

Prayer Strategy for the Spheres of Influence

January 2016 - Praying for the Family



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These articles 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.

From the National Coordinators

Dear friends,

At the beginning of 2016 the Lord gave me a word "This is the Year of Intercessors" I come before the throne of God and I ask each one of you to say thank you for your intercessors and your prayer coordinators and praise God for their 24/7 prayers support for all of you Church leaders, pastors and clergy.

Intercessors' gifts are precious before God and their prayers are incense before the throne His throne. We need to honor them and honor their calling.

This year take the chance to remember perhaps the Birthdays of your intercessors and celebrate with them in a special way.

Jesus is the example we must follow, as He is a MASTER intercessor, and has ordained the Holy Spirit to operate in the same manner.

1Ti 2:3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

1Ti 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

1Ti 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

1Ti 2:6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

Heb 9:15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

I want to give thanks to all intercessors, prayer leaders, prayer coordinators across the world who are supporting me and Bjorn in their prayers and love.

Thank you and God bless you

Lilian & Bjorn Schmid

prayerstrategy.org businesswomenhealingministry.org

transformingsydney.org



Pentecost Eve 2016

Dear friends in Christ,

Transforming Sydney and the **Sydney Pastors Network** will be celebrating Pentecost Eve on **Saturday the 14th of May 2016**.

This Sydney prayer gathering is taking place in the **Parramatta Region** (see <http://www.transformingsydney.org/files/Pentecost2016.pdf>) – more details will be announced over the coming months as they become available.

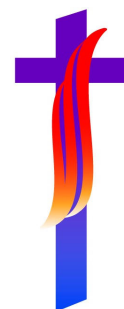
If you wish to be involved with the planning of this important event please contact us; Lilian on 0412 766 917 or Bjorn on 0411 562 751.

In John 17:20-23 Jesus Prays for All Believers:

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

Bjorn & Lilian Schmid, Facilitators of Transforming Sydney Movement

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An Old Family Tradition

By Raymond Nell, Family Pastor at Mosaic Church

Eugene Peterson writes in his book: "Christ Plays in a Thousand Places" about the demise of the table:

*"Daily meals with family, friends and guests, acts of hospitality every one, are the most natural and frequent setting for working out the personal and social implications of salvation. But there is a problem. The practice of hospitality has fallen on bad times. Fewer and fewer families sit down to a meal together. The meal, which used to be a gathering place for families, neighbours, and the stranger at the gate, is on its way out."*¹

Dinner as a family around a table is "on its way out" according to Eugene Peterson. It looks like this old tradition is "on its way out" because of:

1. Drive through restaurants
2. House holds, where both parents work
3. Technology driven homes
4. Kid's busy schedules, homework and an array of afternoon activities

It seems that more and more families around the world find it very difficult to have the old traditional family dinner or evening meal. Although all the statistics tell us that it's very important to make time for this event every day.

Studies from the University of Columbia in the USA show us, children who experience a daily meal at a table:

- Are healthier physically
- Achieve better grades at school
- Are happier emotionally
- Are less likely to abuse alcohol or any other substance²

The traditional dinner or evening meal should make a comeback all over the world, so that families can experience the benefits and rewards of this old tradition. House holds need to engage in this very important practice and learn to connect with each other around the table.

But let's take a look at how the meal worked for ancient Jews:

"Everyday meals: Only two meals of the day were usually eaten. The Labourer worked until midday before taking his first meal

But the noon meal was not important, usually consisting of bread, olives and sometimes fruit

The chief meal of the day was served in the early evening, an hour or two before sunset when the duties of the day were over.

It was a time of rest, refreshment, and family reunions.

*After the meal for an hour or two before bedtime the people sat around and talked."*³

It is said that the Table is a time for Family Reunions. When a family sits together around the table it's a

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'The traditional dinner or evening meal should make a comeback all over the world'

¹ Eugene H. Peterson – Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places – (London Hodder and Stoughton 2008) P 214-215

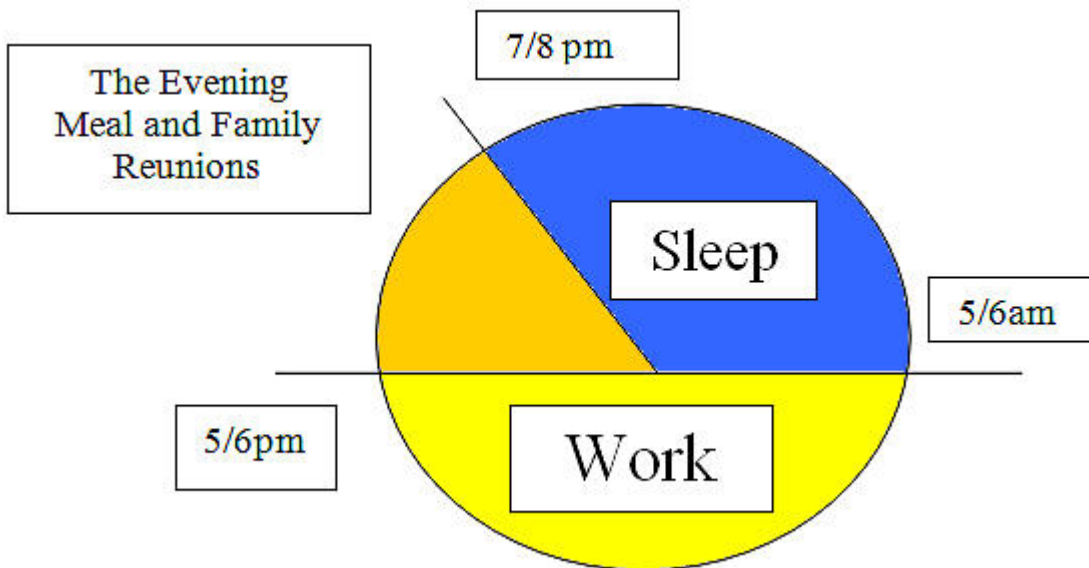
² Timi Gustafson, R.D. Eating Together as a Family Has Multiple Benefits-Timi's blog-Posted 09/20/2012-www.huffingtonpost.com/timi-gustafson/family-dinner

³ Zondervan Encyclopaedia of the Bible

An Old Family Tradition (...continued)

time where their individual worlds become one for the first time in the day and as a family they are “re-uniting”. They tell stories of the day and everyone has their own interpretation of the day’s events. All the family members experienced the day differently and they have the opportunity to share their stories. The most important part though, is the time at the table when a family is together with the Maker of heaven and earth and they invite Him to take a seat at their table. This is a time where their table, becomes His table.

Here is how the Hebrew day was divided:



The Hebrew day began at five or six pm in the evening. It is a tradition that has been repeated for centuries. They found this concept in Gen 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, and 31. All these verses have one thing in common:

*“And there was evening and there was morning ...”
Amplified Bible*

The Hebrew day started with a meal, then some family time followed by sleep and then the next morning they would go to work.

