ LOVE FOR AUSTRALIA FOOD DISTRIBUTION: This includes distributing free groceries on a weekly basis to families that are financially struggling or on very low incomes, pensioners and the Indigenous community.



All of these events have one objective and that is to remind people that they are loved and cared for by their Maker.

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Rising up a Faceless Generation (...continued)

Another facet of our ministry was inspired by the verse in Jeremiah 29:7

“But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.”

We believe in the importance of the children of God uniting together and praying for Australia, laying down their own church or ministry banner and simply focusing on seeing God’s Kingdom established in this nation and His will being carried out in Australia as it is in heaven.

In March 2013 and April 2014 we held outdoor praise & worship events in the heart of Sydney CBD (Martin Place) and on the lawn in front of Parliament House in Canberra, respectively. There we gathered with other ministries and hundreds of passionate worshippers and intercessors to pray for Australia.



The most recent project and vision God has entrusted to us, by His grace, is starting a music school, under the name MGS Music, or formerly known as ‘My Guitar School’ (12A/ 135 Kings Rd Five Dock NSW).

Through this school we want to create a loving and encouraging learning environment, instilling a positive seed in the lives of the students and their families and at the same time rising up a generation of worshippers who utilise their gifts and talents for the glory of God.

Yet, if you and I go back to the root of it all and examine what we were all destined to do in this world, it can best be summarised by Jesus’ words:

‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ (Luke 10:27)

We cannot love our neighbours as ourselves and demonstrate God’s love and persona if we do not have a close and intimate relationship with Him. For we must acknowledge that without God and without His love, we are nothing. We are able to do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

Therefore, we must never neglect the importance of sticking closely with the vine and source of all things; placing God at the centre of our lives. By loving Him with all our heart, soul and strength, it is only then can we be part of a humble and faceless generation that is pleasing to God’s heart, who fulfils His plans and carries out His desires.

God bless.

We’d like to welcome you to join our weekly fellowship service every Saturday night at 6pm, as we receive inspiring biblical based teaching and build an intimate relationship with God through passionate praise & worship.

For more information on our ministry, service times and venue details, please visit our website: www.fgm.org.au / www.mgsmusic.com.au / www.facebook.com/fgmaustralia or contact Florence on +61 450 448 377

The Church is Greater than the Denominations

(From a sermon for a confirmation service in "How Shall They Hear" by Rev. Trevor Byard [1911-2006], 1988, Lutheran Publishing House, p 118-119)

An aside worth making is that confirmation is a renewing of our commitment to Jesus Christ and to his church—not to our particular denomination. The denomination in which we are confirmed is a part of the whole; it is not the whole. Some speak and act as if it were.

Meet a hospital patient who had the right idea. His minister on entering the ward found him vastly amused. 'You seem happy', he said. 'I have reason to be', the patient replied, 'I am on the right side of my operation, and you have come; but I've been smiling since yesterday.' He lowered his voice to say: 'See the chap over there? He came in yesterday, and after he was settled in the bed, the nurse came for details for the admission book. When they got to "What is your religion?", the patient said: 'I'm a Christian' 'I can't put that down', the nurse said. 'I want to know are you RC, or CofE, or what?' 'I'm a Christian, I tell you', persisted the patient, 'but if you can't put that down, put me down as a Methodist, that's the next best thing.' Well I hope it is. At least this chap knew the important thing was to be a Christian. To trust in Jesus and to have made him boss, and to call him Saviour and Lord. The church is made up of such Christians from all denominations, and they are, all of them, united in that they have determined that central issue. They believe and confess that Jesus Christ is their life's final authority, and that they are to be Christian first, and denominational second. Don't ever reverse that emphasis. Some have not yet learnt that.

