

Transforming Sydney & Prayer Strategy for the Spheres of Influence



This year, the Newsletter has a National & Global focus and mission for the spheres of influence in Family, Church, and the Marketplace.

TRANSFORMING SYDNEY

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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.

In the October 2015 edition - focus on Health and Science

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Prayer Calendar 2015

See the daily prayer points on the 2015 Prayer Calendar - www.transformingsydney.org/TSPayerCalendar.html
On pages 38 and 39 is a **Daily Prayer Calendar for November to pray for the sphere of Media & Entertainment** (In the September newsletter is a Daily Prayer Calendar for September to pray for Health & Science - see also prayerstrategy.org)

Upcoming Events

- 31 October - Halo-een! A Christian alternative to Halloween (p19)
- 8 November - International Day of Prayer (p23)
- 13 November - Australian Communities Forum (p18)
- 14 November - Prophetic Development Day (p30)

halo een

From the Convenor

Donate, Donate, Donate!?

I sent out the following message to the network on 26 Sep 2015:

Dear friends,

Many Christian people in marketing ask me this question: "How many people do you have in your network". Honestly I smile and I respond to them like this "I have 7000 people in my network but I have trillions of angels supporting me in Heaven." Sometimes people do fundraising to help the poor and provide shelters and seek others to donate. That is good, but we must have faith and believe that God is going to stir peoples' hearts to donate and be generous and then His manna from Heaven will be poured over the fundraising.

This reminds me of 2 stories from the bible

- 1. The story of Peter in Acts 3:3 - Peter did not have money but he healed the lame Beggar*
- 2. Jesus prayed for the multitude and fed them - Matthew 14:13-21 (Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand)*

Brothers and sisters, if you walk in faith and believe God, He will provide all your need and more.

You also need to pray and believe what you ask for. You need to allow God to be part of what you are doing. You need to acknowledge others in your missions.

Please think in the spirit, not in the flesh, in whatever you are involved with and in.

At the end give the Lord praise and glory in everything you do. Ask ...Believe....Receive.

God bless you all

I then received this response from a respected businesswoman (edited for brevity):

This short & powerful message is better than any sermon I have heard.

Thank you for helping me to return to the radical but sheer success of the Holy Spirit remarkable ways!

Your email reply confirms and gives me peace not supporting our church project in Africa and an indigenous minister with their means of using gofundme and the way they harassed me via Facebook and SMS.

I just checked FB [and I wish] they stopped relentlessly using such means. How they can tag the video promo to my FB page? How can they be so desperate as to be so rude? Donate now! Tell your crowd to donate! Every day harping on it.

I strongly believe the body of Christ has to be taught not to harass business people. I am off FB for 2 months already because every pastor and itinerant minister in the world wants to befriend me when they know I am in business.

*Christian cyber bullying? Everybody expect business people to foot their bill and have the gall to ask for huge sums (of money). **I am going into hiding... !***

God bless you, Lilian Schmid

www.prayerstrategy.org

www.businesswomenhealingministry.org

www.transformingsydney.org

From the Editor

Compiling the articles in this month's newsletter, I am again amazed and renewed in my confidence of three things:

1. The Body of Christ is educated, engaged and wise beyond our individual capacity because we are united across time and space by the Holy Spirit and by the inspired testimonies that our brethren who lived before have written to us.
2. Life here in the temporal is incredibly sophisticated and beautiful, the more so because it is limited by time - a rose or orchid is treasured, appreciated and cared-for while it has vigour and blooms, because the flowers we seek last for only days before they fade and perish. A warm smile from an elderly person in pain and failing health is so precious.
3. Even though there is so much trying to tear us away from being humans made in the image of God, I am overwhelmed with hope - people are being transformed because God is always there waiting to welcome us if we turn humbly to Him. He may not always make things easier for our earthly lives, but we are never alone even when we feel the grip of death; we know that we have a family waiting to welcome us on the other side, in God's timing of course and not ours.

I'll leave you with an insight from one of our elders:

"What is the Christian meaning of death? If we look at the most painful moments of our lives, when we lost a loved one – our parents, a brother, a sister, a spouse, a child, a friend – we realise, even amid the tragedy of loss, even when torn by separation, the conviction arises in our hearts that everything cannot be over, that the good given and received has not been pointless. There is a powerful instinct within us, which tells that our lives do not end with death." Pope Francis, General Audience Address, 27 November 2013

Grace, Bjorn Schmid

Thoughts on Health

From Loree Rudd, June 19 2015

On Page 2 of the Sydney Morning Herald today the first headline reads "Poor hit hardest under cuts to public hospitals". Last night I watched the ABC documentary "Between a Frock and a Hard Place" then a special Q&A with panel and audience mostly identifying with the community that some USA politicians have clumped together under the acronym LGBTI - lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex. A minority, one panel member, long serving NSW politician Fred Nile, and it seemed some audience members who applauded certain comments he made, identified more broadly with the human family and showed by their participation that they care about the welfare of all who claim to have sexual identity differences from mutual male-female sexual attraction or more attractions than one type and/or sexual identity conflict between body and mind.

Finance, personal story, belief and scientific argument are defining health in powerful ways.

Health in Australia is an industry - huge and hungry. It is struggling and yet an ever-advancing scientific frontier. It has overtaken former major Australian industries. For those outside it there is mystery, foreign specialist language, awe, fear, unwarranted faith and trust or equally unwarranted abusive distrust. Every citizen has experience of it and every personal story is unique.

As a not highly qualified registered nurse (working in public hospitals in S.E. Queensland - during hospital-based training over 1981-1987 and since 2001 - part-time in Canberra in the ACT over almost a decade and one brief month of night shifts in Melbourne while I met and visited my cat in quarantine en route from abroad) my insider role is small and my knowledge limited.

Yet I am an insider and meet people passing through in ranks of staff, patient and visitor. Some patients are carefully and methodically healed, some are snatched from death, some are born and some are given a new lease of life, a transformation at any and every age, through breakthroughs in scientific knowledge, technology and expertise as well as spiritual and psychological understanding. Some survive horrendous hospital errors, large or small. There is extreme anguish in loved ones of those who don't ... and for caring and careful staff involved in any way. In perfect transition too some patients farewell this world in personal and

family peace and gratitude, despite the pain of loss for loved ones.

To my mind there is no separation of divinity and science. God spoke. His Living Word became and becomes reality: wondrous, intricate, complex. Science seeks to know that reality without myth, superstition, hearsay or religion.

Pure. For God is neither myth nor religion. He is reality - the Living Word incarnating substance and life, loving, sustaining, transforming and healing substance and life.

This I know about Him with all my being: He loves us with His whole heart, His whole soul, His whole mind and His whole strength. We, created in His image, live in His power, joy and intimate, creative love when we love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. His commandments to us are for our health, fulfilment, joy in inner-peaceful and purposeful living. This is prosperity.

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Our bodies will always get wear and tear when we are living in unity with Him - often more destructive wear and tear when we aren't. So He patches us up. A holy health industry cooperates with Him, giving people informed choice, a true picture of extent and limitation of humanity's scientific expectation from knowledge, trial and clinical experience. A holy health industry considers staff skill mixes, expertise, availability and alertness ... and any compromise in these likely to affect

patient safety and outcome ... for every decision made.

The reality is that all staff work in less than ideal, yet hopefully always adequate and ever-improving settings, safeguards and systems, reporting and seeking urgent remedy for critical shortfalls in any area that would compromise patient welfare. There are always options and decisions must often be made in a hurry to preserve life or function of a person in need.

God does not prevent the inevitable death and decay of our bodies and neither should we. He has a better glorified body for us beyond time - a body fit for eternity.

Do we understand? No, but we work with Him and His life-supporting scientists (medical/health science incorporates multiple professions) to patch up, repair,

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Thoughts on Health (...continued)

heal, render to the maximum possible extent useful those body parts and functions threatening early decline or death. He even restores plus invigorates so that a person becomes more whole/healthy than they ever have been.

When I reflect on the health industry I think of one particular story about Jesus. He crossed a lake - needing to still a life-threatening storm mid journey - to reach the land of the Gadarenes/Gerasenes. It was His idea and specific direction to His disciples to make the journey. Why? (Luke 8:22-39) There one man beyond human help needed Him. We learn that this one man, on seeing Jesus, fell down before Him and cried out with a loud voice. We also learn that tormenting spirits are tormented themselves, preferring the habitation of swine and watery depths to the abyss from which they've roamed and to which they must return.

The man, healed, is anointed and appointed by Jesus as a health worker in his home town. He is so filled with joy, however, that the whole district is compelled to witness the miracle of his life reborn. We also learn that many onlookers preferred ill health for this man, should they have to choose - as they perceived they had - between healing for people in need and a profitable business model.

I am struck by Jesus' compassion for the tormenting, tormented demons who left the man by His authority - He gave them their requested reprieve in swine and watery depths.

He knew that He Himself would soon visit the abyss that chained their spirits in torment - eternal hopelessness and separation from Life and Love, affirmation and honour. He would be murdered in ignorance (for some well-meaning, for others culpable) by religious folk who would get the state to do their dirty work.

Jesus entered death and hell, and in the victory of obedience to His Father through horrendous conflict and affliction - the whole host of the heavenly army with Him - He defeated the accuser, hater, liar, deceiver and gaoler of humanity, thereby breaking the chains that bound human spirits to that abyss and its torments. Even here they were free to choose. He released to live and reign with Him all those willing to go. I doubt if there were many or any 'stayers', for the lie of their accuser/satan was exposed in Jesus presence. It is the same ever since.

Jesus returned to earth in His glorified body, suited to eternity, able to move and live in time ... recognisable by those who knew Him in spirit, word, voice, language, recollection and manner, but also in physical evidence of His identity. He prepared a meal for His closest disciples by the sea. The Supper of the New Covenant before His death had sealed His taking all that belonged to and had been lost by humanity as equally His and it gave all that was His into humanity's ownership. He restored what Peter had lost. He opened understanding of all He had said and done, told them where He was going and why. The Holy Spirit would come and infill them so He could abide with each and every person. He instructed them and us to love each and every person as He had loved. Big love, faithful and true. The Father's heart incarnate. He is preparing a place for all who

embrace Him who not only hear, but obey His command to love, to abide in Him.

What has all this got to do with workloads, budgets, research, the P.B.S., surgery waiting times, spiralling costs and relentlessly rising expectations of the health industry?

Just this. When we lose sight of God and His purposes, the health industry can feed on promoting a focus on fear and death, a fear of life, a learned anxiety both placated and prolonged by reliance on increasingly expensive tests, treatments and surgeries, a money-

making machine, a wealth-sucking parasite, an excuse for abandoning personal stewardship of our body, mind, soul and spirit - a curse on governments and citizens alike.

When I see Jesus crossing the lake to the land of the Gadarenes I see 'Doctors Without Borders' and multiple organisations and generous persons looking beyond self to all humanity in need, even for one life; I see the unsung shift workers who don't shirk their duty for personal convenience, who don't exploit the system; I see all who fearlessly face the storms and challenges of life to bring life and hope and healing without motivation of profit yet with an eye to stewardship of every valuable resource ... especially I see hardworking politicians, fashionably ridiculed because of the abuse of some of them, carefully planning and allocating

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Thoughts on Health (...continued)

appropriate funds for resources for health promotion, maintenance and restoration - and so we prosper, God prospers us.

I rejoice when I hear Jesus' answer to this question: "Having loved God with all my being, who is this neighbour You ask me to love as myself? What does this mean in practice?" (Luke 10:25-37)

His answer points to the uselessness of religion - any religion, all religions - and the uselessness of long-held appointed inherited roles of blessing within them, IF, IN FACT, we are ignoring the needs of others before our eyes. The expert on religious understanding and the man born into a priestly inheritance passed by the robbed and beaten man left to die on the roadside they were travelling. The currency of the Father's heart is mercy.

Jesus' motivation was and remains compassion for all - even those sure they could see when they were really spiritually blind; those sure they were living a pure religious life when they were morally and spiritually bankrupt in a Kingdom of Heaven whose currency is mercy and compassion. He spoke directly with these ones, not pretending all was well with them.

Jesus has compassion on all humanity: rich, poor, tall, short, enjoying a local heritage, bringing a foreign heritage, blessed and uplifted by life, robbed and beaten by life, saint, sinner - it makes no difference to Him.

In Christ there is no left wing or right wing; no systems of individuality or collectivism; no sexual preference or identity complexity; no Christian, Jew, Muslim, Hindu etc. or atheist; no private or public enterprise; no legal or illegal citizen; no lovable or unlovable, sick and weak or fit and strong. To Him we are all people born to royalty in His Kingdom, sons and daughters of His Father - with a shower/bath, sandals, a robe and a ring awaiting us if we're not already washed and wearing them. And there's a feast of love and joy and peace, acceptance and honour with Him in this world and the next. We may accept or

reject all or nothing. There's no heavenly shopping trolley and shelves to choose from. It's all or nothing. We can't buy it or earn it by stacking shelves. There's no check-out. All is freely available to all. Freely we receive ... so freely give.

So it is in the health industry. I know who you are, whoever you are. You are one He loves. The accuser has taught people to adopt and wear names and labels people give them - some listed in the previous paragraph. When people believe the names and labels they become chained to them and believe that is their identity and they can't live or enjoy life outside them. The names make demands: "You must do this for me, because I'm !" Or "I reject you, because you're!". Health does not lie in meeting these

demands and health workers and governments would do well to understand and be firm in compassionate, practical application of their understanding.

We need hospitals, G.P.s, allied health professions, scientists and informed carers specialising in healing hearts, bodies, souls and minds. The Father's love is eager to embrace each person, to protect through commands born of understanding the image (His) in Whose likeness we are created; understanding therefore what brings the love and recognition and respect we long for.

As we age our bodies complain and our memory fades. There is great challenge and great comfort and

ultimate joy available in every age, stage and experience. Scars do not have to own and direct our lives. That Gadarene man had plenty, but they were lost in the joy of encountering One Who cared enough to combat obstacles in His path and confront the cause of his torment. That despised Samaritan, with wrong theology according to those who also walked that way that day, did the same for the man left to die by the road in Jesus' story. It cost him, as it cost Jesus and His disciples, to heal the Gadarene.

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Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit, give us all wisdom and personal revelation to understand how You want us to love, honour and heal all whom we travel with during our pilgrimage in time. Forgive us Father where we have failed - we all have - and give us grace and authority to heal in Jesus' Name.

Maintaining Human Dignity

A message by Geoffrey Bullock, FamilyVoice Australia, Rally for Life 2nd February 2013

Friends, I commend you for gathering here today. We are here today for a good and godly purpose:

- We are here to proclaim the right to life of every conceived human being.
- We are here to highlight the harm abortion does to all of those involved – the child, the mother, the father, the families and the society.
- We are here to honour the courage and wisdom of women who seek to nurture and bring to birth their unborn children in adverse circumstances.
- We are here to comfort those women and men who look back in sorrow on their earlier decision to abort.
- And we are here to encourage those facing the dilemma of a problem pregnancy to continue to nurture their unborn child – and to offer them our resources to that end.

It is highly significant that a universally-agreed definition of human dignity can't be found.

In all this, we are affirming the dignity – and indeed, the holy specialness – of every human life. But so we can be clear on this, I want to answer the question: what is human dignity, and why do we bestow on it such high value?