We start our days wrong. It starts with a snooze button that is pushed repeatedly. Then it’s chaos in the house and everybody leaves for work and school in a rush. In the Old Testament we see that what happened to the “first” is very important. They had the first fruit offerings and they had to offer their first born lambs to God. That is why they started their day with a meal and an invitation to God to be a part of their mealtime. It was the first thing that they did every day. I think that, that is the reason why Luke, in his Gospel, talks about the table eight times:

- Luke 5:27-39 - Matthew’s Party
- Luke 7:36-50 - Jesus anointed by a sinful woman
- Luke 9:10-20 - Dinner for 5000
- Luke 10:38-42 - Dinner with Mary and Martha
- Luke 11:37-54 - Dinner with the Pharisees
- Luke 14:1-14 - Dinner with the Pharisees
- Luke 22:7-23 - The last Supper
- Luke 24:28-35 - Resurrection meal with disciples



It’s as if Luke wanted to show us the importance of spending time at the table and starting our day around the table.

There are churches who are challenging the families in their congregations about returning to the old tradition of spending time together as a family around the dinner table. Our church also challenged families to start this tradition and the response we received was mind blowing.

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An Old Family Tradition (...continued)

The challenge to our congregation:

We challenged our congregation to start having meals together as often as they could. We provided them with devotions that they could use after the meal.

We also started to view these groups and the families who partake in these practices, as “Small Groups” of our church. We now have 130 families who are participating in this practice and most of them do it more than once a week.

We call these families our “Table Communion” Groups:

“God has a name for Small Groups: it’s called the family. The house doesn’t get any more authentic and real with each other” - Jonathan Cronkhite⁴

We tried to connect people in Small Groups.

Some people loved these groups, others didn’t. Most people didn’t have the time to connect with other people in a Small Group during the week. Families with young children found it very difficult to connect with other people during the week. Those with children at school also admitted that it was a challenge for them to connect with a small group during the school term.

People are very busy with work and other activities. We’re living in a “fast lane world”. It’s just not that easy for a family to drive across town, in hectic traffic, to spend an hour or two at someone else’s house.

We added one hundred and thirty active “Small Groups” to our church that meet regularly, and who are doing life together, they’re praying for each other on a weekly basis. These are not only families with primary school kids, but it is any “family” that consists of two or more people around a table. It can be two friends sharing a flat, or a group of elderly people living in a retirement village.

What happens at a Table Communion?

Firstly the family gathers around the table and they pray. The table is their sacred meeting place, so they invite God into this space.

The food is distributed and the family shares stories from their day while they are “feasting”. Afterwards they rate their day or they talk about the highs or lows of their day. Everybody gets to share and no one is allowed to make comments while one is sharing. The aim is to listen.

Then scripture can be read and some questions about the scripture can be asked and a final prayer can be said.

It is a safe place, where family members can share their stories, their ups and downs, their great exploits as well as their failures. The Table is a place where they belong and feel welcome. It is a place of authenticity.

This is what Randy Frazee said about the table:

“Children desire a sense of belonging, they know they belong and there are people who care for them, at the table.”⁵

For Eugene Peterson the table is a place where Christ shows up and where He plays in the lives of family members. The challenge to all families is: “To take part in a daily table ritual.” Then one can experience the benefits that come with it.



⁴ Jonathan Cronkhite – quote taken from Brain Dollar’s Blog 2012 - [brian@highvoltage-kids.com]

⁵ Randy Frazee – The Table – Message preached at Willow Creek Community Church Chicago 2009



"Protect Your Families!" – Francis On The Domestic "Dream"... And Its "Ideological Colonization"

Posted by Rocco Palmo on "Whispers in the Loggia" Friday, January 16, 2015

<http://whispersintheloggia.blogspot.com.au/2015/01/protect-your-families-francis-on-dream.html>

'At this evening's encounter with families in a 20,000-seat Manila arena, the Pope went off-script at length to issue a bluntly pointed condemnation of an "ideological colonization" of domestic life by forces that would "threaten" it, including among its examples attempts "to redefine the very institution of marriage" and "a lack of openness to life."

Dear Families,

Dear Friends in Christ,

I am grateful for your presence here this evening and for the witness of your love for Jesus and his Church. I thank Bishop Reyes, Chairman of the Bishops' Commission on Family and Life, for his words of welcome on your behalf. And, in a special way, I thank those who have presented testimonies and have shared their life of faith with us.

The Scriptures seldom speak of Saint Joseph, but when they do, we often find him resting, as an angel reveals God's will to him in his dreams. In the Gospel passage we have just heard, we find Joseph resting not once, but twice. This evening I would like to rest in the Lord with all of you, and to reflect with you on the gift of the family.

It is important to dream in the family. All mothers and fathers dream of their sons and daughters in the womb for 9 months. They dream of how they will be. It isn't possible to have a family without such dreams. When you lose this capacity to dream you lose the capacity to love, the capacity to love is lost. I recommend that at night when you examine your consciences, ask yourself if you dreamed of the future of your sons and daughters. Did you dream of your husband or wife? Did you dream today of your parents, your grandparents who carried forward the family to me? It is so important to dream and especially to dream in the family. Please don't lose the ability to dream in this way. How many solutions are found to family problems if we take time to reflect, if we think of a husband or wife, and we dream about the good qualities they have. Don't ever lose the memory of when you were boyfriend or girlfriend. That is very important.

Joseph's rest revealed God's will to him. In this moment of rest in the Lord, as we pause from our many daily obligations and activities, God is also speaking to us. He speaks to us in the reading we have just heard, in our prayer and witness, and in the quiet of our hearts. Let us reflect on what the Lord is saying to us, especially in this evening's Gospel. There are three aspects of this passage which I would ask you to consider: resting in the Lord, rising with Jesus and Mary, and being a prophetic voice.

Resting in the Lord. Rest is so necessary for the health of our minds and bodies, and often so difficult to achieve due to the many demands placed on us. But rest is also essential for our spiritual health, so that we

can hear God's voice and understand what he asks of us. Joseph was chosen by God to be the foster father of Jesus and the husband of Mary. As Christians, you too are called, like Joseph, to make a home for Jesus. You make a home for him in your hearts, your families, your parishes and your communities.



To hear and accept God's call, to make a home for Jesus, you must be able to rest in the Lord. You must make time each day for prayer. But you may say to me: Holy Father, I want to pray, but there is so much work to do! I must care for my children; I have chores in the home; I am too tired even to sleep well. This may be true, but if we do not pray, we will not know the most important thing of all: God's will for us. And for all our activity, our busy-ness, without prayer we will accomplish very little.

Resting in prayer is especially important for families. It is in the family that we first learn how to pray. And don't forget when the family prays together, it remains together. This is important. There we come to know God, to grow into men and women of faith, to see ourselves as members of God's greater family, the Church. In the family we learn how to love, to forgive, to be generous and open, not closed and selfish. We learn to move beyond our own needs, to encounter others and share our lives with them. That is why it is so important to pray as a family! That is why families are so important in God's plan for the Church!

I would like to tell you something very personal. I like St Joseph very much. He is a strong man of silence. On my desk I have a statue of St Joseph sleeping. While sleeping he looks after the Church. Yes, he can do it! We know that. When I have a problem or a difficulty, I write on a piece of paper and I put it under his statue so he can dream about it. This means please pray to St Joseph for this problem.