The Cornish, of whom I am one, by their own Cousin-Jack logic were certain that God was really a Methodist, no matter what others may think. Such a one was an old Eaglehawk character. When his doctor told him he had but weeks to live, he told his wife to send for the Presbyterian minister. She, thinking he must be delirious, contacted their own Methodist parson to tell him of John's strange request. When the Methodist minister called, the patient said: 'What are you doing here? I told my wife to send for the Presbyterian man.' 'Yes John', said the minister, 'that's why I've come. We thought you must have made a mistake.' 'No mistake at all', said John. 'But', said the puzzled

parson, 'You are Cornish—Methodist, so why do you want the Presbyterian minister?' 'I want to join the Presbyterian Church', replied John. Their worst fears seem confirmed; he must be delirious. 'But why?' they asked. 'Well', said John, 'Doctor says I've not got long to go; and if I am going to die, it's better for one of them to go than one of us.'

You can't fault the logic—that is, if you happen to be Cornish—although it does rate denominational loyalty somewhat higher than it has any right to be. Although we may have been baptized or confirmed by this or that denomination of the church, we are baptized or confirmed into *his* church, and that is bigger than any of its denominations. The church is made up of all those in all denominations who have settled the question of authority, and now confess that Jesus Christ is their saviour and Lord, the Boss of their lives.

Confirmation is the completion, the fulfilment of all that was promised, hoped for, and claimed in Baptism. At the centre of the Sacrament of Baptism (and the ordinance of Confirmation) is the recognition that faith, as Christians understand and practice it, involved a solemn contract between two parties. The Bible emphasizes that in Baptism God has carried out his part of the contract. Infant Baptism, more than anything else, emphasizes the truth that we cannot earn salvation, nor ever deserve it. Its essence always lies in the truth that 'while we were yet sinners Christ dies for us'. That is why all who were baptized as infants can legitimately look back with joy, as I do, at being received and welcomed into the church of God before we even knew about it, much less understood it. In

Confirmation, we then welcome the opportunity to reaffirm our part in the contract, to say Yes to God's claims in Christ on our lives, to accept his Lordship, and to make him Boss over our lives.

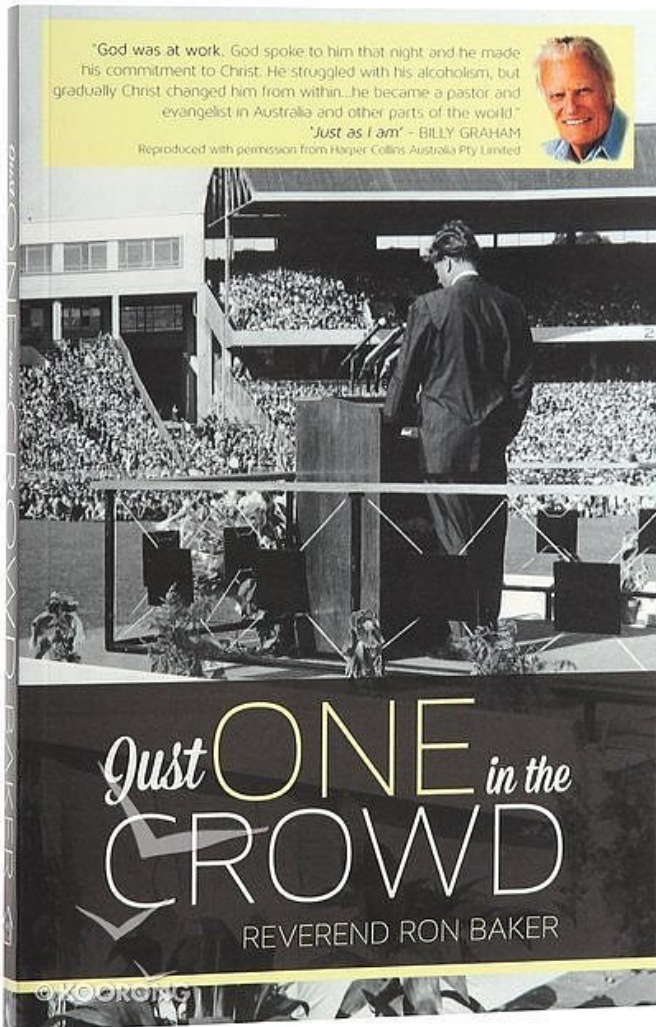
If Jesus is their Saviour and Lord, they are our beloved fellow Christians. We must never 'unchurch' each other on any doctrinal point, as long as the centrality of 'Jesus is Lord' is assured.