It is highly significant that a universally-agreed definition of human dignity can't be found. While many agree that it concerns 'respect', there is no agreement on what actions demonstrate that 'respect'. One encyclopaedia says: "*International proclamations have thus far left dignity undefined*" and "*it is rarely defined outright in political, legal, and scientific discussions.*" (Wikipedia)

Why is this so? It is because there is no universally-agreed definition of what it means to be 'human'. What it means to be human; how humans should be treated, and the difference between humans and other aspects of the created order are questions that are answered differently by the many worldviews, philosophies, ideologies and religions of the world. In answering the question, I want to contrast the materialist and the theistic views of human dignity, and to look at the consequences of both worldviews. The materialist first!

It is fair to say that the materialist view of man does not take into account man's full capacities and capabilities, and has little idea of what he is here for – that is, for what end purpose he exists. Neo-atheist molecular scientist Richard Dawkins agreed with this when he wrote: "*We are survival machines – robot vehicles programmed to preserve the selfish molecules known as genes*" (Richard Dawkins 'The Selfish Gene' OUP 1976).

Francis Crick – co-discoverer of human DNA – explicates further: "*...your joys and your sorrows, your memories and your ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behaviour of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules*" (Francis Crick 'The Astonishing Hypothesis: The Scientific Search for the Soul' New York: Charles Scribner's Sons 1994).

Francis Schaeffer exposed the basis of the materialist view of man when he wrote: "*Those who hold the material-energy chance concept of reality ... do not know what man is ... They see man in essence only as an intrinsically competitive animal that has no other basic operating principle than natural selection brought about by the strongest, the fittest, ending on top*" (Francis Schaeffer 'A Christian Manifesto' p.26).

Anglican Archbishop Peter Jensen summed up the materialist failure to deal with human dignity when he wrote: "*It is a fatal defect of secular anthropologies that ... since they do not know the end of man ... [t]hey cannot respond to the question 'what is man for?' ... What it means to be human can be judged only by what we know of humanity's true fulfilment.*" (Anglican Archbishop Peter Jensen 'At the Heart of the Universe' IVP 1991 p.26)

If materialists find it difficult to know who or what man is and what he should do, then how can they authoritatively say what human dignity is? As Chuck Colson says: "*If man is merely a fortuitous collection of molecules in a meaningless cosmos, why should he have any inherent rights*" [or dignity]? (Chuck Colson 'Kingdoms in Conflict' Hodder & Stoughton 1987 p.75)

Without a transcendent authority – a Creator – to declare who we are and what we are made for, man is without full knowledge of himself. What we see in the world today are power struggles where the competing views of man – especially the materialist, the Muslim and the Judeo-Christian views – vie for ascendancy. The attacks on the dignity of human life by the materialist elite in Australia and other western nations are plain to see: abortion, euthanasia, human embryo destruction, genocide, eugenics, prostitution & sex-trafficking, the sexualisation of our children,

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Maintaining Human Dignity (...continued)

unhealthy and unnatural sexual expression, the organ trade, the use of donor eggs and sperm in surrogacy.

Every day, Australians are treated to a feast of human degradation in the media and entertainment:

- fatherhood is treated with contempt;
- motherhood is marginalised in favour of career pursuits;
- animals are treated more compassionately than humans – (save the whales and abortion on demand is the cry of many materialists);
- much of what we see and hear on our TVs and radios is banal trivia
- Behind all of these facets of life today are two seemingly paradoxical principles:
 - ◆ Humans are free to determine their own destiny;
 - ◆ Humans will be whatever their masters want them to be.

... if human dignity is thus determined, there can be no common cause that can unite all men; there can be no common good acceptable to all; and the future of our civilisation is in jeopardy

Friends, if human dignity is thus determined, there can be no common cause that can unite all men; there can be no common good acceptable to all; and the future of our civilisation is in jeopardy. Philosopher Peter Kreeft shows why: “... *without religion, no moral absolutes; without moral absolutes, no real morality; and without real morality, no survival of civilization. Thus without religion, civilization cannot survive.*” (‘Peter Kreeft ‘C S Lewis for the Third Millennium’)

What about the theistic view of human dignity? Theists know from whence comes human dignity. ‘Human Dignity’ stems from our Creator God and the value placed on us by Him. Just as a tennis racquet is ‘dignified’ by hitting tennis balls because that is what it was made for by its makers, so we are dignified because we are made in the image of God our Creator. The Catechism of the Catholic Church rightly insists that the “*dignity of the human person is rooted in his or her creation in the image and likeness of God.*”

God values us so much, He made us like Himself! In his book ‘Issues Facing Christians Today’, Rev John Stott writes: “*Our value depends then on God’s view of us and relationship to us. As a result of this, human rights [and dignity] are not unlimited rights, as if we are free to be and do absolutely anything we like. They are limited to what is compatible with being the human person God made us and meant us to be.*” (John Stott ‘Issues Facing Christians Today’, Marshall Pickering 1990 p156)

We belong to God! He has made us like Himself! We are made to act in accord with His will and purposes! We know who we are! We know what to do! We know our true destiny and true fulfilment! This is true human dignity! And today we proclaim this wonderful truth and tell this city – this state and this nation – that we are committed to maintain true human dignity!

We declare – to use the words of Southern Baptist leader Albert Mohler – that “*...the only foundation for a recovery of human dignity is an affirmation of the fact that every single human being is made in God’s image and is of sacred worth from the moment of fertilization until natural death.*” (Al Mohler 130118 - <http://www.worldviewchurch.org/wvc-digest/featured-articles/19143-forty-years-after-roe-human-dignity-hangs-in-the-balance>)

We declare to the population controllers – those who would limit our numbers: If you embrace the dignity of – and the right to life for – all persons from conception to natural death:

- there will be more people aware of and committed to the dignity of others;
- there will be more people aware of the need to use their dominion of the earth wisely;
- and there will be more people living for the love of God and their neighbours.

We declare to those who would rid the earth of every faulty human:

- welcome the disabled as your friend;
- carry the problems of the dysfunctional;
- become the support of the abnormal;
- nurture the weak till they are strong;

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Maintaining Human Dignity (...continued)

- provide for the needy till they can fare for themselves.

If you do this, you will discover your true purpose and dignity.

We declare to those who would trivialise human dignity:

- set your goals to produce God's goodness in human life;
- see the potential for good in every human life;
- encourage, exhort and help all to excel in expressing their human dignity;
- be reconciled to the living God and His purposes for your life.

**...set your goals
...see the potential
...help all
...be reconciled to the living God**

To those who know they belong to God, let me encourage you with a verse from the hymn 'This is My Father's World':

*This is my Father's world:
Oh, let me ne'er forget
That though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the ruler yet.
This is my Father's world,
The battle is not done:
Jesus who died shall be satisfied,
And earth and Heav'n be one.* (Maltbie Babcock 1901)

In closing I want to tell a story. In his book 'The Clowns of God', Australian author Morris West (of "Shoes of the Fisherman" fame) writes about Christ's return to earth. When he comes, he places a Downs Syndrome girl on his knee and serves her the Eucharist bread and wine. He pre-empted the people's questions about whether he is the Christ and he deals with their question about the girl's humanity by saying:

"What better [sign] could I give than to make this little one whole and new? I could do it; but I will not ... I gave this mite a gift I denied to all of you – eternal innocence ... She will never offend me, as all of you have done. She will never pervert or destroy the works of my Father's hands. She is necessary to you. She will evoke the kindness that will keep you human ... She will remind you every day that I AM WHO I AM." (Morris West 'The Clowns of God' William Morrow, NY 1981 p.336)

May God keep us all in the paths of true human dignity!

SAVE THE DATE

GLOBAL FORUM

FOR A WORLD WITHOUT ORPHANS





FEB 11-14, 2016
CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

For more information and to fill out the application to attend please visit www.wwoforum.org

Yes Minister and Discipleship Goals

By Michael Huggins, 1987

Since Christmas I have spent odd moments enjoying reading the book version of “Yes Minister “ . Laughing recently over the chapter “The Compassionate Society “ I suddenly started to take stock of myself , my job and the Church.

Jim Hacker, as Minister for *the Department of Administrative Affairs*, discovers to his horror, that a hospital that had been opened for 18 months had an administrative staff of 342 plus 170 porters, cleaners, laundry workers, gardeners cooks, and so forth, yet no Doctors, no nursing staff, no patients.

In pursuing the matter he was then further shocked to find that neither his Permanent Under-Secretary nor the people involved were at all concerned because they were happily busy with “Contingency Planning, ‘Data and Research Development, “Finance”, “Estimating”, “Evaluating”, “Maintenance”, ‘Catering”, “Personnel”, “Office Administration” and so on, for “the essential work of the hospital must go on”.

Hacker was astounded, for he had always believed that patients were the essential work of a hospital.

If the subject of Jim Hacker’s concern had been a church, your church, my church, and not a hospital I wonder how the script would have read?

If the goal of a hospital is to care for and heal the sick, what is the God given goal of the church in this needy nation?

What is that goal which every other activity should recognize and somehow contribute towards?

Matthew 9:35-38

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

and Matt.28:19-20

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’

seems to give the answer.

Perhaps Christ has placed and kept the church here on earth, as someone has once said, for the benefit of its non members.

If Jesus has not changed nor has his commission, then surely everything else must be prepared, if necessary, to face change, even radical change, so that this great commission might be fulfilled in this generation.

1 Chronicles 11 records for all time the names of the mighty men of valour who gave the kingship of David their total support, whilst chapter 12 goes on to tell how “Day after day, men came to help David until he had a great and mighty army.” V.22.; mighty and brave warriors who had obviously trained hard to be highly skilled and were ready for battle. All these were fighting men who. volunteered to serve in the ranks. They came to Hebron fully determined to make David king over all Israel. All the rest of the Israelites were also of one mind to make David king.” (1 Chron. 12.38)

What an example for today of purpose, determination, commitment, cost and hard on-going training - discipleship

What a vision for leadership to pursue, one’s church group mentioned in God’s dispatches for today in the manner of. e.g. 1 Chron. 12.53; and the Goal? To make Jesus King.

Let us work hard to be part of a generation that neither gives up nor looks for lesser goals.

If the goal of a hospital is to care for and heal the sick, what is the God given goal of the church in this needy nation?

Obsessive

Prepared by Lilian Schmid

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is not the ordinary “double-checking” that all of us do from time to time - making sure that the doors are locked or the oven is off. For OCD patients these thoughts are so magnified that they interfere with everyday routines, job, and relationships. Sufferers have been known to wash their hands for eight hours or to reorganize their entire household daily. Obsessive-compulsive Disorder is chronic and cannot be controlled voluntarily. Even after long periods of relative normality, sufferers may have another attack without apparent cause.

Because obsession takes hold gradually-moving slowly from simple interest to brooding to complete preoccupation – people often fail to recognize that they are suffering from a disorder. When OCD eventually produces symptoms that interfere with daily life, patients may try to hide their compulsions from others and attempt to deal with them by using will power.

Although OCD can appear in childhood, onset most often occurs in adolescences, half of adult sufferers show some symptoms by the age of 15. In the United States between 2 and 3 percent of the population experiences some form of OCD during their lives.

Obsessive compulsive disorder often interferes with the OCD sufferer's success in social and work environments. While people with obsessive compulsive personality disorder certainly have difficulties with social relationships, they usually tend to perform well in work environments.

Symptoms

For obsession:

- Involuntary and persistent thoughts that appear to be senseless, such as an overwhelming fear of dirt, persistent worry about a past event.
- Attempts to suppress such thoughts.
- Recognition that these thoughts come from one's own imagination, not from outside factors (not true for children)

For compulsions:

- Repetitive acts such as hand washing, checking and rechecking locks, tidying, repeating words
- Recognition that the repetitive behaviour is excessive or unreasonable (may not be true for children)
- Feverish levels of thought or activity
- Depression and distress as attempts to deal with compulsions fail.

For children:

- Mute behaviour with agitated depression
- Withdrawal and social isolation accompanied by delusional thinking.
- Mood swings from anxiety to despair
- Exemplary functioning in sports or school work accompanied by compulsive behaviour.

The First Story

(Sent by SM)

A psychiatrist I'd been seeing on and off recommended that I see a colleague of his who was well versed in obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). I did, and an hour and a half into our introductory session he looked directly at me and said, "You have OCD." I was already in tears, which then continued flowing for the entire afternoon. Even my father started crying. The tears had been a long time coming.

The psychiatrist explained that I could try medications, or behavioral therapy, or a combination of both. Still in a something of a state of denial, boy was I stubborn, I flew overseas to finish my job, hoping that the Anafranil would be my miracle drug. It wasn't, and after my job ended I decided I needed some really good, and extensive, treatment. I'd read a piece in the national OC Foundation's newsletter about an outpatient but daily treatment program at UCLA's Neuropsychiatric Institute and made the call. The thought of doing behavioral therapy every day sat well with me and I wanted to see the most experienced professionals. I was tired of explaining my symptoms to psychiatrists, only to have them delve into my family's past, scribble down

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Obsessive (...continued)

a few notes and charge me an arm and a leg. Damn it, I wanted to feel better!

*I got a motel room in Los Angeles, a city I swore I'd never live in or visit again, and entered the treatment program. As I walked to the Institute in the mornings I thought, **Here I am**, a grown and successful person, in a treatment program at the Psych hospital!"I almost couldn't believe I'd reached this spot in my life, facing and dealing with a chronic disease. As I made my way through the halls of the hospital it finally sunk in for good that I was ill and needed to resign myself to a lifetime of treatment.*

The nurse I was assigned to made a hierarchy of the obsessions and rituals that caused me the most anxiety. We'd start facing the ones that weren't too bad, and work our way through the list. I was pretty frightened and wasn't sure I could get through the tasks. I went to my room at night feeling very nervous about the behavioral therapy, I would need to work with and work through all the areas I'd been avoiding. First off, I had to bring into the hospital items I thought were contaminated."Also, I was going to have to rent a car and drive without turning around to check if I'd hit anything. I would also have to go into the hospital kitchen and turn off the appliances, checking them only once. I wouldn't be asked to do anything dangerous or unreasonable.

During my seven weeks in the program I ended up working hard, and accomplishing most of behavioral therapy. The medications helped some, but I think having the support of the nurses during the therapy and being around other persons with OCD was the most helpful. It was good to be in a group of persons who could talk openly about OCD, and for all of us taking medications and doing behavioral therapy, there is a lot to talk about! I must've run into people with OCD over the years, but of course I never knew they had OCD. I was now able to hear about obsessions and observe rituals similar to mine. So, other people thought these thoughts and did these things...

Leaving the program and getting on with my life was a bit difficult, but staying in the area helped. I continue seeing my nurse privately, and one of the program's psychiatrists. I attend a support group periodically. The OCD comes and goes, but I handle it pretty well by keeping the rituals to a minimum. I go long spells without needing to take medications. I don't plan on letting OCD interrupt my life too much, and I also plan on managing my illness for the rest of my life. That's just the way of it, and things could have certainly turned out worse.

Anonymous

Causes

At one time, obsessive or compulsive behaviour was thought to indicate demonic possession, with exorcism one of the earliest forms of treatment. The widely held theory today suggests that there is genetic predisposition to OCD and that it is triggered by low levels of one of the brain's neurotransmitters, serotonin.