Next, rising with Jesus and Mary. Those precious moments of repose, of resting with the Lord in prayer, are moments we might wish to prolong. But like Saint Joseph, once we have heard God's voice, we must rise from our slumber; we must get up and act (cf. Rom 13:11). Faith does not remove us from the world, but draws us more deeply into it. Each of us, in fact, has a

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Francis On The Domestic "Dream" (...continued)

special role in preparing for the coming of God's kingdom in our world.

Just as the gift of the Holy Family was entrusted to Saint Joseph, so the gift of the family and its place in God's plan is entrusted to us so we can carry it forward. To each one of you and us because I too am the son of a family.

The angel of the Lord revealed to Joseph the dangers which threatened Jesus and Mary, forcing them to flee to Egypt and then to settle in Nazareth. So too, in our time, God calls upon us to recognize the dangers threatening our own families and to protect them from harm. We must be attentive to the new ideological colonization.

Beware of the new ideological colonization that tries to destroy the family. It's not born of the dream that we have from God and prayer – it comes from outside and that's why I call it a colonization. Let us not lose the freedom to take forward the mission God has given us, the mission of the family. And just as our peoples were able to say in the past "No" to the period of colonization, as families we have to be very wise and strong to say "No" to any attempted ideological colonization that could destroy the family. And to ask the intercession of St Joseph to know when to say "Yes" and when to say "No"....

The pressures on family life today are many. Here in the Philippines, countless families are still suffering from the effects of natural disasters. The economic situation has caused families to be separated by migration and the search for employment, and financial problems strain many households. While all too many people live in dire poverty, others are caught up in materialism and lifestyles which are destructive of family life and the most basic demands of Christian morality. The family is also threatened by growing efforts on the part of some to redefine the very institution of marriage, by relativism, by the culture of the ephemeral, by a lack of openness to life.

I think of Blessed Paul VI in the moment of that challenge of population growth, he had the strength to defend openness to life. He knew the difficulties families experience and that's why in his encyclical (*Humanae Vitae*) he expressed compassion for specific cases and he taught professors to be particularly compassionate for particular cases. And he went further, he looked at the people on the earth and he saw that lack (of children) and the problem it could cause families in the future. Paul VI was courageous, a good pastor and he warned his sheep about the wolves that were approaching. And from the heavens he blesses us today.

Our world needs good and strong families to overcome these threats! The Philippines needs holy and loving families to protect the beauty and truth of the family in God's plan and to be a support and example for other families. Every threat to the family is a threat to society

itself. The future of humanity, as Saint John Paul II often said, passes through the family (cf. *Familiaris Consortio*, 85). So protect your families! See in them your country's greatest treasure and nourish them always by prayer and the grace of the sacraments. Families will always have their trials, but may you never add to them! Instead, be living examples of love, forgiveness and care. Be sanctuaries of respect for life, proclaiming the sacredness of every human life from conception to natural death. What a gift this would be to society, if every Christian family lived fully its noble vocation! So rise with Jesus and Mary, and set out on the path the Lord traces for each of you.

Finally, the Gospel we have heard reminds us of our Christian duty to be prophetic voices in the midst of our communities. Joseph listened to the angel of the Lord and responded to God's call to care for Jesus and Mary. In this way he played his part in God's plan, and became a blessing not only for the Holy Family, but a blessing for all of humanity. With Mary, Joseph served as a model for the boy Jesus as he grew in wisdom, age and grace (cf. Lk 2:52). When families bring children into the world, train them in faith and sound values, and teach them to contribute to society, they become a blessing in our world. God's love becomes present and active by the way we love and by the good works that we do. We extend Christ's kingdom in this world. And in doing this, we prove faithful to the prophetic mission which we have received in baptism.

During this year which your bishops have set aside as the Year of the Poor, I would ask you, as families, to be especially mindful of our call to be missionary disciples of Jesus. This means being ready to go beyond your homes and to care for our brothers and sisters who are most in need. I ask you especially to show concern for those who do not have a family of their own, in particular those who are elderly and children without parents. Never let them feel isolated, alone and abandoned, but help them to know that God has not forgotten them.

I was very moved after the Mass today when I visited that shelter for children with no parents. How many people in the Church work so that that house is a home, family? This is what it means to take forward, prophetically, the meaning of family. You may be poor yourselves in material ways, but you have an abundance of gifts to offer when you offer Christ and the community of his Church. Do not hide your faith, do not hide Jesus, but carry him into the world and offer the witness of your family life!

Dear friends in Christ, know that I pray for you always! I pray that the Lord may continue to deepen your love for him, and that this love may manifest itself in your love for one another and for the Church. Pray often and take the fruits of your prayer into the world, that all may know Jesus Christ and his merciful love. Please pray also for me, for I truly need your prayers and will depend on them always!



Why should we pray for our families?

By Lillian Penner, National Prayer Coordinator, christiangrandparenting.net



The year 2016 has arrived with many of us wondering what the New Year will look like for us and our families, in the coming year. However, we as believers in Jesus Christ can have the confidence He is walking beside us holding our hand, and offering guidance, if we allow Him.

We are on a difficult journey as our families are trying to survive in an unstable broken world. Our culture is whittling away at our Godly heritage, as they have removed prayer from the school, Christians are being scorned and mentioning Jesus is unacceptable. The world calls wrong right and right wrong, live for self in an entitlement society where no one wins and authority is challenged, not respected. We are living in a time where the enemy is going around roaring like a lion, however, the battle is not ours, it is the Lords.

So what do we do when we live in a culture of spiritual, social and moral decline? Are we completely without hope and at the mercy of the merciless and the politically correct? No, We are not without hope. We read in Psalms 46:1, "We have a God who is our refuge and strength, our stronghold in times of trouble."

God has given us a powerful resource in the avenue of prayer to bring power and blessing to their lives, it is a gift from God, it's not a production; it is a personal intimate conversation with God, the creator of the universe, Prayer is the most important thing we can do for ourselves and our loved ones.

What should we pray?

We read in John 10:10, where Jesus said, "The thief comes only to kill and destroy; I am come that they may have life, and have it to the full." In today's broken world, we see the family unit very fragile, I believe we have an enemy who is desperately trying to distract and destroy the family. It's important that we cover our families with prayer that they will recognize the distractions from the enemy and not allow him to destroy our families.

The parents of our grandchildren have a great responsibility parenting our grandchildren in these insecure, unstable times. It is important that we as grandparents pray God will give the parents of our grandchildren wisdom and time management in their monumental task of guiding our grandchildren

in the ways of the Lord. Their lives are busy with their employment, with many distractions in their marriages, parenting and spiritual lives in a busy and evil environment filled with many moral and spiritual battles.

Today's media desensitizes are desensitizing our grandchildren. They are greatly influenced by the movies, music, TV, video games, and Internet. They are faced with legal recreational marijuana, drugs, sex trafficking, alcohol, sexual identity, homosexuality, pornography, pre-martial sex and more. Our prayers for them should be that they recognize the evil in the world and ask God to place a hedge of protection around them physically, emotionally and spiritually.

To pray effectively, we as parents and grandparents need to know the frustrations, dreams, fears, concerns, and expectations for the children. Ask the parents, "What are some of the issues you are dealing with right now and how can we pray for you?"