Another aside. My unremembered baptism means much to me; my high view of Baptism is, I believe, theologically sound and biblically approved, and enabled me, among other things, to stand with Luther. When he was grievously pressed by temptation, he used to repel the devil with the words; 'I am baptized'. The same is true for me, and feels right to me. Yet I pause to add that this never means my rejection of my friends of other denominations who do not in conscience practice infant baptism, or those who have not availed themselves of baptism of any kind. If Jesus is their Saviour and Lord, they are our beloved fellow Christians. We must never 'unchurch' each other on any doctrinal point, as long as the centrality of 'Jesus is Lord' is assured.

Just One in the Crowd

Dear friends the story of my life was written to reveal my journey as it happened so that the story may help people who are struggling in some of the struggles I went through and that those people will find the answer and hope I found in the lord Jesus Christ and they too like myself give him all the glory.

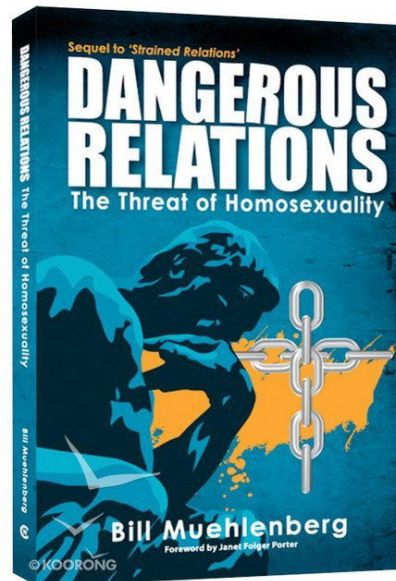
Your friend, Rev. Ron Baker.



Find it at **Koorong** or on their website at

<http://www.koorong.com/search/product/just-one-in-the-crowd-ron-baker/9780992519261.jhtml>

Dangerous Relations The Threat of Homosexuality



In this follow-up on his book "Strained Relations: The Challenge of Homosexuality", Bill Muehlenberg documents the very real war we are in regarding sexuality in general and the militant homosexual lobby in particular.

Available at **Koorong** and from **Amazon**.

(Read more about it at billmuehlenberg.com/2014/07/28/dangerous-relations/)

Bill Muehlenberg has authored hundreds of articles and book reviews, and provides commentary on issues of the day on his website CultureWatch at billmuehlenberg.com

Secretary of the Family Council of Victoria, and part-time lecturer in philosophy, theology, and ethics at several theological colleges, Bill is also a frequent media commentator, with articles and comment in many of Australia's leading newspapers and journals, and has appeared on most major television and radio current affairs shows and news programs.

Bill has a BA with honours in philosophy (Wheaton College, Chicago), an MA with highest honours in theology (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Boston). He is currently completing a PhD in theology. Originally from America, Bill now lives in Melbourne, Australia and is married with three sons.



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 here <http://publicchristianity.org/about>

What happens when you dare to ask God for the impossible??

Does the brand of faith you live by produce the kinds of results in your lives that we read about in the biblical stories of men and women of faith? Chances are, for most of us including me, not even close. But it doesn't have to stay that way.

I had the privilege of hearing Steve Furtick speak at a conference in Chicago a few years ago, and I love the book he wrote that he spoke about then, "Sun Stand Still", it really challenge's us to live our lives with an audacious faith.

This audacious faith that we see in the Bible, the faith that caused Joshua to pray and see the sun stand still in the sky, is the same faith we can claim for ourselves today. This is a call for all of us to begin living the life of audacity God has created and saved us for.

In Joshua 10:12-14

12-13 The day God gave the Amorites up to Israel, Joshua spoke to God, with all Israel listening: "Stop, Sun, over Gibeon; Halt, Moon, over Aijalon Valley."

And the Sun stopped, the Moon stood stock still Until he defeated his enemies.

13-14 The sun stopped in its tracks in mid sky; just sat there all day. There's never been a day like that before or since—God took orders from a human voice! Truly, God fought for Israel.