Seeking Christian Healing

It can be very important to get a spread of opinion about the causes of a person's mental problems. It is conceivable for either medical professionals or wise Christians to make mistakes in diagnosis in an area that can be difficult to comprehensively understand. It is sometimes the case that people feel misdiagnosed or misunderstood by medical professionals or Christian helpers. Knowledge and understanding of many mental conditions is not universal. It is therefore often good to get several opinions and also to do some personal research. It can take some significant time to first properly diagnose a condition and then to find an effective treatment for them.

Those who suffer need Christian support and acceptance. They also need to continue to value their own personal faith in God, as a source of genuine strength, comfort and hope. Mental disorders and spiritual disturbances are some of the most misunderstood problems a Christian - indeed anyone - can face. Sufferers can be misunderstood, considered spiritually deficient, judged and even mocked. Christian rejection is the last thing a person needs when faced with tough mental and emotional challenges. The ongoing development of effective drugs and psychotherapy treatments should also bring help to many suffering mental conditions. Sufferers should find support where they can and consider carefully who they confide in.

Christian Healing help for: those with mental illness or mental/psychological problems, mental disorders, eating disorders and addictions such as: anorexia, bulimia, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, bipolar disorder, nervous breakdown, obsessive thoughts. Also those suffering from demonisation, the demonised or demon possessed and those who are afflicted or influenced in mind by evil spirits or evil thoughts.

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Obsessive (...continued)

A few steps that help:

1. **ACTIVE LISTENING** - Skilled listeners are needed to help Obsessive/Compulsive people to understand and deal positively with their own emotions. Their emotional lives will exist on a parallel with their spiritual lives.
2. **ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING** - Obsessive / Compulsive people need to be trained and equipped to be “immediate” with their emotions and feelings with one another. Poor boundaries and passive/aggressive behaviour must end. Ephesians Four in scripture calls it, “Speaking the truth in love.”
3. **COMMUNICATION** - Non-verbal rituals and indirect communication exchanges must end. Unhealthy expectations of one another must end and people must be released to be who they are.
4. **RELEASING ONE ANOTHER** - Jesus came to preach to and to release captives. Control and manipulation must be given over to the Master Controller, Jesus Christ. We must be free to become the person Jesus has created us to become.
5. **CO-DEPENDENCY TRAINING** - Underlying all obsessive / compulsive rituals and beliefs is that someone outside of themselves will help them with their struggles. Obsessive/Compulsives must be brought to understand what Jesus taught, “The Kingdom of God is within you.” Peace and happiness are not found in an unhealthy addiction to and need for another person. Peace is finding and making the spiritual connection of Jesus Christ as the higher power and allowing Him to rule in all the issues of life.

Jesus' High Power

Scriptures on Healing:

Matt 26:64 “Yes, it is as you say,” Jesus replied. “But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

Phil 2:10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

Mark 1:21-27 Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. And they were astonished at His teaching, for He [Jesus] taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, saying, “Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are -- the Holy One of God!” But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet, and come out of him!” And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him. Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.”

John 17:1-2 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.”

Col 3:17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Jesus came to set the captives free, to heal the sick and to cast out demons. Jesus gave us authority we can do the same in His name.

Matt 10:1 He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

Matt 10:8 “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.”

Matt 13:15 “For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.”

Luke 10:9 “Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you.’”

John 12:40 “He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn—and I would heal them.”

Act 4:30 Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.

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Obsessive (...continued)

Powerful Prayer for Deliverance

Dear Heavenly Father, I come to You in the name of Jesus Christ. I thank You Lord for Your love for me.

I confess that Jesus Christ is my Lord and my Saviour and that He died and rose again from the dead.

I believe that through the blood of Jesus Christ I have been redeemed from the hand of the devil.

I believe that through the blood of Jesus Christ all my sins have been forgiven.

I believe that through the blood of Jesus Christ I have been sanctified, made holy to God.

I believe that through the blood of Jesus Christ I have been justified just as if I had never sinned.

I now confess all my sins. I confess that in my own strength I have been unable to defeat the attacks of the enemy. I specifically renounce the following sexual sins I confess I have been wrong. I renounce all pleasure connected with these sins. I now turn from my sin. I ask You, Father, to forgive me all that is past and give me discernment when the temptation arises and the strength to resist it.

I ask You to heal my memories and to heal the hurts and forgive me in Jesus' name.

I also specifically renounce any other sins such as rejection, or unforgiveness. I especially forgive the following persons (name them).

I specifically honour my parents and I forgive them. I renounce my own sins and the sins of my ancestors in the name of Jesus Christ.

I especially renounce all idolatry, witchcraft and everything of the occult and all the hidden things of darkness. I call upon You, Lord Jesus, to set me free from every demonic power that has affected me.

Lord, I now renounce Satan and all his works. I hate his demons. I count them my enemies in the name of Jesus. I loose myself from every dark spirit, from every evil influence, from every satanic bondage, from any spirit in me that is not the Spirit of God. I command all such spirits to leave me now in the name of Jesus.

I call upon You, Lord Jesus, to set me free from every demonic power that has affected me. In the name of Jesus Christ, Risen Saviour, I command every demonic power that has lived within me or oppressed me to leave me now in the name of Jesus Christ.

I declare that I am a child of the Living God and that Satan has no right to inhabit any part of me or to oppress me. I thank You Lord Jesus and I give You the glory. Amen.

The 2nd Story and Testimony of the power of the Holy Spirit

(Posted by: Robin Shapiro | May 08, 2007

http://traumatherapy.typepad.com/trauma_attachment_therapy/2007/04/emdr_humanitari.html)

About 3 years ago I dropped into a black hole – four months of absolute terror. I wanted to end my life, but somehow [Holy Spirit], I reached out to a friend who took me to hospital. I had three visits [hospital] in four months – I actually thought I was in hell. I imagine I was going through some sort of metamorphosis [mental, physical & spiritual]. I had been seeing a therapist [1994] on a regular basis, up until this point in time. I actually thought I would be locked away – but the hospital staff was very supportive [I had no control over my process]. I was released from hospital 16th September 1994, but my fear, pain & shame had only subsided a little. I remember this particular morning waking up [home] & my process would start up again [fear, pain, & shame]. No one could help me, not even my therapist [I was terrified]. I asked Jesus Christ to have mercy on me & forgive me my sins. Slowly, all my fear has dissipated & I believe Jesus delivered me from my “psychological prison.” I am a practicing Catholic & the Holy Spirit is my friend & strength; every day since then has been a joy & blessing. I deserve to go to hell for the life I have led, but Jesus through His sacrifice on the cross, delivered me from my inequities. John 3: 8, John 15: 26, are verses I can relate to, organically. He’s a real person who is with me all the time. I have so much joy & peace in my life, today, after a childhood spent in orphanages . God LOVES me so much. Fear, pain, & shame, are no longer my constant companions. I just wanted to share my experience with you [Luke 8: 16 – 17]. EMDR was the icing on the cake, for me. I wanted to live and was prepared to do anything to RECOVER that "Little Boy," who was lost for all those desperate, and lonely years. God helps those who help themselves.*

Thank you, Jesus for being with me in my LONG DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL!! What I experienced was nothing compared with what you did for mankind - YOU died on a cross for our sins. I love you so much Jesus, because you LOVED me first. I was lost and was found.

PEACE BE WITH YOU, M

* EMDR - Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing; therapy consists of eight phases of precise treatment. [Ed]

Science and Christian faith

(An excerpt from “Rubber on the Road Christian Thinking - An exploration of a Biblical Christian worldview and its application to contemporary Christian thought” by Ray Tiller)

Science can be a vexing subject for bible-believing Christians with many believers being tortured by questions such as: What is science? Does science disagree with or disprove the Bible? Does a biblical Christian faith and worldview contribute to the competence of science, or is it irrelevant? As a science student, how can I believe all that I have been taught about the truth of the Bible? How should I regard the following popular views?

- Science and ‘religion’ exist in different realms. Science can only tell me about the physical world and my Christian faith can only tell me about eternal life, salvation and relationship with God. They should therefore be kept separate—science should not try to explain aspects of faith or spirituality and faith should not try to explain scientific phenomena or assumptions
- Science gives all the answers that we can really believe; without scientific evidence, we can only speculate and ‘believe irrationally’.
- The Bible, as my Church or I currently interpret it, is the measure of all truth. None of my assumptions about what the Bible says can be challenged. If scientific discoveries challenge what I think the Bible says, I will simply ignore them, assuming scientists to be wrong.
- Science and biblical faith should complement each other—science can tell me something about my faith and my faith should inform my science.

In giving Christians a framework for answering these questions, this article will cover:

- 1 The starting point for our thinking.
- 2 The definitions and limitations of science
- 3 How Christianity is uniquely conducive to the development of good science
- 4 What should we teach our young people about the relationship between science and their Christian faith?
- 5 Resolving apparent contradictions

1. The starting point for our thinking.

The worldview or ‘cosmology’ that comes out of the religious or faith position of a culture is the foundation for the development of its science. One’s cosmology will either facilitate the development of knowledge and understanding, or it will limit or debilitate such development.

A biblical Christian view of science is founded on the acceptance of the authority of the Bible to reveal to us:

- Who God is, and the fact of His creation of all that is.
- Accurate details of historical events covered in its

pages.

When we base our science on a cosmology that has this authority, we will understand knowledge within the framework that God has set for us—such a framework will facilitate a confident, secure, and productive approach to scientific investigation and initiative.

This perspective deals with the relationship between Christian faith and science with a view to reinforcing the reader’s:

- sense of harmony between a biblical view of life and a proper rigorous science.
- confidence that proper science will not shake one’s Christian faith but will enhance it.
- Ability to give those that we lead and teach an intelligent and coherent reason for what we believe about science.

2. The Definitions and limitations of science

Before we examine the relationship between Christian faith and science, we need to define what science is and is not:

No other faith has a cosmology that contains all of the essential ingredients needed to facilitate scientific growth within its culture.

- Science is the development of knowledge through disciplined observation, experimentation, hypothesis, testing of hypotheses, and interpretation of results in the light of assumptions.

- Scientific knowledge is cumulative—a critical review of the works of other scientists can form a foundation and infrastructure for the development of future work and knowledge.

- Honest and progressive science is prepared to question the assumptions made by others in the light of later information or alternative theories.
- Science is limited by a recognition of the fact that all scientific knowledge and understanding is developed within the constraints of a set of epistemological/metaphysical assumptions which must be obtained by ‘faith’. The processes of scientific discovery are totally useless in arriving at, proving, or disproving these assumptions.

3. How Christianity is uniquely conducive to the development of good science

No other faith has a cosmology that contains all of the essential ingredients needed to facilitate scientific growth within its culture. The eight essential ingredients of a biblical Christian cosmology that facilitate good science are:

- a) God and the created order (nature) are seen as separate entities but related—God is an immanent Creator who lovingly cares for His creation. Christianity thus gives

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Science and Christian faith (...continued)

us a rational and coherent context for understanding the order and complexity of the universe, while acceding to the possibility that God may at times intervene in the affairs of His creation in a way that does not appear to follow the ‘laws of nature’ as we understand them. This is especially so because ‘laws of nature’ are descriptions of God’s regular, repeatable way of upholding His creation.

- b) The cosmos is a ‘universe’ (one unified ‘law’ of existence), not a ‘multiverse’; that is, there is one Designer and Creator of the cosmos and so one set of laws covers the functioning and relationship of all of its components. For the Christian, scientific investigation is therefore a matter of ‘piecing together’ an understanding of God’s laws of existence, and bit-by-bit, like a jigsaw, we grasp relationships between the particulars of our knowledge and the ‘big picture’ of God’s created order.
- c) These laws are potentially knowable by mankind and discoverable by scientific processes, since we are ‘made in God’s image’. In fact, scientific pursuit could be seen as a part of God’s mandate for mankind to rule the Earth. Therefore, Christians can legitimately view their work of scientific investigation as a part of Christian mission.
- d) At any point in the history of our scientific development, we are aware of the incompleteness of our knowledge and understanding. Biblical Christianity gives us a humble and hopeful, reverential position in this awareness—we have the hope of discovering higher and more detailed levels of order, knowing (a priori) that God has designed and created all things. Reverence for God goes hand-in-hand with productive scientific pursuit.
- e) Biblical Christianity does not hold that the outcomes of our existence are (from man’s viewpoint at least) predetermined in some fatalistic way—in our day-to-day investigations and actions, there are real choices to be made by both man and God. Without suggesting that God’s actions are ultimately dependent upon man’s actions, the consequences of our choices will have some impact on the future. (God, being outside of time, of course, foreknows the outcomes of all we do or fail to do.) We can either improve or destroy the physical and social environment by the actions that we take. A Christian approach to science is thus responsible, and in taking responsibility seriously, Christians ought to strive to make scientific pursuits productive and safe.
- f) The created order, as we observe it, is finite in space and time and is perishable. It was created out of nothing (it had a beginning), and, because of God’s judgment on sin, it will have a conclusion. Taken in balance with e) above, this idea enables scientists who are Christians to avoid the pessimistic hopelessness of

their non-Christian peers. We have a coherent explanation for the degenerate nature of much of what we see, we are able to see the wonders of God’s creation in the midst of what is imperfect, and we have the hope of a ‘new heaven and earth’—we don’t have to shoulder the awful responsibility of trying to be the ultimate saviour of what is ultimately not saveable.

- g) Biblical Christianity has a ‘non-magic’ cosmology. Events have rational and logical causes that can be predicted from the orderly laws of the universe (either what happens naturally or what is the consequence of breaking one of the laws). We do not always know the laws and so some things remain mysteries that are still to be solved by scientific processes. Even God’s miraculous interventions are not magic, but a perfectly logical non-capricious display of His supreme power and perfect character. Miracles are, however, different from what we normally expect from the day-to-day operation of the universe, otherwise they could not be recognized as miracles.
- h) Religious understanding and scientific investigation must work together to develop new scientific knowledge—in fact substantial knowledge is only formed as observation, hypothesis, experimentation, and interpretation are consistent with the cosmology that comes out of our religious position.

Even God’s miraculous interventions are not magic, but a perfectly logical non-capricious display of His supreme power and perfect character.

4. What should we teach our young people about the relationship between science and their Christian faith?

Scientific thought that ignores the existence of God and the authority of the Bible is probably one of the biggest intellectual stumbling blocks to Christian young people. Their homes and churches teach them to centre their lives and thoughts on God and His Word. But then they read their school science texts, watch science documentaries on TV, and see popular science displays in museums etc. and can be convinced that God and the Bible cannot really be a coherent part of a rational person’s thinking. Reality becomes what the scientists say, and God—well, that is just a matter of personal belief or superstition!

This tragedy is totally unnecessary because the biblical Christian worldview is not only compatible with intellectual coherence and good science, it is the worldview that gave birth to modern science and makes good science possible and, ultimately, intellectually satisfying.

We should teach students to intelligently critique each of the following popular but flawed perspectives:

Flawed Perspective 1: Science gives us all of the answers, and we can test the truth of all things by current scientific observation and theory. This perspective will cripple our understanding of reality by

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Science and Christian faith (...continued)

limiting us to the changing and limited strivings of science. It ignores revelation as a source of truth.

Flawed Perspective 2: Faith gives us all of the answers, and we can test the truth of all things by whether it appears to agree with my understanding of reality from the perspective of my faith or my understanding of biblical truth. This perspective leads us into the error of religious or superstitious narrow-mindedness, because we do not usually critically examine the statements and teachings of our theologians until they are challenged by controversy, often in the context of scientific theory and discovery. Sometimes our biblical understanding is modified or developed when we critically examine it in the light of what we observe around us. This process does not repudiate the inerrancy of Scripture, rather it allows that our understanding of it might be faulty—that is, our hermeneutics might be deficient. In the light of challenge or controversy we may need to ask the question, “Does God really say that, or is that a product of someone’s teaching or interpretation?”