How to Pray

Early in my life I felt my prayers were too general for my family, I asked God to give me wisdom and insight on how I could pray more intentionally. I discovered praying God's Word was a great resource to help me to pray not only for my grandchildren and their parents, but also for myself.

When I pray according to God's Word, I am in line with His will, enabling me to pray with confidence, direction, power, and wisdom according to Hebrews 4:12, "The Word of God is full of living power." I have found it helpful to spend time in God's Word to know his promises and commands because my mind is renewed to think His thoughts. His Word helps me to see the needs for which I am praying from His perspective. We read in John 15:7, "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be given you." I believe God's authentic words can be the foundation of powerful prayers for our grandchildren and their parents.

As I started claiming God's promises and personalizing the scriptures, I experienced more boldness and confidence in my praying. I believe

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Why should we pray for our families? (...continued)

that nothing threatens the enemy (Satan) more than when we are intentionally praying God's Word. I believe that no prayer is more effective than the one that finds its roots in God's Word, which is alive, powerful and will not return void. Many Scripture verses in Psalms, Proverbs, the Gospels and Paul's writings, can be used in our prayers. 1

One example: *"Dear Lord, I pray that _____ will acknowledge You in all his/her ways and you will direct his/her path. Proverbs 3:6."*

In our increasing complex and turbulent world we don't know about the future, however, as parents and grandparents who love the Lord, we know who holds the future. We must be engaged in prayer for our children to keep their hearts and minds from falling captive to the enemy's deception and lies. We read in Psalm 5:3b, "In the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation." let's wait in expectation for God's timing to answer our prayers.

Our finite minds simply cannot grasp God's infinite ways of answering our prayers since He doesn't answer our prayers according to our agenda. We have no idea how many times He is waiting for the proper time to answer our prayers, because He needs to work in our hearts, or the other person before He can answer our prayers. When we get discouraged and impatient, we have to remind ourselves that God's agenda is always perfect, since He knows what is best for us.

Results – Promises

Just as Esther stood in the gap for her people, the Jews, when they were threatened, we can stand in the gap with our prayers for parents and grandparents to stand in the gap with prayer for their grandchildren as the enemy threatens their spiritual lives.

The seeds of prayer we sow today will yield a harvest of blessing in the future. As we seek the Lord ourselves and invest in our own walk with the Lord, we are investing spiritually in our families, and future generations, by laying a foundation of treasures in heaven for them.

God has placed **our** children and grandchildren in our lives so we can pray for them to have an authentic faith in Jesus Christ and live wholeheartedly for him. He has given my husband and me the awesome opportunity to partner with Him on behalf of our 3 sons, 3 daughters-in-laws,

12 specific grandchildren and 3 greats. He has given you the opportunity to invest in your family members with intentional prayer on your journey.

Our children and grandchildren are our mission field and our responsibility, so they will not be helpless before their spiritual enemy. A family's faith can be lost in one generation Scripture tells us; however, we as parents and grandparents have the opportunity to powerfully touch the lives of another generation for Jesus Christ.

My prayer is that you will experience God's richest blessings as you grandparent with a purpose, as you invest in the spiritual lives of your children, grandchildren, and future generations.

The most precious gift we can give our families is to teach them how they can have a personal relationship and live wholeheartedly for Him.

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children [and grandchildren] are walking with the Lord" 3 John verse 4

It is important for us to pray specifically and individually for our children. I want to share a few suggestions of how to pray for them in the various stages of life.

For **Infants**, pray they will:

1. Develop a strong sense of security as they bond with their family.
2. Feel safe and secure in their surroundings.
3. Grow physically strong and mentally alert.
4. Begin to lay a healthy foundation for good communication.
5. Begin to develop a healthy attachment to their family members.

For **Toddlers**, pray they will:

1. Develop a healthy self-image.
2. Develop a sense of independence.
3. Develop a sense of obedience to their parents.
4. Be willing to try new, unfamiliar experiences.
5. Feel secure apart from parents (i.e. caregivers).
6. Learn to play independently.

For **Preschooler-age**, pray they will:

1. Develop a well-balanced personality.

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Why should we pray for our families? (...continued)

2. Learn problem resolution skills.
3. Play well with others.
4. Learn to obey quickly, and to respect authority.
5. Explore and create without fear of failure.
6. Develop a soft heart towards Jesus.
7. Develop confidence and independence.
8. Learn to control their emotions and anger.
9. Develop an awareness of God's love for them.
10. Build positive friendships.

For **Elementary-age**, pray they will:

1. Discover their God-given gifts and talents.
2. Develop a sense of satisfaction and enjoyment using their skills.
3. Be motivated, disciplined, and challenged in their learning experiences.
4. Treat others with respect.
5. Stand firm for what is right and refuse the wrong with a positive attitude.
6. Choose friendships wisely.
7. Obey their parents.
8. Understand their need for a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
9. Develop a strong and healthy self-esteem and self-confidence.
10. Have a safe, healthy classroom environment.
11. Be protected from the deception of the enemy.
12. Develop a hunger for God's Word.

For **Teenagers**, pray they will:

1. Be motivated, disciplined and challenged to apply themselves and excel in their academic studies.
2. Experience the reality of Jesus Christ in their lives, as they grow strong in their faith.
3. Recognize the deception of the world.
4. Be covered with God's safe keeping physically, spiritually, and emotionally.
5. Date wisely (which leads to a spouse for a lifetime).
6. Be sexually pure.
7. Have open communication and a good relationship with parents.
8. Choose friends who will have a positive influence.

9. Grow spiritually with a hunger for God's Word.
10. Have a balanced view of their beauty, charm, and strength.

For **College/Young Adults**, pray they will:

1. Be motivated, disciplined and challenged to apply themselves in their studies to excel academically, if they are in college.
2. Seek God's wisdom and direction in their management of time, money, and talents.
3. Think creatively and live with integrity.
4. Recognize their gifts so they can find their God-given assignment.
5. Provide the resources to fulfill their God-given assignment.
6. Find a spouse with a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.
7. Be sexually pure.
8. Be willing to accept responsibility, and make wise financial decisions.
9. Have open communication and a good relationship with parents.

For **Married**, pray they will:

1. Understand how incredibly great God's power is to help, if they ask Him.
2. Establish spiritual disciplines as part of their lives.
3. Read God's Word and pray together regularly as a couple.
4. Seek God's guidance in the management of their time, money, and careers.
5. Develop open and honest communication with their spouse.
6. Grasp the importance of saying, "I'm sorry," and "I forgive you".
7. Understand there is no such thing as too many hugs.
8. Honor their parents.
9. Be united in spirit and intent on one purpose.
10. Be able to firmly stand against anything that might threaten their marriage.
11. Be able to establish a stable, loving Christian home for their family.
12. Recognize the deception and peer pressure of the world.

See also www.millionprayinggrandparents.com



Does His love shine out in marriages in the Church?

Marriages are inextricably linked with transformation of communities, towns, cities and nations. The question is 'do the marriages within the Church reveal and reflect the love of Christ?'

I was reading recently how the early church were known for their love, do we have that distinguishing trait in the Church today? 'Love', Webster's tells us :

"LOVE, v.t. luv. [L. libeo, lubeo. See Lief. The sense is probably to be prompt, free, willing, from leaning, advancing, or drawing forward.]