So what is that, a Faith in God, or the Faith of God to ask for the sun to stand still, to ask God for the impossible?

In Romans 8: 5-17 from The Message

5-8 Those who think they can do it on their own end up obsessed with measuring their own moral muscle but never get around to exercising it in real life. Those who trust God's action in them find that God's Spirit is in them—living and breathing God! Obsession with self in these matters is a dead end; attention to God leads us out into the open, into a spacious, free life. Focusing on the self is the opposite of focusing on God. Anyone completely absorbed in self, ignores God, ends up thinking more about self than God. That person ignores who God is and what he is doing. And God isn't pleased at being ignored.

9-11 But if God himself has taken up residence in your life, you can hardly be thinking more of yourself than of him. Anyone, of course, who has not welcomed this invisible but clearly present God, the Spirit of Christ, won't know what we're talking about. But for you who welcome him, in whom he dwells—even though you still experience all the limitations of sin—you yourself experience life on God's terms. It stands to reason, doesn't it, that if the alive-and-present God who raised Jesus from the dead moves into your life, he'll do the same thing in you that he did in Jesus, bringing you alive to himself? When God lives and breathes in you (and he does, as surely as he did in Jesus), you are delivered from that dead life. With his Spirit living in you, your body will be as alive as Christ's!

12-14 So don't you see that we don't owe this old do-it-yourself life one red cent. There's nothing in it for us, nothing at all. The best thing to do is give it a decent burial and get on with your new life. God's Spirit beckons. There are things to do and places to go!

15-17 This resurrection life you received from God is not a timid, grave-tending life. It's adventurously expectant, greeting God with a childlike "What's next, Papa?" God's Spirit touches our spirits and confirms who we really are. We know who he is, and we know who we are: Father and children. And we know we are going to get what's coming to us—an unbelievable inheritance! We go through exactly what Christ goes through. If we go through the hard times with him, then we're certainly going to go through the good times with him!

So, who are we in Christ, do we have Faith in God, or the Faith of God? I think that sometimes a faith in God is overcome by our own fear, with an expectation that maybe God won't do the impossible, so we accept and expect less than what God has planned for us. Or do we have that childlike faith full of expectation and anticipation. Let's all greet God with a, what's next Papa? Our God, is the God of the impossible, a God of miracles, a God of signs and wonders, a faithful God, a loving God.

And in John 14: 11- 17 from The Message

11-14 "Believe me: I am in my Father and my Father is in me. If you can't believe that, believe what you see—these works. The person who trusts me will not only do what I'm doing but even greater things, because I, on my way to the Father, am giving you the same work to do that I've been doing, You can count on it. From now on, whatever you request along the lines of who I am and what I am doing, I'll do it. That's how the Father will be seen for who he is in the Son. I mean it. Whatever you request in this way, I'll do.

The Spirit of Truth

15-17 "If you love me, show it by doing what I've told you. I will talk to the Father, and he'll provide you another Friend so that you will always have someone with you. This Friend is the Spirit of Truth. The godless world can't take him in because it doesn't have eyes to see him, doesn't know what to look for. But you know him already because he has been staying with you, and will even be in you!

There are lots of stories in the bible about men and women of amazing faith, some with Faith in God and others with the Faith of God. If we think of Jesus walking on the water, and when Peter is asked to come out of the boat to greet Him, which one had Faith in God, and which one, the Faith of God.

Mathew 14: 22-33

22 Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. 23 After he had dismissed them, he

(continued next page)

What happens when you dare to ask God for the impossible?? (...continued)

went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, ²⁴ and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

²⁵ Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

²⁷ But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

²⁸ "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

²⁹ "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.

³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

³¹ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

Then we have David who slayed Goliath with a single stone in a slingshot. Moses and his staff parting the sea for the Israelites to pass, Abraham who was asked to sacrifice his son Isaac, Mary, the virgin mother of Jesus Christ, or Peter who saw people healed that came under his shadow.

So how does that look for us? What happens when you dare to ask God for the impossible? Do we have faith in God, or the faith of God?