[We need caution here. Our hermeneutics must be judged by the usual rules—for example, consistency with other Scriptures—and not the prevailing scientific view. The correct use of science is to illuminate the plain hermeneutic, never to contradict it. For example, the scientific investigation of the process of fertilization can illuminate the biblical teaching that human life begins at conception; and hybridization studies can help us to determine the boundaries of the biblical ‘kinds’ taught in Genesis 1. But it is illegitimate to kowtow to science by ‘straining’ the interpretation of Scripture to try to make it say what normal hermeneutic processes do not indicate. For example, some people have let their understanding of science ‘strain’ their hermeneutics by insisting that the ‘days’ of creation must have been millions of years long because some popular scientific theories of origins demand very long periods of time. Similar ‘straining’ of hermeneutic principles can lead people to support the notion that it’s a woman’s right to abort her baby, or that all living things evolved from one kind.]

Flawed Perspective 3: Faith and science answer different questions; for example, faith answers questions about the meaning of life, while science answers questions about what the cosmos is like. This perspective has the error of dualism—it segments life into a religious sphere and a scientific sphere, and its tragedy is that it shuts the wealth of a biblical Christian cosmology out of the understanding of science and life. Further, this view undermines the Christian claim that Scripture is an historically accurate revelation of God’s truth to all aspects of human society. If it cannot be relied upon to speak accurately about what happened historically, it cannot be relied upon to speak accurately about the incarnation and

resurrection of Christ. Similarly, if it cannot be relied upon to speak truthfully about our origins, how can our faith rely on its statements about our salvation?

Instead of these flawed perspectives, we should teach our young people the following keys for a balanced and biblical View of science. Our young people are best served by helping them to see that their understanding of science is perfectly consistent with a properly constituted biblical Christian worldview. The following perspectives will be helpful in developing a properly balanced and coherent understanding of science:

Faith and science must be seen as working together to help each other to explore and define reality. Our faith provides the philosophical / logical basis and context for our science. It also gives our science a purpose, and a moral framework. Science, in turn, contributes to our understanding of God by investigating and systemizing the knowledge of the details, relationships, and ‘laws’ of His created order.

The Bible’s truths cannot be subject to the ‘scientific method’ because the Bible is a unique book in that God gives it to us as His revelation of Himself to us. For example, it is ludicrous to try to prove the virginal conception or the Resurrection of Jesus by empirical processes. Every scientific position must start with assumptions about the nature of reality and the source of truth (metaphysics and epistemology)—and no scientist can either prove or disprove these assumed starting points. That is, every scientific position is based on a religious foundation of some kind!

Biblical faith and true science should not contradict each other.

Our young people are best served by helping them to see that their understanding of science is perfectly consistent with a properly constituted biblical Christian worldview.

5. Resolving apparent contradictions

Apparent contradictions between what we understand the Bible to say and scientific observation/theory can be resolved by asking a few fundamental questions of our scientific processes and our understanding of our beliefs:

- 1. Is it possible that we have misinterpreted the scientific evidence, and that the same evidence could be equally logically interpreted such that it is consistent with what the Bible says on the subject?** For example, there is a mass of writing from scientists who accept the authority of the Bible that demonstrates a logical consistency of much of the data of current palaeontology with a literal six-day Creation. Some evolutionist scientists, in rejecting the existence of God and/or the authority of the Bible, want to dismiss this interpretation of scientific evidence as ‘religious, therefore not scientific’. The problem in this case, however, is not a conflict between real science and religion, but a question of which religion’s assumptions are being applied to the interpretation of the evidence at hand.
- 2. Has the apparent conflict arisen from confusion**

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Science and Christian faith (...continued)

between the nature of historical science as distinct from empirical science? Sometimes, we can feel that there is a conflict between our biblical worldview and science because we actually confuse which kind of science is being used to arrive at conclusions. In the historical sciences, such as palaeontology, the conclusions we draw from the ideas and evidence presented are strongly influenced by our philosophical assumptions. By contrast, in the empirical sciences, such as chemistry and physics, we tend to draw conclusions from things we observe, and our philosophical assumptions have little bearing on them.

For example, water will boil at the same temperature (empirical science) no matter what the scientist believes about origins; but a materialist studying the origin of the universe, life, or mankind (historical science) will only make hypotheses that fit his materialist assumptions. Hence, a materialist will refuse to consider the idea that God's creation is a plausible explanation for what exists. Philosophical bias plays a huge role in the historical sciences because history is not open to direct experimental testing or observation. We cannot observe what happened hundreds or thousands of years ago; we can only make reasoned guesses on the basis of incomplete evidence. So our hypotheses in historical science are really just exercises in plausible story telling! When our young people understand this difference between historical and empirical science, they will be less intimidated by what atheistic scientists say with such apparent authority.

3. Is it possible that the scientific processes are, as yet, incapable of observing enough of the information needed to make a conclusion that fits with what the Bible says on this issue? For example, some of the hygiene laws of Leviticus were not confirmed by scientific research until the development of bacteriology in the early 20th Century. We should help our young people to see that science is limited in knowledge and technique but that the God who gave us the Bible is communicating to us (sometimes apparently obscurely) from His infinite eternal wisdom and knowledge (omniscience).

4. Is it possible that my church or I have misinterpreted or misunderstood the Bible on this issue? For example, the Christian Church at one time understood that the Bible indicated that the Earth was at the geometric centre of the Solar System. Scientific observations and theories that proposed a contrary system of planetary rotation about the sun were therefore considered heretical and a threat to the integrity of the Christian faith! The real problem here was not an inconsistency between the Bible and Science, because reading of the Bible with proper hermeneutics does not demand a geocentric Solar System at all. The problem was that the Church of the day had adopted Ptolemaic (early Greek) scientific thought on this matter and had made assumptions about the Scriptures to suit the

prevailing view—very poor hermeneutics!

We will do well to train our young people to scrutinize their beliefs and ideas in the light of both proper hermeneutics and good scientific knowledge. As Christians we need to work hard to become confident that our approach to understanding our faith and Christian worldview is robust enough to openly embrace new scientific discoveries and find how they are consistent with biblical truth. We must avoid quickly dismissing new scientific information because we unthinkingly identify a conflict with our faith. Such hasty dismissal of science sometimes earns Christians a reputation of being 'flat-earthers'!

Conclusion

Leaders, parents, and teachers who teach these perspectives to their young people will help to equip them with the foundations of both good science and good faith. They will not need to fear the struggle of resolving apparent conflict between scientific reasonableness and their belief in God and the Bible. Instead, a proper understanding of science in a biblical Christian perspective will see science (stripped of the materialistic baggage of the historical sciences) harmoniously accommodated into their worldview.

Ray Tiller currently lives in Melbourne. He is married to Libby and they have a growing family of 5 children and 8 grandchildren.

Ray has been an educational leader in Australian schools since the 1970's, serving in both government and private schools in SA, NSW, Queensland and Victoria. He has over 3 decades of experience in pioneering and leading Australian Christian schools with the

vision to educate generations of young people to equip them to embody the wisdom and grace of God to bring a transforming influence to their communities.

Ray is currently running a service called Equipping Christian Schools which involves advising Christian school boards and leaders, facilitating school strategic development and restructuring, running training seminars in Christian curriculum development and leadership, and developing professional learning programs for teachers and leaders in Christian schools.

Ray is the author of several publications for Christian educators including Rubber on the Road Christian Thinking; the Creating a Consistently Christian Curriculum program; the Avenues to Teaching Excellence professional development series for teachers and leaders; The Genius of Jesus in Leadership seminar/workshop series; the Mission-Vision-Strategy process for Christian boards and leaders; and assessment tools for Christian school boards.

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AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITIES FORUM

ABOUT

The Australian Communities Forum exists to help organisations understand and connect with their communities. From local, staff, constituent, membership, customer and special interest communities, this forum is focused on how to build, shape and engage communities in all their diversity.

Whether you're part of a community-based organisation, a charity, a government agency or a commercial organisation with a community focus, the Australian Communities Forum will deliver the latest information in an interactive format, with innovative local examples, and the sharing of great ideas.

At the one day Australian Communities Forum you will hear:

- Results from the Australian Communities National Research study
- Case studies of innovative community engagement projects
- Practical, best practice workshops providing innovative strategies to equip and empower
- Keynote sessions on volunteer engagement, motivating teams, generational change, segmentation engagement and effective public and media communication strategies.

SYDNEY

13th November, 2015

9:30am – 4:30pm

Wesley Mission Conference Centre, 220 Pitt St, Sydney, 2000

MELBOURNE

3rd December, 2015

9:30am – 4:30pm

Melbourne City Mission Conference Centre, 164-180 Kings Way, South Melbourne, 3205

PROGRAM

9:30am – Session1: Australian Communities Defined

- Demographic and social trends shaping Australia
- Results from the Australian Communities National Research Study
- Understanding the national giving macro segments
- Australia's Giving Sentiment Index.

10:45am - Morning Tea

11:15am - SESSION 2: Engaging Communities and Shaping Society

- Case studies of effective engagement
- Solving social problems through commercial innovation
- Transforming communities through strategic networks.

12:30pm - Lunch

1:15pm - SESSION 3: Buzz Groups

- Building a sustainable social media strategy
- Volunteer engagement: How to do more with less
- Responding to Australian consumers and donors in tight, fiscal environment
- Storytelling to engage communities
- Placemaking: Facilitating communities through engaging spaces and hubs.

2:30pm - Afternoon Tea

3:00pm - SESSION 4: Future Forecast - Responding to the Trends

SPEAKERS

- Mark McCrindle (McCrindle Research)
- John Rose (R2L)
- Greg Low (R2L)
- Glen Gerreyn (The Roar Effect)
- Claire Madden (McCrindle Research)

More to be announced!

PRICE

\$245

\$225 Early bird (ends 16th Oct) or group booking

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**AUSTRALIAN
COMMUNITIES**
— F O R U M —

halo een

A Christian alternative to Halloween

On the 31st of October, be 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. Halo-een is a chance for Christians to respond with love and peace.

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 ghouel 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:

1. Take a stand without judging other people's choices
2. Behave with love for your neighbour
3. Be 'in the world but not of the world'
4. Be a good role model for your children
5. Be a person who is congruent with your faith and values



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

1. Going Out:

- Parents, dress your children as angels instead of witches or ghouls.
- Simply have children, and you, wearing white on the day.
- Instead of knocking on doors asking for something, knock on doors and give something.
- Instead of 'Trick or Treat', say 'Love and Peace' and give a Love + Peace card or a card with a small Bible verse, and a love heart chocolate.
- Turn up at a Halloween party dressed in white (or as an angel) and just be peace amongst the crowd

Last year a number of Christians dressed in white and walked around their neighbourhood and had an amazing time freely able to talk with neighbours about why they were giving 'love and peace' instead of the alternative.

2. Staying In:

- Parents, 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
- Pop a couple of white balloons out the front of your place to indicate you are celebrating Halo-een

3. Praying:

- Pray for those who are going out, that they will be protected and safe
- Pray for everyone who is taking a quiet stand, that they will have a chance to share why they are being different

Available on our website

We do have balloons, chocolates, cards and limited edition t-shirts if you would like to purchase something to support Halo-een. All funds go to Entente Foundation towards building and restoring trust - www.haloeen.com

Let others know about it

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.

If you have any questions or comments regarding Halo-een, please call us on 02 8850 4330.

Thank you for joining us!

With Love and Peace

Vanessa Hall, Director, Entente Foundation

Halo-een is an initiative of entente foundation, the not-for-profit arm of entente - the international movement of trust.

Testing the spirits to see whether they are from God

Posted on 10 March 2013 by Jenny Cox - <http://cross-connect.net.au/testing-the-spirits-to-see-whether-they-are-from-god/>
(Recommended by Dr. John Yates)

There has been a lot of talk lately about stepping off the concrete square and letting God move etc. The result has been several people speaking about what God has shown them. It is a good thing to allow the Spirit to speak to the church and to be open to these kinds of words. What I want to speak about today is discernment when it comes to prophecy and setting out some biblical parameters for being a church who moves in the Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 5: 19-22 “Do not put out the Spirit’s fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.” (NIV)

Here is a passage which recognises several of the dangers inherent in having a church with actual people in it. There is no perfect church out there somewhere in which the people always do what is right, always know the will of God, always love one another with sincere love, and always have balanced, well thought out doctrine. Paul understood that churches have real people in them and that the existence of real people in churches means that we need to take some precautions.

Firstly, he exhorts “Do not put out the Spirit’s fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt.” If we were to quench the Spirit in the church this would certainly fix the problem of false prophecy. But prophecy, hearing from the Spirit, is essential to the life of the church so that should not be done. However, the minute we allow prophecy in church we run some real risks.

Because Paul was a realist he gave instructions so that prophecy could happen in church without simply saying ‘anything goes’. He says “Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.” This suggests that not every word of prophecy is actually from the Spirit or at least that sometimes we get our ‘own stuff’ mixed up with what the Spirit is saying. For this reason we must sift through what is said and only hold on the good while rejecting the evil.

This passage does not offer any suggestions as to how to do that sifting of prophecy. Therefore, I have chosen to look today at a more extended passage on prophets in 1 John 4. In his first epistle John offers several tests to enable Christians to test prophets.

1 John 4:1 “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

For my purposes I will apply these to testing prophecy.

Test 1:

2 This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. 4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

Jesus did not come merely to give us some sayings like the Sermon on the Mount and the Lord’s Prayer. He could have posted us a letter for that. No he came into the world as a flesh and blood human being who lived a human life and experienced all the things which human beings experience: birth, childhood, hunger, thirst, cold, heat, weariness, loneliness, friendship, betrayal, and finally ignoble death.

Hebrews 2:17-18 “Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. 18 Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.” One way the Spirit of Christ is able to convey this help to us in prophecy.

This flesh and blood Jesus is not a construct of the human mind. We cannot simply make Jesus into whatever we want to in order to suit the moment. It is important then to ask whether we have constructed some kind of false Jesus.

The Spirit will not convey a picture of an unreal Jesus because a false Jesus cannot help us, comfort us, or strengthen us. If what is said is not consistent with a fully human Jesus then this is false prophecy.

(continued next page)

Testing the spirits to see whether they are from God (...continued)

Test 2:

5 They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. 6 We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

In this test the one who speaks the truth listens to “us”.

Who is this that John is revering to? There are two sets of people that we must listen to. The first is the apostles of Christ and their testimony is recorded in the Bible. This is a way of saying that any prophecy must conform to what the Bible says. God is not divided; the Holy Spirit will not say something which contradicts what God has said in his word. I have spoken about this before so what I will stress right now is the need to be familiar with the Word of God in the Bible, because ignorance of what God has already said leaves us open to being led astray by false prophecy. Personal Bible reading and good teaching which proclaims the “whole council of God” is important and cannot be overstressed.