1. In a general sense to be pleased with; to regard with affection, on account of some qualities which excite pleasing sensations or desire of gratification. We love a friend, on account of some qualities which give us pleasure in his society..... We love our parents and our children, on account of their connection with us, and on account of many qualities which please us. The Christian loves his Bible. In short, we love whatever gives us pleasure and delight, whether animal or intellectual; and if our hearts are right, we love God above all things, as the sum of all excellence and all the attributes which can communicate happiness to intelligent beings. In other words, the Christian loves God with the love of complacency in his attributes, the love of benevolence towards the interest of his kingdom, and the love of gratitude for favors received.

Jesus answered a Pharisee "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important command. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mat 22:37-39, HCSB).

LOVE, n.

1. An affection of the mind excited by beauty and worth of any kind, or by the qualities of an object which communicate pleasure, sensual or intellectual. It is opposed to hatred. Love between the sexes, is a compound affection, consisting of esteem, benevolence, and animal desire. Love is excited by pleasing qualities of any kind, as by kindness, benevolence, charity, and by the qualities which render social intercourse agreeable. In the latter case, love is ardent friendship, or a strong attachment springing from good will and esteem, and the pleasure derived from the company, civilities and kindness of others.

Between certain natural relatives, love seems to be in some cases instinctive. Such is the love of a mother for her child, which manifests itself toward an infant, before any particular qualities in the child are unfolded. This affection is apparently as strong in irrational animals as in human beings.

..... The love of God is the first duty of man, and this springs from just views of his attributes or excellencies of character, which afford the highest delight to the sanctified heart. Esteem and reverence constitute ingredients in this affection, and a fear of offending him is its inseparable effect.

2. Courtship; chiefly in the phrase, to make love, that is, to court; to woo; to solicit union in marriage....."

The breadth of love is well known from St Paul's writings particularly the verses in 1 Corinthians, but do the marriages in the Church show this love, do they shine out with this love. If our marriages radiated His kind of love the world would surely look at us and be envious and seek it for themselves, that is seek Jesus.

Jesus said "By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:35, HCSB) do people see that in us, do they see that in our love for our spouse – how do we radiate others with this kind of love for their spouses? This is a big question for us in the Church who are married to pray on, and to seek the Lord as to what changes in our hearts need to take place for this to happen, and for His grace to enable these changes to happen.



A challenge for the year(s) ahead!

Web:

<http://www.marriageweek.org.au>

Facebook:

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

Reformation, Sunday

Posted on 8-Jan-2016 by Dr. John Yates - <http://cross-connect.net.au/reformation-sunday/>

Personal matters

Recent encounters have challenged me to comment on the shape of Sunday church services i.e. liturgies.* First, some observations at a church we visited last week, then a meeting with a devout Christian disturbed by the form of service in his own congregation. Time changes us. As a young Pentecostal Christian I would never have opted to attend services that were so unspiritual as to be *scripted from a book*. Soon however I was left without a choice; through living on campus at an Anglican theological college I was compelled by college rules to attend Sunday chapel. A little reflection made me quickly realise that all churches are liturgical. Contemporary congregations generally adopt an unwritten liturgy that looks something like: welcome, opening prayer, songs, sermon, offering, songs, closing prayer. Even in my original Pentecostal congregation the expression of the charismatic gifts was in a fixed place after the preacher. Even if all churches are liturgical the contemporary structure of services in our most influential (mega) churches raises some issues of deep concern.

We are witnessing a new generation of Christians who do not know the Lord's Prayer by heart. Whereas repeating the Creeds shaped the minds of generations about Trinitarian orthodoxy today younger converts in trendy congregations have no idea what "Three in One" means! By pronouncing, "Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name" ancient liturgies lift our minds from earth heavenwards, popular worship services are focussed on our emotionality (cf. Col 3:1-3). My main concern is *whether our Sunday meetings image the shape of the life of Christ*.

Where is Jesus?

What I found fascinating about the church we visited last Sunday was its *centring on the Bible*. After a single song and brief welcome the entire first chapter of Mark was read followed by an expository sermon on this passage. Everything after that, the communion, prayers and singing was subordinated to the profile of Scripture. Two

observations sprung to mind as I attended that meeting, *the primary witness to Christ is scripture but Jesus is not to be equated with the words Bible*. Conservative Bible-centred churches do have a problem, but the dominant pattern in most large churches is far more grievous. Here the peak point of participation is likely at the climax of a long period of singing which sets the mood the congregation for the sermon. The address will not be a structured exposition of scripture but a motivational story line in sync with the choruses that stirred the emotions of the people. Biblical illustrations and texts are likely used to *support* the plausibility of the sermon rather than being its foundation. In such churches the offering talk will be about the benefits of our "giving back to God" and when communion happens it will focus on our ability to "remember Jesus". Almost certainly there will be few public prayers; certainly none about matters of government, public justice and so on; this despite the scriptural injunction, "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions..." (1 Tim 2:1-2). What ties this liturgical form together is not the shape of the life of Christ but "me-centredness"; where "**ME**" is the moods and needs of the stressed individual Westerner. Religion and culture are a powerful mix and one that can only be deconstructed by the power of the cross.

The Compass of the Cross

Paul exhorts "test everything" (1 Thess 5:21) and Luther pointedly remarked, "The cross is the test of all things." Not that every sentence needs to use the word "cross" *but the shape of our liturgies, oral or written, should reflect the cruciform (cross-shaped) character of God's great saving plan*. The first step in God's laying out his plan to bring creation to himself was the choice of Jesus to be the Lamb slain from before the world was made (Eph 1:9-10; 1 Pet 1:19-20; Rev 13:8). This makes Christ's death-and-resurrection the foundation of all salvation history. In God's dealings with lost

(continued next page)

* The English word "liturgy" derives from a Greek word for public service and is generally used for a set order of congregational worship e.g. in Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox churches.

humanity all of fallen space-time history has been laid on the cross, judged there and *in Christ elevated as a new creation* (John 19:30; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15). The scope of the revelation given us in the gospel unites heaven and earth (Rom 16:25-27). Nothing we do in our public gatherings should diminish the extent of what God has accomplished in Christ; any stress on this-worldly peace and prosperity does exactly that, "Little children, keep yourself from idols." (1 John 5:21; cf. 1 Cor 7:29-31). *The litmus test of every form of church service is the gospel*; "I delivered to you as of first importance...that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures," (1 Cor 15:3-4).

All questions about liturgies boil down to, *does our singing, prayers, preaching, communion publicly portray the shape of the life of Christ* (Gal 3:1)? Here is a clear, if unpopular, example that embodies the shape of the gospel. Corporate confession of sin followed by a declaration of forgiveness images the death-and-resurrection of Jesus who "was handed over to die because of our sins, and raised to life for our justification with God." (Rom 4:25 cf. James 5:16). Such gospel-centred actions continually remind us of our need for a Saviour and that Jesus has fully met this need. Run this litmus test at your own church next Sunday.