I can think of some great stories of Gods amazing miracles that have affected my life, where we too had dared to ask God for the impossible, if I can share some of these stories with you.

I have only been a Christian for a short 14 years, not a long time in over 60 years. Our whole family, my wife Debbie, daughter Belinda and son Scott were all saved over a 6 month period. We went from worldly people with no faith, to committed Christians and every one of us is now involved in ministry, Scott is a school chaplain, Belinda a pastor at our church and me, well my work at the Salvos is all about ministry. That was the first real miracle in our lives, a family transformed.

When my wife Debbie had a ruptured aneurism exactly ten years ago, the neurosurgeon said that she should have never survived, we had a prayer network around the world praying for her, and she not only survived but now has almost 100% recovery, and here we are ten years later, with a faith that is even stronger today than it was in 2004. Praise God.

Another miracle, or maybe just lucky? I remember driving up the F3 freeway to Gosford one afternoon after work, I wasn't tired, it was around 6 pm, I was travelling in the fast lane doing around 110 kilometres an hour, there was traffic all around me. Then I woke up, I was in the slow lane, traffic still all around me, and still doing 110! Now how could that happen, maybe God's protection?

And the miracles continue! I was taking my wife Debbie to

the doctors in Liverpool Street on a Saturday, as we parked a fair distance away, I put her in the wheelchair and proceeded towards the doctors and came to the pedestrian crossing at the traffic lights opposite the medical centre. I pressed the button and waited for the lights to turn green so that we could cross the road safely. The lights turned green we started to cross the road, there was a young guy next to me as we crossed together. Then suddenly I had a vision, seeing me and Debbie being hit by a car and we were rolling down the road, I balked just as we got to the median strip, and the young guy next to me stopped at the same time. A car doing around 70, came hurtling through the red light, he missed Debbie in the wheelchair by around 10 centimetres, if I hadn't stopped we would have been hit. How great is God, he is always protecting you!

I remember when we did outreach for our church on the central coast, we were coming to Kirribilli to spend some time at a social housing estate with around 300 apartments. It was pelting down with rain in the morning, so we were fielding calls and texts, "is it still on, are you going to cancel because of the rain". The response we gave was, no it is still on, we will pray that the rain stops for the entire time we are there, and oh, by the way, don't bring your umbrellas! Now this "don't bring your umbrellas is significant".

As we drove to Sydney in prayer, the rain continued to bucket down, but we had faith, the rain would stop. As soon as we arrived in a convoy of around 6 cars, the rain stopped! We unloaded our gear, set up the band and the barbeque and proceeded with our worship, gave the message of our amazing God, and prayed for people until around 3 pm. The rain threatened the entire time we were there, but it didn't rain, not a drop.

We packed up the cars, set off back up the highway and you guessed it, the rain came down and didn't stop till much later that night. God had faithfully stopped the rain for around 5 hours. Now about the umbrellas, if we pray that it won't rain, if you have faith, why would you pack umbrellas? If you pack your umbrellas when you pray, is that really trusting in God? Is that faith in God, or the faith of God? Could you imagine Jesus, walking on the water with a life jacket on, just in case he started to sink?

Part of my personal ministry is at Jubilee church on Saturday afternoons where we run healing rooms. Now to see some of the things that happen, the amazing miracles that God performs every Saturday, you would be as amazed as I am. We have seen legs that were different lengths grow out in front of our eyes, we have seen bi polar disappear, we have seen cancer fully healed, scoliosis disappear, the list is endless, and what did Jesus say, a real faith is when you believe without seeing, what about if you see miracles like this, I tell you, that gives you faith beyond your imagination!

Another story to finish about Gods amazing miracles, in January last year we prayed for a good friend let's call him Jim, who was scheduled for open heart surgery, they had a

(continued on page 26)

What happens when you dare to ask God for the impossible?? (...continued)

fully blocked artery. Our prayer was that the surgery was not going to be necessary, that God would completely heal them and the surgery would be cancelled. I met with Jim the day before the scheduled surgery and was told that they had the surgery cancelled because their heart had repaired itself and created its own bypass! All praise to God!