The second set of people that John is referring to is the church. Prophets need to listen to the church just as much as the church needs to listen to prophets. We are not individuals who can say our own thing without reference to one another. We are the body of Christ and individually members of that body (1 Cor 1:27). We need to submit to one another (Eph 5:21) and honour one another (Rom 12:10). In effect we must honour one another by speaking the truth in love (Eph 4:15) including correcting what is an incorrect understanding of God given in a prophecy. Both giving and receiving correction is difficult and it must be done in love for the sake of the other. This brings me to the third test.

Test 3:

7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our

sins. 11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Love is the third test. God is love, so no matter what amazing and profound prophecy is declared it is not valid if it is not given in love. Arrogance has no place in the prophetic word. God has sent his Son as a sacrifice for our sakes. In order to be an instrument of God to the church we must die to our own will and pride and submit ourselves to the love of God. Then we can be a channel of that love to others. In addition, as I said above, this love is necessary in correcting what is false. Love is also needed in receiving what is said by another. Love covers a multitude of sins (1 Pet 4:8). Prophecy will not always be given in a way which is pleasing. Sometimes it is given in a way which offends our sensibilities or is awkward or clumsy. Love will overlook these things. The important thing is to consider the other when speaking prophecy and when receiving prophecy.

Prophecy will not always be given in a way which is pleasing. Sometimes it is given in a way which offends our sensibilities or is awkward or clumsy. Love will overlook these things. The important thing is to consider the other when speaking prophecy and when receiving prophecy.

Test 4:

12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. 13 We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

Here I am going to go to another passage in RSV Philippians 1:9-11 “And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve what is excellent, and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”

In verse 10 the RSV uses the word approve but the Greek word is the same as the word test in 1 John ‘test the spirits’. The way to approve or test what is good is to have love which abounds in knowledge and discernment. This is I believe part of God’s love being made complete in us. This love is not some airy fairy feeling but something powerful, able to understand what is good and bring us to a place of holiness and righteousness. As Paul prays for this kind of love for the Philippians it is not something which is automatic in the Christian life. We must seek it and pray for it because with such love we will know the Spirit’s voice clearly.

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Testing the spirits to see whether they are from God (...continued)

Test 5

14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. 15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.

What does a prophecy testify about? That Jesus is the saviour of the world. If it is a true prophecy then it will be centred on Jesus: his character, his glory, and what he has done for his people. Rev 19:10 "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy". This seems an obvious thing to say but it is one which needs to be repeated. When the focus of the church is on something or someone other than Jesus then we know that we are no longer in the will of God and we are ineffective in the kingdom of God.

Jesus is the saviour of the world. His influence is not merely over the church and certainly not just over this group of people. Often then we would expect that prophecy would apply to a wider sphere than just the people who are here on Sunday morning. There are several spheres which we deal with: people who are regularly fellowshiping here, those who fellowship occasionally, family members, friends, and work colleagues, then people we come in contact elsewhere such as the petrol station attendant. The word of God can be related to some or all of these.

Test 6:

16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. 17 In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. 18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

There is no condemnation in Christ (Rom 8:1) and a prophetic word should be encouraging (1 Corinthians 14:3 *But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort.*). A word which condemns is not from the Holy Spirit. There is a difference between condemnation and exhortation: condemnation puts a burden on the people of God to do what they cannot rightly do but exhortation encourages them to live according to God's word. Exhortation can certainly challenge the ideas which we hold dear and challenge the way in which we act but it

should not bring fear of punishment. "We have confidence on the day of judgement" while we are 'in Christ' because in him we have been judged and given God's favourable verdict. I have the righteousness of Christ (Phil 3:9). Therefore nothing the Spirit speaks will suggest that God is angry with us or going to abandon us.

Test 7

Last of all I suggest another test. This is not a test of the words spoken but of the character of the prophet.

2 Corinthians 8:22 "And with them we are sending our brother whom we have often tested and found eager in many matters, but who is now more eager than ever because of his great confidence in you."

This speaks of a brother who wants to serve in the church but I believe we can apply a similar principle to prophets. Time is a good test of a prophet's character; over time the kind of person you are becomes evident to others. If a person is not of godly character then we need to take care to scrutinize his or her words very carefully. I am hesitant to believe a word spoken by someone who has not demonstrated over time his or her willingness to listen to God and to obey God's commands.

I am hesitant to believe a word spoken by someone who has not demonstrated over time his or her willingness to listen to God and to obey God's commands.

Conclusion

As a church who is seeking to hear from God and follow what he wants for us I suggest that we ask several questions of any prophecy which is spoken.

1. Is it presenting a real, human Jesus?
2. Is this word consistent with what the Bible says?
3. Is the speaker willing to listen to the church regarding what he or she has to say?
4. Is this presented in love rather than out of a desire to impress?
5. Have we prayed for love in knowledge and discernment?
6. Is the word centred on Jesus?
7. Does what is said apply beyond the narrow confines of these four walls?
8. Is this encouraging rather than condemning?
9. And finally, is the speaker living a life which demonstrates God's working in him or her to produce godliness?

This is my story

Judy Wong-See, September 2015

I write this article looking back at an incredible journey with the Lord in how He brought me to start an executive search firm over 15 years ago. If anyone would have said to me then that that was ahead of me, I would have been sure they were from another planet. It was never on my 'wish list' – or any list for that matter. I did train in the discipline of Human Resources I had worked for a couple of executive search consultancies that had taught me well and fuelled my passion in this direction. Still, starting out on my own is another matter.

There are 2 major issues it appears about working on your own. One is about being motivated everyday about what 'you are on about' and the second is the inherent 'isolation' in ensuring you stay focussed to start and finish well, on your own. For someone known to be a 'Sanguine' this is totally not the best way to go!

All of this is about what God does when He sets His course and leads us from the front. When we are open to that, it is an exciting ride indeed.

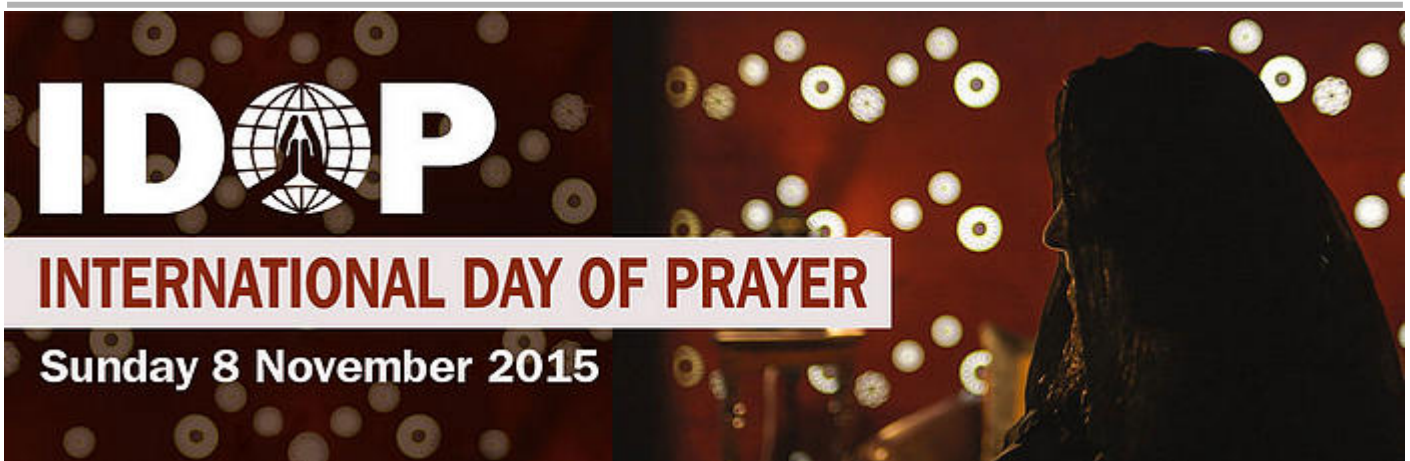
My work in the last 10 years have been with Christian Not-For-Profit organisations with a clear sense of God's Kingdom embedded in their mission and values. Their leaderships' mandates for me was always about identifying mature Christians with strong competencies to visibly lead and deliver sound business outcomes.

The Lord began to shape my journey with Him as I began to meet amazing men and women of God, with their stories of how He is guiding them to their 'next steps' professionally. Increasingly, the concept of "Servant Leadership" looking at Jesus, the Ultimate Servant from Philippians 2:5-8 became clearer to me. It was the constant challenge of finding 'the remnant' – those whom God has and is preparing to serve like Him, in every way.

I stand in awe of my indescribable God who chose me to take this journey with Him. I have learnt, that He is my CEO that He sees and knows every detail, way before I can get my head around it! He has led me to countless placements today and I go on to hear about how hard it is to work with "Grace (God's Grace) and Accountability (meeting business expectations)" in these roles of leadership. Above all else, the challenge and the encouragement to these men and women who influence and impact teams in organisations, is to hear His call to honour His Name especially when no one is looking. In doing that, the Lord truly sets us free from ourselves and we begin to grow to be the men and women He needs in our work places today.

My dear friends, God has gifted you and you alone are unique to Him. Will you ask Him afresh today to do a transformation in your life? He will take you to places you never thought possible.

This is my story, this is my song – Praising my Saviour all the day long!



Join Christians around the world in a day dedicated to praying earnestly for persecuted Christians

Watch *Liena's Prayer* at <https://vom.com.au/idop/> or order the free resource kit with DVD and discover what it is like to be a Christian in Syria, Iraq and many restricted countries around the world. Surrendering your life to Christ will take on new meaning as you do.

What does it mean to be a Christian?

As Liena prayed, she faced a heart-wrenching question. Was she willing to give her life for Christ?

What about the lives of her children?

Christians like Liena and her family need our prayers and support.

Join Christians around the world in a day dedicated to praying earnestly for persecuted Christians.

The Creator's Blueprint vs. Gay And Lesbian Equality

By Mark McClendon, Director, CBN SouthEast Asia, July 2015

In light of the recent SCOTUS decision to recognize gay marriages as the right of all American citizens, I would like to respond, and also address what I feel is the urgent need for the church in Indonesia and around the world to respond in a clear and uncompromising manner.

I believe in what I would call the 'Creator's Blueprint' for marriage and family. The 'Creator's Blueprint' takes us back to the book of Genesis, where God is creating Adam in the Garden of Eden. These scriptures come before many frequently quoted scriptures about sexuality and marriage, usually taken from Leviticus, the Gospels, and the Epistles. In this scene, God puts Adam to sleep, takes out a rib, and from the rib he creates a 'helpmate' for Adam. This helpmate was a 'she', and Adam named her Eve. Let's tune in to Genesis 2:22-25:

Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man.

"At last!" the man exclaimed. "This one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh! She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken from 'man.' "

This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.

Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame.

Here the blueprint is given, 'the man...is joined to his wife and the two are united into one'. There is no shame in this union. At this time I would like to point out, that there was no 'Steve', nor any thought or mention of a 'Steve' for Adam in the garden, only Eve.

Now, God gives a blessing and then a mandate to Adam and Eve. 'Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it." (Gen 1:28)

This divine blessing was imparted to a man and his wife. Then, a divine mandate clearly puts an exclamation point on the Creator's Blueprint for marriage and family. *Made in God's image, man and his wife were to procreate, and to fill the earth.* As they followed God's prescribed pattern for life and marriage, then God would bless them with the authority to govern.

Throughout the entire Bible, scripture points to this sacred union between a man and his wife. Let's see what Jesus says in the book of Mark, as he addressed the Pharisees.

"But 'God made them male and female' from the beginning of creation. 'This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.' Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together."

Jesus makes several very clear statements: that 1. God made them male and female, from the beginning. 2. That a man is joined to his wife. 3. That God sees this union as sacred, joined together by God. Jesus gave no place nor opportunity to be misunderstood, and lays out again for us His Creator's Blueprint for life and family.

The Apostle Paul added perspective, and not only spoke deeply of the marital responsibilities of both husbands and wives, but clearly laid out moral boundaries that every believer in Christ should follow. These boundaries included clearly stating that a lifestyle of fornication, adultery, or homosexual relations is sinful, and would bring God's judgment. Many proponents of the LGBT movement have claimed that if Jesus were against homosexuality, he would have said so. But as a Jew, Jesus was ministering almost exclusively to the Jewish community. The Jewish community may have had many theological disputes amongst each other, but they were very clear on homosexuality. Both in the book of Genesis, and in the Law of Moses it was made agonizingly clear that this was forbidden. So, Jesus didn't need to address that for the purposes of his immediate ministry. But as the Gospel spread from the Jews to the Gentiles, God used the Apostle Paul to do so because this was clearly needed in the cultures in which the Gospel was going forth. All of these truths are clearly written in the texts of the Bible, and there is no reasonable, logical or theological way to interpret or translate them in any other way than they are written.

But in today's culture, Christians are often accused of flagrantly denying many truly loving gay and lesbian people equal rights under the laws that we enjoy as heterosexuals. We are accused of moral superiority, as well as extreme prejudice and even hatred.

Let me be clear in the truth, as presented in the Bible.

I do not believe the sin of homosexuality is worse than other sins. To say homosexuality is worse than other sins is to misunderstand the holiness of God. Sin is sin. Jesus said that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough. So, the smallest infraction 'leavens' our lives and will require the blood of Jesus to cleanse us just the same as seemingly more odious and vulgar sins. So why does this sin of homosexuality bring such strong condemnation from sincere followers of Christ towards the gay community, and those who champion same sex marriage, when we ourselves are sinful people needing the same forgiveness that only Jesus can give?

It is because this sin, when legitimized by declaring that it's equally deserving of having the sacrament, the title, the certificate of marriage bestowed upon it, has within it

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The Creator's Blueprint vs. Gay And Lesbian Equality (...continued)

the power to re-define marriage and the family away from the Creator's Blueprint that brings life and peace. It has the power to project an alternative and relative morality, its relativism bringing a frustrating sense of confusion where there was previously moral clarity. As truth becomes murky, and as the church starts to stray from the Bible's clear stand to embrace a culturally acceptable stance, the eternal values of the Creator's blueprint are in danger.

Gluttony is a sin, but does not have the power to re-engineer the definition of morality. Pride is a terrible sin, but cannot be measured or legislated. Mistreating or divorcing one's wife, or committing adultery are sins, none of which are greater or lesser than homosexuality. However, 'same sex marriage' as equal to heterosexual marriage is not the same as homosexuality. 'Same sex marriage' goes far beyond an individual partaking in a sinful practice, and becomes a social locomotive harnessing all legal and cultural means to achieve 'equality'. However, in order to achieve this elusive goal, it must by its very nature aggressively seek to re-define or re-engineer morality, family and marriage. This will happen regardless of the kindness and good intent of some of the gay people and/or non-gay supporters involved in the movement.

It's true that there have been outrageous acts of prejudice or hostility against gay people from society, and from the church, for whatever reason throughout history. Many times the Church has reacted in anger, rage, judgment, protests and possibly many other expressions, some which never should have happened. But even so, none of the injustices felt by some in the LGBT community can justify what is intrinsically wrong and sinful. Truth cannot morph to accommodate contemporary culture. Truth by its very nature, stays consistent throughout all time, and it is either truth or it is not. The mistakes and sins of the church and believers in Christ don't make the Bible any less true, or disqualify the Creator's Blueprint for marriage. Homosexuality is still a sin, and same sex marriage is still a great mistake in spite of the church's failure to live out Biblical truth as a community of believers. Christians are often discredited because of the divorce rate seen amongst heterosexual, Christian couples in the USA. However, divorce rates don't disprove God's plan, or make heterosexual marriage less valid...only less valued. It is true; many Christians have sinfully forgotten our vows and promises spoken at the altar in front of many witnesses. But those things don't make homosexuality, same sex marriage or any other sin--right, or validate the LGBT passion for equality. In other words, the failure of Christians in today's culture to be radical followers of Jesus Christ, and love their

wives just as Christ loves the church, does not change the unchanging values and truths of God's blueprint for life and family. It only signals the deep need for this generation of believers to seek God with all their hearts, and repent for their sinful ways.