Conclusion

"The church is always to be reformed" (Barth). This is as true now as it was during the Protestant

Reformation or the Nazification of the German Church in Barth's day. Responding to the tangled shape of modern life where people are stretched by forces of family, finance, work and technology many orders of service have moulded 'Jesus' to meet *our* personal needs. A mind set in complete contrast to what entertains us is called for. Since creation is a platform for God's glory (Calvin) we must inhabit a vision of *our services as an encounter between heaven and earth where the Father beholds the Spirit-inspired worship of the standing-as-slain Lamb* (Heb 12:18-24; Rev 1:10; 5:6-14; 13:6). This is a God-centred vision of a new creation created through the gospel. The gospel promise is that where the form of the death of Jesus is enacted his resurrection presence will be real (Rom 6:8; Phil 3:10).

"Reformation, Sunday"; two simple words, but through the lens of the cross they speak of a new spirit of seeing and enacting the cosmic drama of redemption. Because of its cost the road of reform is a road less travelled; most will opt for a predictable Sunday routine that supplies a spiritual hit to get us through the week whilst leaving **"ME"** firmly in control. Perhaps however a few readers of this article will desire to experience the great power of the gospel of Christ which left Paul breathless, "Who is sufficient for these things?" (Rom 1:16; 2 Cor 2:16). These few will no doubt suffer in seeking a reform of the religious systems of the day for the glory of God alone. *Such a cruciform life will certainly pass the test* and bring great pleasure to our heavenly Father. Is there anything else that matters?



SAVE THE DATE
GLOBAL FORUM
FOR A WORLD WITHOUT ORPHANS



FEB 11-14, 2016
 CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

Alpha Easter Invitation 2016

Background and Alpha Mission

Alpha Australia's vision, in line with that of Alpha International, is the evangelisation of the nations and the transformation of society.

Alpha Australia seeks to give each of the 13,000 churches in Australia the opportunity to run Alpha as a means of outreach and evangelisation. By 2023 we are aiming at reaching 1 million Alpha stories (individuals who have attended Alpha). To achieve this, our goal is to have 4,000 churches actively running Alpha by 2020.



National Alpha Easter Invitation Objectives & Success Factors

- 1000 registered Alpha courses starting after Easter 2016 in targeted areas (major capitals + selected regional centres).
- Alpha leaders informed of the campaign and focussed on running Alpha 'well' (that is, in such a way that is welcoming and accepting of unchurched according to the basic Alpha principles of "no pressure, no charge, no follow up" and "eat watch & chat")
- Provide a technology platform that allows churches hassle-free access to resources for training, running & promoting their Alpha, and to register their course for the campaign.
- Partner with CMA & participating media outlets to provide resources and inspiration for people to explore faith through spiritual conversations & trying Alpha over Easter.

More information at <http://australia.alpha.org/news/easter>

MELBOURNE:



SYDNEY:



GOLD COAST:



PERTH:



BRISBANE:



ADELAIDE:



HOBART:



NEWCASTLE:



GEELONG:



Prayer points:

- For more churches to register their interest in being part of the Easter invitation
- For the Alpha team as they seek to inform church leaders about the invitation and train church teams how to run and promote Alpha effectively
- For every church that registers to be part of this invitation – for their ministers, the Alpha team coordinator and the Alpha team
- For Alpha's National Director, Melinda Dwight, and the Alpha Board of Directors
- For Christian Media Association and every radio station that is a part of this initiative. Pray for the conversations the announcers will have with their listeners around questions of life and faith.
- For listeners to go to the radio station website and follow the links to find an Alpha near them. May they connect with a local church, attend Alpha, and encounter Jesus.





Papua New Guinea World Mission

P.O. Box 2456 Lae 411 Morobe Province,
Papua New Guinea

DECEMBER 2015 NEWS

Dear Partners in God's Mission,

Belated New Year 2016 greetings to you all in Jesus Mighty and Powerful Name!

Below is an update from the Mission Trip we did to the remote Okapa-EHP over the Christmas weekend:

CHRISTMAS IS ABOUT GIVING

Our Mission Trip to the remote Okapa began at 3:00AM on Sunday 27th December. We loaded 20 x 10kg rice bags on to our Toyota Landcruiser 4x4 (10 seater) with the perfect number of seven on this mission to donate rice bags to mostly old people and widows at a quiet remote village called Pigaruri (inland of Okapa District) who have been hit hard with drought (El-ino).

After hearing stories of their hardships faced by these old people and widows, our hearts were burdened and prompted to bring some form of help to them in a little way. We had to be obedient to God and save a life! The best thing we could do was to sacrifice our Christmas shopping, holidays and the meals so that we could save up to buy rice bags and give hope to people!

We finally arrived at our destination at 12-midday and a group of widow mothers were waiting for us near a bridge. We couldn't go further to their village because the bridge had collapsed somewhere in July, when a brand new Hyundai Dyna Truck slipped off the wet bridge and capsized into the flowing river.



We had a time of fellowship at the side of the bridge with all those widows and others who were present and handed over the rice bags to the widow mothers. They were so emotional and thanked God for visiting them in this way during Christmas in their time of need. Our hearts also went out for them too and prayed with them before heading back to Lae by 2:00PM.

BRINGING JESUS TO THE MARKET PLACE

The second part of our Mission Trip was open-air evangelism. We did five stops on our way back to Kainantu beginning at Ofafina village (the home of the local MP) and finished off at the Onamuga Bridge

There are still many people who do not go to Church, reasons only known to them. We need to bring Jesus Christ to where they are; in the market place, gambling place or

the sports field (even in your work place or business too).

Our highlight was stopping at the road block in Onamuga, three men were stopping vehicles coming in from Okapa Rd. They were collecting money from every vehicle that passed through that day for patching the road with soil. Their job didn't justify them to collect funds but vehicles had to pay because they were fully armed with bush-knives and refusal to pay would be another story.

So when we were stopped, I pulled to the side and our boys went out to speak with them. Eventually, they ended up sitting on the grass by the road side under the nearby coffee trees and the Salvation message was shared to these three men. It was right there, these three men understood the Gospel message and the true meaning of Christmas.

The Holy Spirit was at work right there and they were convicted of their sins, prayer was offered for them. What a joyous moment for us; seeing the power of God touch and transform lives along the road side under the coffee trees. Hallelujah! All praise, glory and honor to God on high!



PLEASE PRAY WITH US;

That the SEED of God's Word planted in the hearts of the people will grow and bear fruit at the right time and for the SALVATION of the widows and old people whom we ministered to through the rice bags

THANK YOU for standing with us in prayer and support. Also thank you to the five Youths of Cassowary Rd United Church who accompanied me on this Mission Trip. These Youths were the Evangelist who did the powerful Open-air Evangelism on our way back.

For me personally, this Christmas was special by going out of my comfort zone to give to those in need.

That's the true spirit of Christmas. Not only that but bringing Jesus to the Market-place was phenomenal!

"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17).

Every blessing in Christ,

Ms TEMA MANKO

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PNG World Mission (PNGWM)



An Open Door to Reach Chinese

Han Chinese is the largest race on the planet. But the people in China are not only ethnic Han Chinese. There are another 55 major nationalities making up about 6% of the population. It is estimated some 1.4 billion people live in China today. Chinese (Putonghua) is spoken by more people as a mother tongue than any other language. That is about 1.2 billion people compared with 335 million people who speak English as their mother tongue (though the total number of English speakers today is about 1.5 billion people). Then there are tens of millions of Chinese speaking people outside China in virtually every major city in the world. Thus many believe in the heart of God and the heart of the church in the 21st century, reaching Chinese should be a number one priority.