Now that's not all, the next day on the Tuesday, I met up with the owner of our local restaurant, his name was Roy. I asked him how he was going, he said OK but, I have to go in for open heart surgery on Friday, I have a fully blocked artery. Well, guess what, I said funny you should mention that, I told him about yesterday's miracle and said, maybe I can pray for your heart, and I expect that God will fully heal you too. I prayed for him and said good bye and asked him to let me know how he got on.

The following Monday, I was walking through the city and there he was walking in front of me in Castlereagh Street. I tapped him on the shoulder and said Roy, how are you? He responded "Peter I was trying to get in touch with you but didn't have your number. The surgery was cancelled, when I went to my heart specialist before the surgery, he advised me that the artery has healed itself, it has created its own bypass".

How amazing is our God, all praise and glory to Him.

We need to live a life of expectation, we need to consider if it is to be Faith in God, or the Faith of God, will you dare to ask God for the impossible, you choose, but I suggest you don't bring your umbrellas.

So if I can finish with some amazing words from Ephesians 3 14.21, The Passion Translation by Brian Simmons, and let these be words that I speak over every one that is

reading this message, this is for you, yes YOU!

So when I think of the wisdom of His plan I kneel humbly in awe before the Father of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah, the perfect Father of every father and child in heaven and on the earth. And I pray that He would pour out over you the unlimited riches of His glory and favour until supernatural strength floods your innermost being with His divine might and explosive power.

Then by constantly using your faith, the life of Christ will be released deep inside you, and the resting place of His love will become the very source and root of your life, providing you with a secure foundation that grows and grows.

Then, as your spiritual strength increases, you will be empowered to discover what every holy one experiences - the great magnitude of the astonishing love of Christ in all its dimensions. How deeply intimate and far-reaching is His love! How enduring and inclusive it is! Endless love beyond measurement, beyond academic knowledge - this extravagant love pours into you until you are filled to overflowing with the fullness of God!

Never doubt Gods mighty power to work in you and accomplish all this. He will achieve infinitely more than your greatest request, your most unbelievable dream, and exceed your wildest imagination! He will outdo them all, for His miraculous power constantly energises you. Now we offer God all the glorious praise that rises from every church and every generation through Jesus Christ - and all that will yet be manifest through time and eternity. Amen!

Peter Alward

Every year, Christians around the world gather on the first Sunday of November to pray for the persecuted Church.

As Victoria and fellow believers at the Deeper Life Church in Gombe, Nigeria, prayed together for the persecuted church, they couldn't have imagined how soon they would be persecuted themselves. But at that very moment, gunmen opened fire in the church, killing Victoria's father and younger brother. Yet Victoria's hope in Christ shone as she spoke of her father, declaring:

'He is not dead. Definitely one day we are going to meet again.'

Join the Christians in Gombe and others around the world as we unite in prayer for the persecuted on Sunday 2 November, the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church.

Prayer is the most vital part of our ministry as we depend on God while supporting persecuted believers. The Bible urges us to call on God on behalf of other believers. Through prayer, God protects, strengthens and sustains his people in persecution and uses them to proclaim his glory in restricted nations. Go to <http://www.vom.com.au/idop/> for more information.

'Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me.' Romans 15:30

Lausanne Movement - Global Mission Sunday

16 November 2014

The Lausanne Movement (www.lausanne.org/) invites you and your congregation to join with churches around the world to participate in Global Mission Sunday on 16 November 2014.

Global Mission Sunday is a way to connect your local church with God's mission and introduce missional challenges and opportunities facing the global church today.

It is the hope of the Lausanne Movement that participating in Global Mission Sunday will deepen your congregation's awareness of and response to the momentous changes taking place in mission and ministry around the world.

Global Mission Sunday in 2014 has been initiated to mark the 40th anniversary of the Lausanne Movement. In the four decades since the first International Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne, Switzerland, the Lausanne Movement has connected thousands of individuals passionately committed to making Christ known, leading to hundreds of networks, ministries, and partnerships. Connect your church with God's mission on Global Mission Sunday. May God bless your church and churches across the world as we work together to make Christ known.