Same sex marriage, after gaining an elevated place of legitimacy, equality and legal power, can now become the Trojan horse that delivers into society many destructive forces. Think of young children being taught about gay and lesbian relationships in their early years in school, or kids being taught 'genderfluidity' as a mandatory part of our educational system. One day Obamacare or national health care systems could even be required to cover the operations needed to move a person from 'Gender Recognition' to 'Gender Realization'. Already cases for polyamorous marital relationships are being brought to court, and the idea that groups of multi-gender individuals could fight for the same rights is not far behind. Soon the medical establishment could be researching ways to incorporate the genes of two males or females or even more into an embryonic blastocyst, so the child can 'inherit' the traits of all parents in the marriage.

Knowing the LGBT's track record of fighting for equality, how will it now move to attack the dissenting voice of the Church that declares homosexuality as a sin, and gay marriage as destructive? This could be the next level effort of the LGBT 'equality machine', which would be to cast the church as misguided, and even be considered to be an evil and hateful prejudice that needs to be rooted out of life and society because of its uncompromising stand against homosexuality.

Now more than ever, it is important that we do not leave the 'Creator's Blueprint' for sexuality, marriage, and family, even to accommodate the feelings, goodness or sincerity we might see in the LGBT community. We believe marriage is a Biblical sacrament, holy before God, and that the Bible gives a clear moral compass for all of us; a right and a wrong. For these reasons, to support this movement, to attend gay weddings, to lovingly accept and support gay family and friends to *continue* in this lifestyle, is to shed our responsibility to stand for truth, and the Creator's unequivocally clear foundation of truth for life and family. It is also a failure to train our children in the ways of God, so that when they grow older, they will walk in His ways, and live lives pleasing to God.

Today, the church must take a loving, yet radical and uncompromising stand. *We must clearly speak up, that the Creator's Blueprint for life, family, sex and marriage, is a non-negotiable truth; an unchanging value in the life of every follower of Jesus Christ.*

Generating Forgiveness and Constructing Peace through Truthful Dialogue: Abrahamic Perspectives

By Hilarie Roseman

ISBN 978-1-937570-48-4

How do members of Jewish, Christian, and Islamic organizations address unresolved questions of reconciliation and forgiveness? Mending links means forgetting and disposing of old hurtful memories, looking carefully at human needs, and with the love and forgiveness that religions teach, working together to construct peace.

In this book which is based on her Ph.D. thesis, the author clearly describes the essence of reconciliation and forgiveness.

Available from Dignity Press -

<http://www.dignitypress.org/wdu-press-books/forgiveness>

Abstract

In interfaith encounter groups, the people of the Abrahamic religions are drawing together in dialogue rather than conflict. The core research question in this thesis is “How are people of Abrahamic faiths, faiths that are implicated in a geopolitical confrontation, able to cooperate within religious organizations?” The analysis is comparative. On the analectic continuum, it stems from a deductive set of questions, but takes into account some inductive emerging issues.

15 participants, perceived as role models for the language of peace, were interviewed at great depth. Social, scientific, and religious knowledge from a questionnaire was discussed by four focus groups consisting of Jews, Christians and Muslims. Commitment to religion, enemy images of each other, ethical dialogue, forgiveness, and the construction of peace made up the discussions. Peace was constructed by remediation of negative attitudes and behavior that often involved hospitality and always involved deep listening.

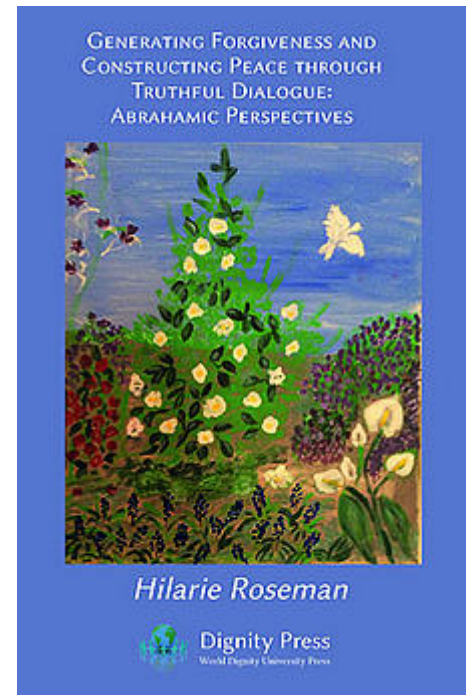
Differences and identities in Jewish, Christian and Muslim religions were clearly stated, but also their commonalities: human needs such as respect and safety, and the religious text to love God and neighbour. They defined this God as forgiving and compassionate, and neighbour as “everyone”. There was a change in their interests, which expanded to all three Abrahamic religions and their language of peace included discussing difficult issues such as the re-examination of their texts, and the paramount need to be open, generous and brave. Their dialogue rose above differences to enable them to lay a reasonable, achievable foundation for a peace, based on human needs and common texts. All participants were reasonably well-informed and well-educated believers committed to their own faith tradition and able to communicate its inner values and spirit.

A model was extracted from this research that shows the pathway from externally mediated images of geopolitical conflict to practical expressions of cooperation and peace within interfaith groups. This is an historical social change.

About the author

Hilarie Roseman worked in TV advertising in Australia and in London, then as Family Life Educator and as interviewer for Catholic radio and television programs. Her studies comprised theology, sociology, communication research and visual arts. After submitting the thesis presented in this book she graduated as Dr. of Philosophy of International Communication in May 2014.

Hilarie has worked with -the Sociological Imagination Group with Prof. Bernard Phillips, and with Evelin G. Lindner and the Dignity and Humiliation Studies network. Hilarie and her husband John Bardsley Roseman have eight children and 13 grandchildren.



Transhumanism: History And Birth Of Manmade Life

By Hilarie Roseman

ISBN 978-1-326422-26-4

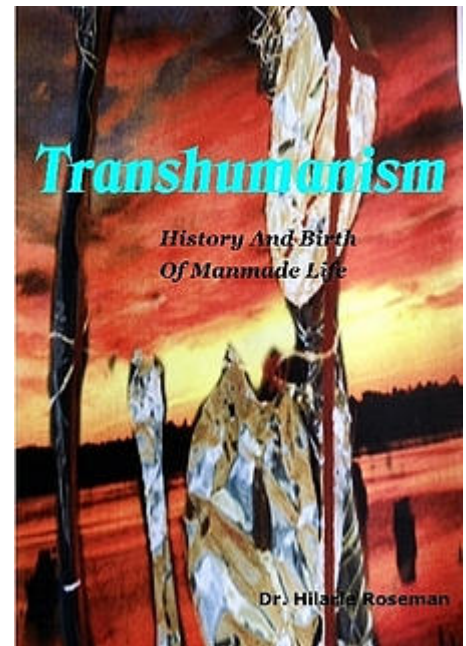
Dr. Hilarie Roseman asks you with urgency to read this small book about the research she has done on the reproduction of the human race and the role of global Politicians.

The outcome at the present moment is that human embryos and animal embryos are being grown together by the scientists. Hilarie is a mother of eight, a grandmother of 13 and it is her opinion that the family unit is being badly damaged. Please join in the dialogue of scientists, politicians and mothers and fathers.

The new science of genetics that grows “things” is a manmade attempt at life that is bigger and better than homo sapiens. We humans have the dignity of being made in the image of God. The issues are life, soul, identity and survival. Let your voice be heard.

Available from **lulu.com**

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AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

World Mental Health Day reminds us we are all members of the Body of Christ

Media Release

7 October 2015

People living with mental health challenges, are no less members of the Body of Christ than anyone else, Bishop Terry Brady said during Mental Health Awareness Week.

‘People with mental illness and their families can often feel isolated from their faith community and thus isolated from God. Isolation is often caused by social stigma: the idea that mental illness is a question of character or a punishment from God,’ Bishop Brady, Chair of the Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life and the Australian Catholic Disability Council said.

‘Obviously there are particular challenges to enabling their full participation in the life of the community. Some of the challenges are visible and many others are not so clearly identified. Once we acknowledge these challenges we can work together to ensure that all the gifts that flow through the Body of Christ can be shared by each member of that Body.’

‘It is also a reminder to look after our own well-being, especially our spiritual well-being. How are we nourishing our well-being through our spirituality?’ Bishop Brady, asked.

World Mental Health Day (WMHD) is a day for global mental health education, awareness and advocacy. It is an initiative of the World Federation for Mental Health. This year the theme is, ‘Mental Health begins with me!’

One in five Australians will experience mental illness this year. We all have a role to play in looking after our own mental health and well being, Bishop Brady said. ‘The Catholic Church has been involved in Mental Health for a long time. Mental Health is a vital part of the Church’s ministry,’ he added.

‘When our parishes gather, nearly everyone will know someone who has a mental illness of varying severity and length. Because of the stigma attached to it, few will come forward, but it is there. How can we support people living with stigma of mental illness?’

‘Parishes may like to highlight the gifts and talents of people with mental health challenges, their families and support networks. It is also an important time to recognise the importance of spirituality and well-being,’ Bishop Brady added.

Celebrating Mental Health Awareness week from 4th – 10th October 2015, Bishop Brady launched a parish kit to assist parishes to be authentic by including every member of the community, acknowledging their call, their gift and their presence.

‘I invite you to use the parish kit material to promote World Mental Health Day in your parish. You may wish to use the material to celebrate World Mental Health Day on Saturday 10 October or at another time.’

Prayer cards, parish kit, tips for celebrating Mental Health Awareness Week are available through the ACBC website: <https://www.catholic.org.au/mental-health>

Media queries, please contact Aoife Connors on 0450 348 597 or media@catholic.org.au

12 Challenging Questions for Every Christian Leader

By Peter Sewell (from Jane Johnson - www.churchexcellenceframework.com)

Ever since I was a young boy I have been asking questions. In fact, I make a living out of asking people questions. In my experience I have found questions offer the biggest growth experiences. This week I have chosen 12 of the most important questions that leaders can ask themselves in order to see growth and positive change in their church.

1. Do I equip and support every person to serve in their area of gifting?

(Eph 4:12; 2Ti 2:2; 1 Cor 4:15)

Leaders are often quick to vocally support people, but slow to involve people in practical ways. Empowering leaders recognise the value of involving every person and equipping them to serve. Poor leaders withhold opportunities from others, prefer to do ministry alone, and create conditions that limit ministry to a very few. In the New Testament church, Barnabas mentored Paul, and Paul actively mentored Timothy, Titus and others. Individual mentoring can help people to identify their gifts, and involve them in practical ways.

2. Do we have counsel and support from ministries outside our church?

(2 Tim 3:10; 1 Cor 4:17; Prov 11:14)

One of the inescapable realities of life is that the longer we function in any role, the more self sufficient we feel. On one hand, self sufficiency is a sign of maturity. On the other hand, it is the breeding ground for blind spots, meaning that we fail to see our weaknesses. Pro 11:14 says, "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety". Over the last few years we have started to see the restoration of Apostolic and Teaching gifts to guide churches by asking the right questions, and giving them insight to areas they are currently overlooking.

3. Do we ensure the ministry involvement of each person matches their gifts?

(1 Cor 12; Eph 4:16; 1 Pet 4:10)

Leaders often wonder how they can get more people to volunteer. The question that leaders need to be asking is how they can support people to serve in areas of their interest and gifts. During the last week I had complete strangers from the other side of the world volunteering to help me on a project. I didn't have to give them a motivational talk or any incentive. I just found a group of people already doing what I needed, I sent them a polite message, and they not only volunteered to help but offered to do much more than I had even requested. Tap into the interests of every person in your congregation and you will have a different church. Of course, the floor still needs cleaning, but when people feel appreciated and excited about using their gifts to serve, they always go beyond what they are asked to do.

4. Are times of prayer an inspiring experience for our members?

(Col 4:2; Act 4:31; Matt 6)

I often hear church leaders complain about the low attendance of their prayer meetings. I have been blessed by being in churches with an exceptionally high attendance in prayer meetings. Some of the things they had in common were: convenient prayer times, prophecy and spiritual gifts, small groups or triads, reading of scripture, testimonies, and spontaneous singing. I believe every Christian desires to pray, but unfortunately not every Christian has had the opportunity to actively participate in prayer. In 1904, there were 30,000 people in Melbourne Australia who were praying daily in prayer groups.

5. Are we aware of the needs in our community?

(Acts 11:28; 9:39; 2:45; 4:35; Mat 25:35, 36)

Throughout the New Testament there are many examples of ministering to the needs within the community. They collected offerings for famine relief (Acts 11:28), made coats and garments as an act of charity to the poor (Acts 9:39), sold possessions and distributed to those who had need (Acts 2:45; 4:35). The words of Jesus should challenge us to be aware of those in need, both in our congregations and communities. Mat 25:35,36 says, "For I was hungry,

(continued next page)

12 Challenging Questions for Every Christian Leader (...continued)

and you gave me food; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; I was naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me”.

6. Do we continue to evaluate the effectiveness of everything we do?

(Luke 14:28; Mar 7:13)

In recent years much has been written about the decline of traditional churches. As you drive through the Australian countryside, you will find many abandoned churches. In the same way, in recent years we have seen many large companies such as Borders, and Blockbuster, close their doors. They failed to change with the times and suffered from the global competition of the internet. In the same way, many churches are deaf to what is happening around them. Leaders need to continually question whether there are any unhelpful traditions developing and make changes.

7. Do we know which members of our church have the gift of evangelism?

(Eph 4:11; Act 21:8; Mark 16:15,20)

We are all called to share the wonderful good news with those around us; however there are those in the body of Christ who are especially gifted as evangelists. Identifying these people and supporting them offers the biggest return on investment. Think about how much your church spends on advertising and evangelistic outreach each year, then carefully consider how much of your resources, finance and time is invested into those who are gifted in the area of evangelism. Do you train them? Do you send them away for training? What might happen if every church invested in those that are regularly bringing friends to church? Statistics suggest that on average, up to ten percent of your congregation have the gift of evangelism. There are many ways you can support these people, but the best way to start is by asking them.

8. Do we involve young people in our ministry team?

(1Ti 4:12; Tit 2:15; Acts 2:17)

One of the greatest failures of the western church is not involving young people in ministry roles. We are great at saying goodbye as they leave for bible school, but sadly fail at giving them responsibility and support when they return. We are quick to point out their weaknesses, and make generalized statements about their lack of discipline. We accuse them of being irresponsible, but never stop to think that we might be contributing to their behaviour. When you view people as being responsible they will act responsible. Titus and Timothy were both young men, yet they were appointed to the role of overseeing churches and responsible for appointing elders. Paul encouraged both young men not to let anyone despise, depreciate, disesteem, or thinking badly of them in any way.