Another reason to reach Chinese is that it is the harvest time for Chinese and many others living throughout Asia, whereas the soil in most Western free democratic nations is hard. On a recent visit to a few Australian cities November 2015, I was told that while many English speaking congregations composed of mostly of Caucasian Australians are not growing or even are declining, churches ministering to Chinese, Indonesians, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Koreans, Indians, Africans and even people from the war devastated Middle East are growing.

For nearly two weeks I ministered 2-3 times a day in various Chinese churches in Melbourne and Sydney, and many were saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. I was so excited when I heard there are at least one million Chinese from mainland China in Australia now, not counting countless thousands of Chinese from Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, etc. I was so excited that I will be making another trip for ministry in 2016. Also yearly we are arranging for Australian Christians in the market-place to take ministry trips to China.

Many have heard about the persecution of Christians in China, demotion of some churches and the removal of large crosses of over 1,000 Churches in Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province. Most knowledgeable Christians have heard about Bro. Yun (Heavenly Man) or read his books. One can be forgiven for believing that China is a dangerous place for Christians. Now the story of the "Heavenly Man" is true, but it is truly outdated. Also incidents of persecution, demolition of churches and removal of crosses is only limited to certain areas and usually only for a limited period of time. And these cannot even begin to compare to the horrendous atrocities against Christians during the 'Cultural Revolution' (1967-1976).

After the death of Chairman Mao that resulted in a power struggle between the reformist communists and the radicals led by a group called the 'Gang of Four', the paramount leader succeeding Mao, Deng Xiaoping, opened China in 1978. And the doors have been slowly but surely opening since then. We are truly living in the end times, and many feel the promise given to the Church of Philadelphia applies to us: *'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens. "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name."* Rev 3:7-8

I desire that my message in this short article will emphasize the ever opening doors and call His disciples to bring in this last great harvest. The message of end time tribulation, the antichrist, the mark of the beast, one-world government, Armageddon and a future rapture should be left to the Bible study on eschatology. But the message from the pulpit should be positive, faith-building and result in people taking the Gospel to the nations. But we also need to preach the message of the Cross and all us should be prepared for tribulation and difficulties. It is as Paul said, *'For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.'* 1 Cor 16:9

When I was 16 years old in 1961, there was a great revival in the USA called the "Jesus Movement". I was baptized in the Holy Spirit, and received a call to go to 'Red China'. China was totally closed to missionaries and the Gospel then. But 8 years later (1969) I landed in Hong Kong, learned to preach in Cantonese in about 7 months, and started a church with the purpose of reaching mainland China. Another long nine years passed before China opened. But when it did I was one of the first missionaries to enter China.

Before China opened there was little information on the state of the Chinese church, much as we know

(continued next page)

An Open Door to Reach Chinese (...continued)

little about Christianity in North Korea. Many believed the church had been nearly decimated during the Cultural Revolution. However we were surprised, amazed and even shocked to find the church had seen tremendous growth during the dark years, and it had grown by millions over the 30 years of more radical policies aimed at the elimination of Christianity. This was mainly due to the work of the Holy Spirit and the boldness that came from Spirit filled Christians. During those dark years they would pray hours each day. However there was probably not a single whole Bible in all of China, for they had all been destroyed by the Red Guards. Therefore we began a ministry of taking Bibles to China, calling it "Donkey's For China" and to this date have delivered well over ten million Bibles and millions of tracts, teaching materials and videos. Then in the late 80's I begin to extensively minister in the house churches in Henan, Anhui, Shandong, Zhejiang and other provinces on the work of the Holy Spirit. As we prayed with the people we saw thousands baptized in the Holy Spirit. This resulted in more boldness and gifts of the Holy Spirit to be used in evangelism.

While nobody can be sure about these statistics, it is estimated while in 1949 only 0.5% of the population were believers in Christ, that number could now be perhaps be 8-9% of the total population. Millions are being saved and baptized yearly, and many Christian scholars believe the number of Christians could reach up to 30% of the population in the next few decades. Yet having said that, I must point out that the vast majority (probably over 80%) of those living in China and the 1 million mainland Chinese now in Australia, have yet to hear a clear Gospel message. Many have never heard the name of Jesus once.

In addition to this, even many Christians don't possess their own Bible, and most non-Christians have no access to the Bible. But through our good relationships with the Chinese government and the official Three-Self Patriotic Church, we are able to purchase large amounts of Bibles printed in China by Amity Press, and distribute them to house church Christians and non-believers. We also focus on Bible Schools, leadership training for both house church and Three-Self church leaders, ministry to non-Han minorities, and evangelism in China and overseas where Chinese live.

We invite and welcome Christians from Australia and other nations to come to Hong Kong with the purpose of visiting China to bless the people there, learn from them and bring them needed Bibles or Christians books. This is not illegal, dangerous or difficult, though sometimes customs agents may not allow all the books to pass. But for Westerners, this is quite rare. You will fall in love with China and the people. You will see 5,000 years of history everywhere, a highly cultured and developed nation, and in many ways more modern and advanced than your own nation. But they need Jesus and you can bring them His blessing.

You might also be able to worship with Chinese Christians, and hear them share moving testimonies. If you like Chinese food, you don't want to miss the spicy Sichuan or Huanan cuisine. China is safe, the people friendly and many are open to the Gospel. Yes, it is the time of Open Doors for China and the Chinese.

Our ministry also has a large selection of Chinese Bibles, Christian books, teaching materials, Gospel tracts, Gospel DVDs and VCDs that can be used for evangelism and ministering to Chinese people. If you contact us, they will be made free to you, and you can in this way share the Lord with Chinese living in Australia. Also don't forgot those from other nations, for many are open to the Gospel in some way or other.

Yes, it is the harvest time and the doors are open. I pray this short article will help you to life up your eyes and look on the fields. (John 4:35)

Pastor Dennis Balcombe

Revival Chinese Ministries International (RCMI)

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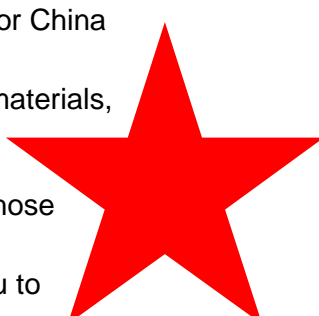
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'The message of end time tribulation, the antichrist, the mark of the beast, one-world government, Armageddon and a future rapture should be left to the Bible study on eschatology. But the message from the pulpit should be positive, faith-building and result in people taking the Gospel to the nations.'



Why I Hate Sanctity of Human Life Sunday

Posted by Russell Moore around 16 Jan 2013 on [Christianity.com](http://christianity.com)

<http://www.christianity.com/church/pastors/why-i-hate-sanctity-human-life-sunday.html>

Don't get me wrong, the call to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ is a joy. Nothing is more thrilling than opening the Word of God to the people of Christ week-by-week. But it provokes my spirit to preach the Sanctity of Human Life (SOHL) emphasis on a Sunday morning.