Sign Up Your Church to Participate at <http://www.lausanne.org/about/blog/global-mission-sunday?lang=en>

“Lausanne is a global movement that connects influencers and ideas for the global mission of the gospel for every person; an evangelical church for every people; Christ-like leaders for every church; and kingdom impact in every sphere of society.”



News and Events



City Silence is a weekly Holy Hour for young adults (aged 18-35) at St Mary's Cathedral every Tuesday from 6.30-7.30pm.

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

Genr8 is the premier provider of School Chaplains in NSW, managing over 150 Federal Government Funded School Chaplaincies.

Genr8 partners with schools in the recruitment, training, supervision and ongoing professional development of School Chaplains.

This ensures the placement of high quality Chaplains who are well equipped to support young people and strengthen local communities.



Transforming Sydney is partnering with Gener8 to bring awareness of the role of Chaplains and the need for SRE teachers.

For more information how to help please go to <http://www.genr8.org.au>



Pastors Network & Prayer Groups Across Sydney

We encourage you to contact and attend a group that is close to you - join together and be strengthened.

NOTE: the contacts in the below link have been given to Transforming Sydney by the people concerned for the express purpose of inviting others to attend their prayer group - the details are not provided for any other purpose and we ask that you do not copy these details onto other websites and social media without the permission of the respective owners.

Please go to Transforming Sydney Website

www.transformingsydney.org/TSPrayerGroups.html

to find a list of Prayer Ministries and Groups.

Finally! A Christian alternative to Halloween

If you find yourself troubled by Halloween each year, unsure of how we should respond as Christians, then read on.

On the 31st of October, be a part of 'Halo-een'.

Why Halo-een?

A lot of Christians have an issue with Halloween and what it portrays and encourages in our children, and yet many do not know how to respond.

Some turn the lights off and pretend they are not home when children come trick or treating at their door. Some put lollies in the children's trick or treat bags and then feel guilty because they are supporting something they really don't believe in. Others struggle to explain to their own children why dressing up as a witch or ghoul is not something they would like them to do, and leave their children confused and feeling left out.

We know, because we've done all of those things ourselves.

Halo-een is a chance for Christians to:

- ⇒ Take a stand without judging other people's choices
- ⇒ Behave with love for our neighbour
- ⇒ Be 'in the world but not of the world'
- ⇒ Be good role models for our children
- ⇒ Live up to the expectations of the world around us
- ⇒ Be trusted people who are congruent with our faith



What you can do differently

On the 31st of October each year, rather than hiding or feeling guilty about participating, there are 3 things you and your children can do to celebrate Halo-een:

1. **Going Out** - Dress your children as angels instead of witches or ghouls. Instead of knocking on doors asking for something, the angels knock on doors and give something. Instead of 'Trick or Treat', we say 'Love and Peace' and give a Love + Peace card or a card with a small Bible verse, and a love heart chocolate
2. **Staying In** - Respond to those children who knock on your door by saying 'Love and Peace' when they say 'Trick or Treat', and give them a Love + Peace card, and/or a Bible verse card and a love heart chocolate
3. **Praying** - Pray for those who are going out, that they will be protected and safe

Available for you

We have made some beautiful Love + Peace cards and Halo-een Bible Verse cards that you can purchase on our website – www.haloeen.com

We also encourage your children to make their own Bible verse cards to give out on the day, so that they are really giving something of themselves.

If you are on social media, join the Halo-een community and share your photos and stories on Facebook and #Halo-een to track the growing movement around the world! Please note that this is a not-for-profit program, and we are simply covering our costs and may make a small margin on any purchases, all of which is directed to entente foundation, the organisation behind Halo-een, which is dedicated to building and restoring trust around the world.

Let others know about it

The Halo-een video has been produced for you to share with others, in your church service announcements, on your website and Facebook page.

Feel free to include any information from the website or this letter in any announcements.

If you have any questions or comments regarding Halo-een, please call us on

02 8850 4330, or email us at foundation@entente.com.au

We look forward to you being a part of this positive change.

With Love and Peace

Vanessa Hall, Director, Entente Foundation - www.entente.com.au