9. Are our worship services an inspiring experience for everyone?

(1 Thess 5:16-19; 1Co 14:26)

Whether this is a relevant question at all is debatable. After all, “it’s not about how we feel”, right? Nevertheless, there are several points we can learn from the above scriptures which I believe are guidelines that ensure services are inspiring. The first is that personal involvement from every member is encouraged. The second is that all things be done to build each other up. If people are regularly walking out of a service feeling unloved, judged, or more depressed when they entered, there’s something wrong. Church services, in whatever form that take, should lead to an encounter with God, in an environment where members build each other up.

10. Is attending our church a joyful experience for our members?

(Gal 5:22; Prov 17:22; Ps 126:2; Phil 4:4)

In the book of Galatians we are told that one of the fruit of a believers’ life is joy. A healthy church is therefore, without doubt, a place with lots of joy. Yes, there will be times of sadness and grief, but the life of a believer should not be characterized by sadness. Even during times of persecution, as the New Testament church faced, Paul encouraged believers to rejoice. The world desperately needs more joy, and any place where believers gather

(continued next page)

12 Challenging Questions for Every Christian Leader (...continued)

together should be somewhere with lots of joy and laughter.

11. Does our church promote the multiplication of small groups?

(Tit 1:5; Acts 14:23; Acts 20:20; Acts 5:42)

Much research has been done on the benefits of small groups. I don't particularly want to reference that here. Instead I would like to ask the more important question, assuming we accept that small groups are helpful and even necessary for Christians to grow in their faith, do you have a strategy in place to multiply the number of groups? This question also relates to leadership ability, and also causes us to consider what we value. Empowering leaders are motivated to duplicate themselves and place people in roles of responsibility. Dominant models of leadership tend to withhold responsibility, and lack the trust to release people into leadership roles.

12. Do our members regularly invite someone home for a meal or cup of coffee?

(Acts 2:46; 16:15, 34; 28:30; 1Peter 4:9; Heb 13:1,2)

Even though the word 'hospitality' only appears a few times throughout the New Testament, the practise of showing hospitality was practised consistently by all followers of Jesus. Believers meet in houses and fellowshiped regularly around food. Hospitality also often extended to having people stay with them. I truly believe that hospitality has been overlooked as one of the things that have played a significant role in the revivals we are currently witnessing around the world. In the midst of our technology jungle, face to face relationships are needed more and more. I read a comment recently saying how sad it was that people would happily send a text wishing them happy birthday, but not take the time to call and arrange a coffee date. Can our churches be an example of loving relationships that the world desperately needs?

What is the one question that you find most challenging? Are there other questions you have found helpful in the past? Let us know. We would love to hear from you.

Peter Sewell has over 25 years of ministry experience, training church leadership teams, business and government leaders, and community groups. He is a passionate supporter of the local church and served as an associate pastor for 15 years. During this time he was involved in planting new churches, and coordinating cell groups, pastoral care, and discipleship. He has qualifications in biblical studies, business, counselling, coaching, and adult education, and is currently involved in training future leaders across Europe.

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PROPHETIC DEVELOPMENT DAY

"An opportunity to develop in hearing God's voice in a greater way"

With Phil and Lorelee Colley

Saturday, 14th November 2015
10am - 5pm

Hosted By:

Pastor Gerald James
Hope Ministries
Level 1, 102-104 Victoria Rd
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Lunch is catered for \$10 - Please advise dietary requirements
RSVP: 7th November for catering purposes
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The Freedom Project

– The call, vision & work in a nutshell

From Michael Newton-Brown

The Freedom Project is a Christian not-for-profit justice agency dedicated to fighting human trafficking and slavery. It was established in 2010 by myself and my wife, Liz who, after serving as missionaries in Uganda and Kenya during the 1990's, returned to live in Sydney, Australia with our three young children in 1998. We spent the next few years building a retail business, investing in our local church and other ministries and raising our kids. However, our growing awareness and knowledge of the issues of slavery and trafficking began to deeply impact us and we sensed a strong call to respond. After travelling to countries including Uganda, Cambodia, Thailand, India and the USA to research the issues of slavery and trafficking, the scope of the problem compelled us to act.

The Freedom Project was formed on the basis of two strong convictions.

Firstly, authentic Christian faith is always accompanied by good deeds. Liz and I believed firmly that the plight of the oppressed, the enslaved, the poor and the downcast offends and breaks the heart of God. Since we are His hands and feet here on earth, we must respond to calls such as that in James 2:14: "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them?"

Secondly, we were convinced that the injustice of modern day slavery offends the heart of God and must be stopped. Our faith was to be an integral part of our vision in seeking to be a voice for the voiceless in Jesus' name - "Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." (Colossians 3:17)

Mission

The mission of The Freedom Project is to engage and equip the Australian community in the fight to end human trafficking and slavery by creating awareness, providing education and promoting advocacy. This is done through delivering talks and presentations in schools and churches to educate, inform and inspire young people, people of faith and the general public, and holding events to fundraise and raise awareness. The Freedom Project also partners with and supports local and global projects working in the prevention, rescue and restoration of those trapped in the cycle of this injustice. We work alongside Just Projects International in the Philippines, Burma and Thailand dealing primarily with the issue of child soldiers and families living in conflict zones. We also opened our first global office in Bangalore, India with a major focus on a Sports Academy program, a preschool for slum children and raids and rescues for people trapped who have been trafficked into labour or sexual exploitation.

The Philippines

In the southern island of Mindanao in the Philippines, The Freedom Project is working alongside various tribal groups to help keep children out of armed conflict. Our ground zero projects serve through education, community development, vocational training and brave love to protect children from entering conflict zones and provide lifestyles that move beyond blood feuds and hatred. We are BUILDING SCHOOLS to bring stability, literacy, education and safety to the children of these villages. Children who are most at risk and most vulnerable to be targeted for rebel armies are those who are NOT in schools and who spend their days roaming villages. Our goal is to build several schools in this rugged, isolated region over the next 5 years and potentially protect thousands of kids from rebel armies.

The Philippines is a tropical archipelago of more than 7,000 beautiful islands and over 170 spoken languages. Even though the vast majority of Filipinos are peaceful, the country's ethnic and cultural diversity can create long-term conflicts. Cycles of violence become established in many of the smaller tribal and clan-like groups because of the belief that conflicts are best resolved through vengeance.

Through careful conversations with former child soldiers and regional governmental authorities, one thing has become obvious: there are probably thousands more child soldiers in the Philippines than what is currently believed. The situation is critical. Children are at risk not only of death or injury, but also of being locked into deadly cycles of generational violence.



(continued next page)

The Freedom Project (...continued)

Burma

Burma (Myanmar) is a country with beautiful tropical coastlines, which contrast with its majestic snowcapped peaks, that are part of the Himalayan range. Burma is ethnically diverse, with over 100 groups and sub-groups, and thousands of dialects. If you walked among these smiling and resilient people, it might be hard to imagine that the country has over 75,000 child soldiers—more than any other country in the world.

Though there are many critical issues that Burma faces because of its diversity and lack of centralized leadership, the dire matter that The Freedom Project has in focus is liberating its many child soldiers. We have successfully and diplomatically negotiated the release of nearly 200 child soldiers by providing needed services to local communities. We operate four children's homes/schools in Burma/Thailand, all which serve children in the middle of conflict zones.

Most Burmese authorities on children in armed conflict say that the youngest confirmed age of a child soldier is 12. It is important to clarify, however, that we have reports of children as young as three years old living in military barracks and undergoing training, along with many confirmed reports of children of five to six years. It usually takes a boy of at least twelve years old to handle a weapon, but many cultures still believe that war is honorable and children are trained in their early developmental years as warriors – long before the age of 12.

Three R's for Children in Conflict Zones

We have a 3 fold approach to children in conflict zones:

1. *Rescue*

The first critical step in caring for children in armed conflict is fairly obvious: rescue. We diplomatically (without military force) negotiate the release of these children by building relationships with the armed groups that use them and by investing in what they believe is important for their communities. In most cases, these groups highly value education, which has opened doors for us to rescue more children and prevent many children from becoming involved in the conflict.

2. *Rehabilitation*

Once we rescue a child, the not-so-glamorous work of walking them through a process of healing begins. One of the most immediate needs is physical healing, as many children come to us in very bad health, but emotional healing is also a vital part of caring for those rescued. This involves a long-term commitment on our part. We provide a stable, loving, family environment to the children and commit to mentoring them through their development as young adults

3. *Reintegration*

People often ask us why we don't relocate the children from their home countries to safer locations. We are often tempted to do so, but we realize that the only way these children are going to rise up as the next generation of leaders in their societies is for them to maintain their cultural identity. We provide them with an outstanding K-12 education, as well as vocational training and university preparation in some cases, and walk with them until they are healthy, independent adults.



Some of our preschool kids - building them a future!



One of our homes in Burma

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The Freedom Project (...continued)

India

The establishment of The Freedom Project India has been an exciting development. India has the highest number of slaves in the world. The Freedom Project India Sports Academy has been established as a preventative project for the most vulnerable boys on the streets of Bangalore who are targets for being trafficked into the notorious labour industry in India. We are working with boys and their families from 5 slum communities around Bangalore. We currently have 250 boys in the program who are being trained in soccer skills and given a healthy breakfast each morning. We meet again each afternoon after school to continue their training and life skills. We have established a residential boys shelter for the most vulnerable boys to live.

An anti-sex trafficking Project is being developed to rescue girls caught in the sex industry in and around Bangalore. Girls trapped in brothels, under the watchful eye of pimps in Bangalore's train and bus stations, or in the lobbies of grand hotels are girls with NO VOICES and little hope and we want to change that. We are gearing up to open a Safe House and Assessment Centre for girls who have been rescued from sex trafficking. A 2 year residential program is being established for these girls to move from trauma back to full health and restoration.

<http://www.thefreedomproject.org>



Taking the shelter boys to get new shoes

Four Little Words

by Ruth Ann Cramer

They'd warned us! He was a monster and dangerous, an inmate of mental hospitals for half his life; and those in authority were bringing him to us from a distant state in their last desperate effort to bring about his change before they committed him, permanently they thought, to an insane asylum.

We took the phone off the hook, hung out a DO NOT DISTURB sign, set out our Bibles and readied a tray of protein to ward off hunger; it promised to be a long siege. Now, he was jabbing the front door chime. Authorities had assured us they'd keep us safe, but Matthew had me hang back, just in case.

Of slight build, with spiky tufts of colorless hair flopped over his ill-shapen head, dressed plainly in watery-beige shirt and pants, socks and sneakers, only his fervid look and mean green eyes brought color to his image. His swagger radiated confident defiance; his arched back promised a fight, his clenched jaw led his face into the room where, steeled by defiance, he positioned his bulwark in the corner.

He was short for his age, looking more like five or six than his full eight years; his monster-alter ego well hidden. His father, a sharply-dressed, highly-trained professional, let him be, while his step-mother, in late pregnancy with their first baby, looked very young and beautiful — a lovely mother; except being so terrified,

she didn't really sit, but hovered over the couch cushion, ready to leap and flee.

Matthew and I had ministered inner healing for many years to thousands, so we proceeded with a sequence we'd been led by the Holy Spirit to use before — always listening intently for His voice and direction. For two hours, we sought to crack the boy's rigid demeanor so he'd let the monster out and we could work with the truth, the reality, of who the boy was. As described by his father and step-mother — the latter with copious tears and barely breathing — we endeavored to see the fiend, to discern the cause and effect of the beast's violent, uncontrollable rages, the brute's cruel, sadistic, unrelenting abuse of his younger brother and sister, his satanic threats to kill all.

He'd been analyzed, mentalized, hypnotized, psychologized; socialized, traumatized, religionized and asylumized . . . and still, he didn't have his act together.

For hours, the boy stonewalled and the Holy Spirit kept quiet, so we ate in silence, then interviewed him again, seemingly getting nowhere. Heaven, too, had its ears and mouth closed. The parents grew restless — the father, reigning his anger, the mother, raining her blouse with tears; they'd come so far, they didn't want to commit him, but were out of options. One could sniff the stench of despair.

(continued next page)

Four Little Words (...continued)

We prayed; we waited. The Lord had never let us down; He'd always come through. We just had to hold on long enough and stay open till the Spirit moved — we were confident He would.

Four hours spent in prayer and we'd not gained one insight in ministering to this boy. The air throbbed: Impossible case; they've tried everything; failure is expected. Evil screamed into the void, tempting us to give up; heckling that for the first time, God stood, arms folded. God would not act in us, nor through us. We commanded evil to leave, beat back hopelessness and despair, battled panic as it sought to suffuse us with nefarious lie.

Finally, it came down to this: Did we believe God was good and would act, now, on behalf of this child and his family — or not?

By his prayer, I could tell that Matthew and I, in fighting the same temptations, were thinking the same: (1) Yes, God is good. (2) Yes, God had never left us without insight. (3) Our only choice was to wait in faith and confidence, and God would act. We three were in this ministry together and God would not give up on us . . . if we'd not give up on Him.

If only God would overwhelm us with bounteous confidence and victorious faith; how easy it would be! We could do great things! Instead, God asked us to ignore the reality before us, forget all others and look at Him alone. Did we really trust Him? Did we truly believe He would act? Even in face of His absolute silence? Even if He never spoke . . . again?

As day turned to night, our faith stretched out thin as a wispy vapor, yet, we managed to hang on, and on and on. Then . . . could these barely perceived whispers — these four spare words — be from The Spirit? We spoke them to the boy. "You loved your mom."

His face blanched, his thin chest sucked air; his body froze like an animal held rigid in glare. He'd been caught. Captured. His deep secret exposed, brought to light, given voice. Then...

The monster came apart. Now! Manifested before us was the real boy. Seen and felt was the murderous anger that inflamed him, his searing anguish at being violently rejected, his excruciating pain at being cruelly abandoned, the incessant sear of knowing he was long-forgotten, the deep knife-thrusts as he was betrayed again and again by the one he loved most deeply; his self-hate and self-loathing at not being good enough to have her love, his hate for those whose love never assuaged his desire for his "real" mother's love — all the raging

fury that consumed him played out as a conflagration before us. Now . . . God could work.

Long hours later, a bright, happy boy emerged, secure in the knowledge of God's love and of his parents' love and forgiveness for him; with no sign he'd ever been other than this lovely child we just wanted to hug. His father turned to us, almost with a sense of awe, and asked, "How'd you do that? We spent hundreds of thousands on the finest psychiatrists and professionals, and they couldn't touch him, and all you did was speak four words. How do you do that?"

Our answer was simple. "We wait."

In today's world, waiting is not good; waiting is waste. Waiting costs. Waiting hurts. Give us Instant! Answers! Now! We, today, refuse to wait.

Never had we felt so deeply engaged by the Holy Spirit to not only wait, but wait with confidence that God does hear; God does care; God will do what's best. Much more valuable than the miraculous healing of the boy, was God's demonstration He always holds out mercy to those who seek mercy, in and through Him.

We never cease to see affirmed that God does care, and will care, for His people. Why would we, then, in any crisis or situation that tries, calls for and summons forth the last dearth of faith, turn to anything or anyone, other than God?

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For more than fifty years, Matthew and Ruth Ann Cramer have taught, trained and ministered in church, business, education and private settings.

Long active in business, church, renewal movements, arts, media and entertainment, their work is featured in conferences, retreats, seminars, business consulting and other formats for many denominations and groups.

Ruth Ann has taught Creative Writing and Drama. She is an author, playwright and the director/producer of over twenty-seven musical comedies, revues and stage plays.