I don't hate Sanctity of Human Life Sunday because I think it, somehow, unbiblical. No, indeed. The entire canon throbs with God's commitment to the fatherless and to the widows, his wrath at the shedding of innocent blood. I don't hate it because I think it's inappropriate. Just as every Lord's Day should be Easter, with the proclamation of the Resurrection of Jesus, and Christmas, with the announcement of the Incarnation, so every Lord's Day should highlight the worth and dignity of human life.

I hate Sanctity of Human Life Sunday because I'm reminded that we have to say things to one another that human beings shouldn't have to say.

>> Mothers shouldn't kill their children.

>> Fathers shouldn't abandon their babies.

>> No human life is worthless, regardless of skin color, age, disability, economic status.



The very fact that these things must be proclaimed is a reminder of the horrors of this present darkness.

One SOHL Sunday morning as I opened the Bible to preach, I looked out and caught the eye of my sons. I prayed that their children wouldn't have to hear a sermon against abortion and euthanasia. I prayed that my grandchildren and great-grandchildren would grow up in an age when abortion is, as the Feminists for Life organization put it some years ago, not just illegal but unthinkable. I prayed for my (yet to be conceived but not yet to be conceived of) great-grandchildren that a Sanctity of Human Life Sunday would seem as unnecessary to them as a "Reality of Gravity" Emphasis Sunday.

I hate Sanctity of Human Life Sunday because I'm reminded that as I'm preaching there are babies warmly nestled in wombs who won't be there tomorrow. I'm reminded that there are children, maybe even blocks from my pulpit, who'll be slapped, punched, and burned with cigarettes before nightfall. I'm reminded that there are elderly men and women languishing away in loneliness, their lives pronounced to be a waste.

But I also love Sanctity of Human Life Sunday when I think about the fact that I serve a congregation with ex-orphans all around, adopted into loving families. I love to reflect on the men and women who serve every week in pregnancy centers for women in crisis. And I love to see men and women who have aborted babies find their sins forgiven, even this sin, and their consciences cleansed by Christ.

We'll always need Christmas. We'll always need Easter. But I hope, please Lord, someday soon, that Sanctity of Human Life Day is unnecessary.

*Russell Moore is Dean of the School of Theology and Senior Vice President for Academic Administration at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and executive director of the Carl F. H. Henry Institute for Evangelical Engagement. Dr. Moore is the author of *The Kingdom of Christ: The New Evangelical Perspective* (Crossway, 2004) and *Adopted for Life: The Priority of Adoption for Christian Families and Churches* (Crossway, May 2009). Visit his website at RussellMoore.com.*

[Editor's Note: Sanctity of Human Life Sunday is observed this year in the USA on Jan 17, 2016]



ABORTION FACTS

- There are an estimated 80,000 children who aborted each year through surgical means. This figure does not include chemical abortions such as RU-486, a combination of two drugs given up to nine weeks gestation to terminate a pregnancy. This is significant when you consider 91% of abortions are performed in the first 14 weeks.
- The reason we use the term "estimated 80,000 children are aborted" is because no precise figures are kept on abortion in Australia. The three most populous States, NSW, Victoria and Queensland do not keep any statistics on abortion, and only one State, South Australia, publishes figures on abortion. National figures are estimated from South Australian, Western Australian and Northern Territory figures and from Medicare rebates paid to private patients.
- About a third of all Australian women will have an abortion. This represents about one-in-four pregnancies.
- Various studies show about 97% of all abortions are performed for psychosocial reasons, including half of late-term abortions (after 20 weeks gestation).
- Less than 3% of abortions are performed because the child has a disability.
- Less than 1% of abortions are performed on women who are the victims of rape. One study of 192 women who conceived as a result of sexual assault showed 78 per cent of the women who chose to abort (representing 30% of the total) regretted their decision . None of the 70% who continued their pregnancies regretted the decision.
- Late-term abortions are available in all States and Territories except NSW and Queensland.
- 60% of women were using at least one form of contraception at the time of their pregnancy.
- Women of any age, including teenage girls, do not require parental permission to have an abortion.
- The majority of women and girls who have abortions do so because of a lack of support from partners, parents and friends. 70% of women say they felt they had no alternative to abortion.
- Abortion not only ends the life of a child (the foetal heartbeat is detected at 22 days from conception), but often leaves a woman and others deeply wounded, affecting existing and future relationships.
- One comprehensive study of 400 international studies into the psychological risks associated with abortion concluded that 20-30% of women who had an abortion suffered from serious, prolonged, negative consequences.
- About 60% (polls range from 60-70%) of Australians are generally in favour of abortion, however this figure decreases as reasons for abortion are qualified. Most Australians believe there are too many abortions, and that women should receive independent counselling.
- 32% of women who have abortions are married or in a de-facto relationship.

Emily's Voice info@emilysvoice.com <https://www.emilysvoice.com/get-informed/abortion-facts/>

Praying Until Something Happens Australia (Push)

Last year after the siege happened in the Lindt Café a bunch of us came together from all over the city from different churches to pray for our city and the needs of our country

You are invited as we come together to pray through the evening on Australia day eve, where we will meet in the heart of Sydney to pray for our city and our nation. We will pray through until about 11 pm and we will probably move to a couple of locations through the evening and have a cuppa together at some point.

We want our nation to have core values of justice, mercy and compassion, that there would be respect and integrity at the core of leadership and in our culture.

When: 25th January: Meet at the fountain in Hyde Park where we will pray for a few hours

Who: If you love to see hope come to this country, have a heart for it, & love to pray. Come join us for as little as much time as you would like

Where: We will be on the left hand side of the path towards St James Station; we will be seated on the grassy area before the circle of the fountains starts.

Bring: Your phone, water, snacks, jacket if it's cool.

Ph 0403 498 4242 for more info

Deb Woon



LET. THERE. BE. LIGHT! A Night of Worship & Prayer

I am writing you to invite you to our Prayer Gathering on Friday 18th March, 2016.

My name is Heidi Wysman and I am the Minister of Prayer for C3.

The night is designed to not only celebrate our 'unity in diversity' - but to pray and agree together for accelerated unity and an awakening in our community, city and country. It's time!

"To fall in love with God is the greatest of all romances; to seek Him, the greatest adventure; to find Him, the greatest human achievement." Saint Augustine.

I encourage you to also consider bringing along your prayer teams to make this an inaugural inter-church prayer teams gathering. Together we will command the blessing and advance His kingdom!

A number of ministers and leaders will be asked to lead us in prayer on the night, each being led by the Holy Spirit whilst carrying their own distinct message.

Can you please reply to this invitation so that we can lovingly host you.

Love and Blessings,

Heidi Wysman, C3 MINISTER OF PRAYER

E. info@heidiwysman.com | W. www.heidiwysman.com



LET. THERE. BE. LIGHT!

A Night of Worship & Prayer

GODS PLANS FOR THIS CITY AND NATION
ARE IMCOMPLETE WITHOUT OUR PRAYERS!

Please join us and other fellow church members, leaders & pastors from
various denominations around this city and pray...

March 18. 2016

8.00 - 10.30pm. C3 Church Oxford Falls

'Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, & giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority... For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth...' (1 Tim 2:1,2,4)