Lifelong Catholics, married fifty-plus years, parents of two and grandparents of nine, they bring the warmth, compassion and humor of family life to their work. All of this, combined with a deep spirituality and commitment to Christ and His church, makes Matthew and Ruth Ann ably equipped for this unique teaching ministry.



SOMEBODY'S CHILD



On any given night 1 in every 200 people are homeless.

Children who are often misguided and disillusioned quite often run away from home. They often do not have a plan and end up on the streets.

Victims of domestic abuse while fleeing a dangerous situation through desperation find themselves on the streets.

Someone needs to provide them with a chance for survival and take them away from the vagaries of life on the street. This someone is Somebody's Child.

Somebody's Child aims at building a refuge for people who are temporarily displaced and together with other specialist organisations to provide residents with the necessary guidance and counselling. Somebody's Child believes the first 3-5 days are crucial and with proper intervention many displaced people will be able to settle better.

Somebody's Child is a registered charity authorised by Australian Taxation Office as a deductible gift recipient.

Please visit our website and we welcome any assistance however small! All donations are tax deductible.

Thank you!
Sandrine Razalfe - Secretary
Somebody's Child

WHAT WE DO

Imagine you're a teenager who had a disagreement with your parents and in a moment of anger and frustration run away from home. A prospect of a night on the streets feeling scared and vulnerable is daunting, where to from here?

Or you find you are the victim of domestic violence and need to get out with your children, where can you stay?

GET INVOLVED

GIVE where it's needed by helping us build housing.

TO: SOMEBODY'S CHILD
BSB: 083 337 ACC.Nr 84 663 0794

Other ways to give:

www.somebodyschild.org or www.mycause.com.au

Phone: +61387517110

Email: hello@somebodyschild.org

*All donations over \$2 are Tax deductible

HOW WE DO IT

SOMEBODY'S CHILD aims to build emergency housing for such moments in life!

If we can provide a safe temporary shelter during these moments of uncertainty then just maybe, we can change the outcome to a more positive future than living on the streets.

WAYS TO GIVE



Fundraise



Counterstand



Volunteer



Be a Sponsor



mycause.com.au

Heaven Can't Wait

By Dr Nick Wynne (M.B B.S Hons) and Yvette Wynne (B.App.Sci-Chem) (M.Arts Christian Leadership)

www.heavencantwait.net

INTRODUCTION

Life: joyful... then painful, safe... then unpredictable, fast... then slow. Among all life's twists and turns, moments will materialise that force us into deep questions.

Questions like:

- Are things happening for a reason, or is this all random?
- Why is this so painful, is there an end to this suffering?
- When I die, will I stop being somebody?

The world of science and nature offers little answers to these precious questions.

This short book is about a husband and wife who refused to leave these questions alone. Our journey took us beyond the veil of science and nature, and into the spiritual.

We found a heavenly Father patiently waiting for us.

Questions answered.

Peace.

New life.

We write this hoping to encourage others to press on into the journey of deep questions, the journey of faith.

Father invites you into His real but unseen spiritual realm...and heaven can't wait for your call.

CHAPTER 1: DARKNESS FALLS

No matter how many good decisions we make, when life throws unexpected challenges, we can find ourselves at a loss. It's at those times that we question our purpose in life and reason for being, which is what happened when life overwhelmed me.

We lived in a nice house in leafy suburbia, and had plenty of money for food and clothes. I was in my mid-twenties and had two healthy children with my husband, Nick. I adored my family. I was a housewife, and my fulfilment came from being the best wife and mother I could be. After all, that was my childhood dream.

However, I did everything I could to tear it all apart. I was desperate to have more children, but was rewarded with nothing but heartache after many early miscarriages.

Overwhelmed and frustrated, I attended a fertility clinic and was put on a fertility drug. My life was spiralling out of control. I felt time ticking by, as each month was a complete failure. Because every hour of my day was consumed with my 'cycle' and desperation to fall pregnant, I lost focus on everything else that was important to me.

My relationship with Nick was stretched to breaking point, and during a particularly nasty altercation I shouted out the cruellest words I knew. I wanted to hurt him.

My temper once awoken would not be controlled, and I exploded my venom on my beloved. Nick's response to me was measured, more than I deserved: 'That's not fair. It's like me saying to you that you're a lousy wife and stupid mother.'

He didn't say I was a lousy wife and mother, but that's the way I heard it. My life suddenly had

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Heaven Can't Wait (...continued)

no meaning, because being a good wife and mother was my sole purpose and I was failing miserably. I may as well exit the planet! I decided that suicide was my only option.

I stormed out of the room and went to the medicine cabinet to swallow the first tablets that I found. After popping about ten tablets I sat on the lounge and waited... and waited. Nick was still at home but unaware of this turn of events.

As I sat there, waiting for the drugs to take effect, the phone rang. It was my husband's brother with an emergency. A bushfire was threatening his house, and Nick was about to rush out the door to help him.

So often in times of crisis bad decisions are compounded with poor judgement, and the effect is magnified. Providentially, this was not my fate. By this stage, time had given me opportunity for my clouded judgement to become clearer. I was having second thoughts about what I had done, and if Nick left, so did my ticket to life. I humbled myself and asked my doctor husband what would happen if I swallowed all the medicine I had just taken.

Owning up to my stupidity was the only good choice I had made in the last twenty-four hours. Nick couldn't believe I could do such a thing, called me an idiot (fair enough), but in his concern also asked the neighbour to sit with me while he went to help his brother.

The tablets were antibiotics and thankfully the dose was not life threatening, although I did have the biggest case of thrush you could ever imagine!

Through my own impatience and foolishness, I was even further away from having a baby. Another month went sailing by as I waited for my infection to clear up.

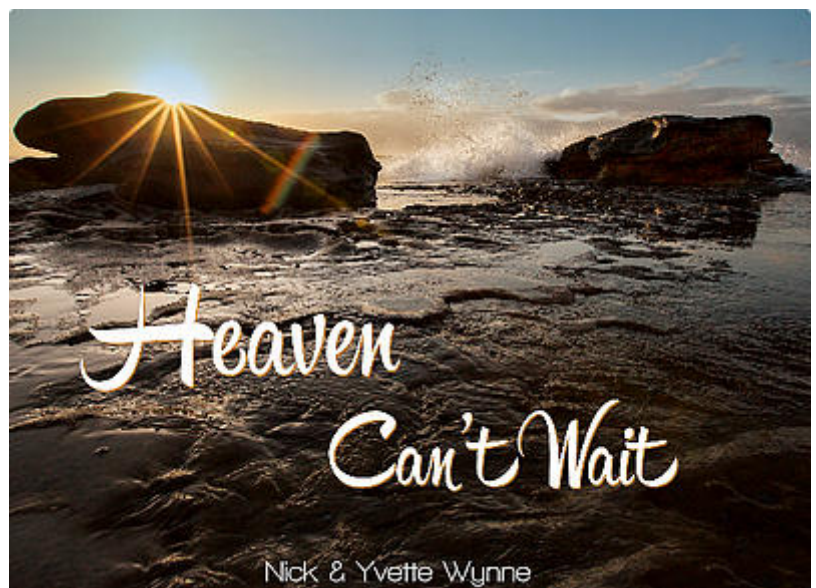
This experience left me questioning the reason for living. If we were just physical beings, then it would make sense that we would get completely fulfilled from the physical things in this world. Food, shelter and clothing should be enough to satisfy our needs. But there is something inside us that yearns for more than just our physical needs being met.

Perhaps if humans had just a body and a soul, then the physical world and relationships would be enough to fulfil us. But are they? I know that was not my experience. My case is not an isolated example—there are many people who are honestly searching for something that can't be fulfilled through human relationships.

As you journey through life looking for fulfilment, your identity can be challenged.

Have you found what you are looking for?

For the rest of this booklet, please visit
www.heavencantwait.net



Daily Prayer Calendar for November - *Media and Entertainment*

(Prepared by Lilian Schmid)

Daily Prayer in November

This sphere of society includes journalists, social media activists, bloggers, writers, editors, producers, technicians, personalities, staff who work in the fields of television, radio, the Internet, newspapers, magazines, and other media sources or outlets.

- 1 Pray God's servants on the sphere of media will walk in integrity, humility, faithfulness, and righteousness.
Whoever pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity and honor. (Proverbs 21:21).
- 2 Pray they will be filled with knowledge, wisdom, and godly attitudes with understanding that knowledge only comes from God and be trustworthy, pure, holy and generous. *(Proverbs 11)*
- 3 Ask God to position Christian men and women in the sphere of media who will boldly give glory to God for the great things that He has done.
So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)
- 4 Thank God that He has raised up men and women who are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ and they are working to bring the truth out and destroy lies in the sphere of Media.
Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (Hebrews 4:13)
- 5 Pray that God will speak through all CEOs in TV channels and Radio stations, people that He has placed them on high position in Media because the Spirit of the Lord is upon them and His Word is on their tongues.
The Spirit of the Lord spoke through me; his word was on my tongue. (2 Samuel 23:2)
- 6 Pray God's people in the arena of media will be aware that the power of the Holy Spirit is much stronger and bigger than any news in the Media, and the word of God bring life to many through the message in the Media.
*The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit. (Proverbs 18:21)
For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned. (Matthew 12:37)*
- 7 Pray that God will position journalists who are willing to say the truth and stand against corruption in our society and bring the news out.
Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. (Ephesians 4:15)
- 8 Pray that God will position and give favour and authority to those whom He has appointed to be a voice of justice to our nation.
Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. (Matthew 12:18)
- 9 Pray that God will make people who works in the sphere of Media be bold, fearless and unashamed of the gospel.
*See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant. (Jeremiah 1:10)
For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. (Romans 1:16)*
- 10 Pray God will instruct those on the sphere of media to deliver the world of God with dignity and respect.
The Sovereign Lord has given me a well-instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed. (Isaiah 50:4)
- 11 Pray that God will set many free and bring many to His kingdom (Let your kingdom come Lord in the sphere of Media as it is in Heaven).
- 12 Lord use Facebook and other social media for your glory.
Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth. (Psalm 57:11)
- 13 Pray that God will mobilize His army of peace, who bring good news and proclaim salvation to the nations through the sphere of Media.
How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" (Isaiah 52:7)
- 14 Pray God will raise up watchmen in the sphere of media and Entertainment to sing His glory and save many people's lives in concerts, TV programs and shows, who will lift their voices with shouts of joy when the Lord makes Himself known to a people

(continued next page)

Daily Prayer Calendar for Nov. - *Media & Entertainment (...continued)*

(Isaiah 52:7)

15 Pray that God will call and send forth godly reporters, who will refute every evil word spoken against God's people, in a broader public arena. *"...no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me," declares the Lord. (Isaiah 54:17)*

16 Pray that God will call men and women to the sphere of media who will report the truth with integrity. *I know that you are pleased with me, for my enemy does not triumph over me. Because of my integrity you uphold me and set me in your presence forever. Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and Amen. (Psalm 41:11-13)*

17 Pray that God will expose all ungodly activities in the sphere of Media and Entertainment *Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy. (Proverbs 28:13)*

18 Pray that God will pull down all demonic strongholds in the sphere of Media and Entertainment. *If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:8-9)*

19 We ask God to break down the spirit of Alcohol and drugs in the sphere of Media and Entertainment. *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, (Ephesians 5:18)*

20 We ask God to expose all Adultery in the sphere of Media and Entertainment. *"Your wickedness will punish you; your backsliding will rebuke you. Consider then and realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the Lord your God and have no awe of me," declares the Lord, the Lord Almighty. (Jeremiah 2:19)*

Giving thanks now to our Father in Heaven

21 Give thanks to God for all Christian Organisations who are working hard in the Media to deliver the message of the Gospel (John 3:17).

22 Give thanks to God for His mercy and grace for those who are witnessing to the truth in the sphere of Media (Acts 1:8)

23 Give thanks to God for His protection over the gate keepers in the sphere of Media and Entertainment. (Psalm 91).

24 Give thanks to God for the increase of the fruits of the spirit in the sphere of Media and Entertainment (Galatians 5:22, 23). Many Christians in this sphere are working hard to deliver the message of truth.

25 Psalm 23
The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.
He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

26 Give thanks to God for the increase of Christian Movies and Stories in the Media

27 Give thanks to God and receive His blessings for the sphere of Media

28 Give thanks to God for His mercy in this sphere

29 Give thanks to God for His love poured out in the sphere of Media.

30 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light (Colossians 1:12)

Prayer

O God, the creator and preserver of all mankind, we humbly beseech thee for all sorts and conditions of men; that thou wouldest be pleased to make thy ways known unto them, thy saving health unto all nations. More especially we pray for thy holy Church universal; that it may be so guided and governed by thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. Finally, we commend to thy fatherly goodness all those who are in any ways afflicted or distressed, in mind, body, or estate; [especially those for whom our prayers are desired]; that it may please thee to comfort and relieve them according to their several necessities, giving them patience under their sufferings, and a happy issue out of all their afflictions. And this we beg for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen

Next month - December - *Sport and Recreation*



Voice of the Martyrs

Serving the Persecuted Church

“They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” Revelation 7:16-17

EGYPT: A New Church and New Attacks for Christians

After Christians in the of Al-Galaa village in Samalout, Minya, Egypt received permission to expand the church serving three villages, fanatic Muslims have increased their attacks on Christians and their property. [Read More](#)

Prayer Points

- ♥ Thank the Lord for the faithfulness of Christians in Egypt who love and serve Him in spite of great opposition. Ask the Lord to continue to strengthen their faith, especially children. May their faithfulness be used by the Lord as a witness to the Gospel.
- ♥ Pray the Lord’s protection will be upon believers. Ask Him to fully provide for all their needs.
- ♥ Pray the authorities, including Muslim leaders, will act justly to prosecute the offenders and bring an end to the violence.

WEST BANK: Pray for Mahir, Sharing the Gospel

‘Mahir,’ a Christian convert from Islam, recently led one of his friends to Christ after attending a training conference in Israel’s West Bank.

Prayer Points

- ♥ Thank the Lord for Mahir’s faithfulness in the spreading of the Gospel and his desire to share the love of Christ with others.
- ♥ Pray the Lord’s protection will be upon Mahir, as he will likely face opposition.
- ♥ Ask God to prepare open minds to hear the words of Mahir and his friends and accept the free gift of grace.

NIGERIA: Christian Chibok Girls Alive

One Christian Chibok girl escaped from Boko Haram about two weeks ago, eventually finding herself in the hands of the joint task force assigned to defeat the terrorist group.

Prayer Points

- ♥ Pray for the Christian girl’s speedy recovery during this time of transition, pray too that she may return home to her community who will love her and support as she attempts to overcome her ordeal.
- ♥ Pray the Lord will minister to her and the remaining captives to give them strength, hope and a real knowledge of His presence.
- ♥ Pray that God will continue to bring change of hearts and minds among Boko Haram and that they will be brought to justice for their crimes against Nigeria’s people.

INDONESIA: One Dead and Church Burned in Aceh

A man was killed and a church burned down in violent clashes in Aceh Singkil, Indonesia, on 13 October.

Prayer Points

- ♥ Commit to the Lord the grieving family and those who sustained injuries. Ask the Lord to supply His strength and comforting presence.
- ♥ Pray for peace and calm in the area; pray the authorities will act justly towards all parties involved.
- ♥ Pray the believers will continue to meet together and be spurred on in their faith.

Subscribe to our free monthly newsletter to receive regular testimonies from the persecuted church

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