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P R A Y E R



The Passion • Richard Pratt • Harold Lindsell

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editorial

Mel Gibson's film, *The Passion of Christ*, thought to be dead-in-the-water as a box-office release a year ago, is shaping up to be one of the all-time movie classics.

If nothing else, *The Passion* has provoked a storm of religious debate. Protest has erupted from the Jewish community over the film's alleged anti-Semitism, and many Protestants have been troubled by Gibson's imaginative recreation of Christ's sufferings through what appears to be a Catholic mystical lens. While many evangelicals such as Billy Graham have endorsed the movie, others are cynical that a traditional Catholic like Gibson could produce an authentic movie on Jesus' death.

So how should Presbyterians respond? While we will form our own private opinions on the movie, there is an underlying attitude of which we must beware. It's the attitude of exclusivism. We see it in the incident when John tried to stop a man who was not an apostle from casting out demons in Jesus' name. Jesus said: "Do not stop him ... for whoever is not against me is for me" (Lk. 9:50).

Here Jesus alludes to a problem that we all face – the tendency to exclusivism. John was worried that this man was "not one of us". Although the man obviously had faith in Christ, it counted for nothing in the apostles' eyes.

I believe that any view of *The Passion* should be formed on the basis of the film's truthfulness and its artistic merit, and not on the basis of prejudice towards Mel Gibson's churchmanship.

In an interview with Diane Sawyer on ABC's *Primetime*, Gibson upheld a number of evangelical convictions. On the Bible: "You either accept the whole thing or you don't accept it at all." On the reliability of the Gospel writers: "They were eyewitnesses who saw it." On substitutionary blood atonement: "He was wounded for our transgressions."

As far as sin is concerned, Gibson told church leaders recently: "For culpability, look to yourself. I look to myself." It shouldn't surprise us that it was actually Gibson's hands that wielded the mallet and drove in the nails in the film. Whatever its defects, this movie is Gibson's personal statement of why he is looking to the Christ of Scripture and trusting in his atoning death. We need to be generous towards him.

Peter Hastie ^{ap}

A real talk

Conversation with God is a precious and underappreciated gift.



Richard L. Pratt Jnr is a professor of Old Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando. Dr Pratt is a renowned scholar in the field of Old Testament who has travelled extensively throughout the world in the cause of evangelism and teaching.

Dr Pratt is the author of numerous journal articles and five books – *Every Thought Captive*, *Designed for Dignity*, *He Gave Us Stories*, *1&2 Chronicles* and *Pray With Your Eyes Open*. He is also a contributor to the *Literary Guide to the Bible*.

One of Dr Pratt's great concerns is to help people grow spiritually and to apply theological truth to their daily lives. "Prayer is one of our greatest blessings and one of our biggest struggles," he says. Dr Tim Keller, of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York, comments that Pratt's approach to prayer is "healthy and God-centred". In this interview, Dr Pratt offers not only clear, biblical thinking on the subject, but also thoughtful insights on how to pray more effectively.

Should we be shocked that God lis-



**Richard Pratt
talks to
Peter Hastie**

tens to prayer when we find it so hard ourselves to listen to other people?

No, I don't think we should be shocked. It's true, of course, that we sometimes find it hard to talk to people who are quite different from us or who have little to offer us. I am sure this is why some adults struggle to speak with small children.

But God is a lot different from us. For a start, God has promised to hear prayer. I occasionally wonder if Christians really appreciate this gracious and remarkable gift. Our thinking is so conditioned by our own behaviour that we think it's likely that God would become frustrated or bored with our little requests.

However, what we forget is that when God loves somebody, He loves them sincerely and completely. And part of this act of loving and caring for us is that God lis-

tens intently when we pray. He doesn't brush us off or busy Himself with something else. He gives us His undivided attention because when He says He listens to us, He means it.

Christians often say that they find prayer hard or boring. Is there something wrong with the way we think about God?

I think people are bored with prayer for lots of reasons. I suspect that one of the main reasons why we find prayer tiresome or boring is that few of us have really seen what prayer can do in our lives.

We sometimes go through such long periods of prayerlessness that we become accustomed to it. When we reach this state we find it hard to see the difference between the times that have been attended by prayer and the times that have not. Consequently, it's not easy to see the benefits of a Christian life that is devoted to prayer. I suppose that if a person's involvement in prayer is limited to listening to and giving nodding assent to the preacher's prayer in church, or praying for

a moment or two at the dinner table, then they may well think that prayer is drudgery.

I think there are a number of remedies for the problem of prayerlessness. One of them is to learn more about prayer. Sadly, we have lots of misconceptions about the nature of true prayer. Learning about prayer and becoming aware of our misconceptions is certainly the first step on the right path. Studying what the Bible has to say about prayer will certainly enrich our understanding of the place and importance of prayer. It also gives the Spirit the opportunity to arouse all sorts of longings in our hearts to pray.

Another thing that I have found to be really important in stimulating my own prayer life is that I constantly need to grow in my understanding of the One to whom I am praying.

I know that if I can start on these two things, namely, learning more about prayer and growing in my understanding of God, then my prayers will come alive and become something that is really helpful and encouraging to me. It all begins when I take the time to be enthralled and fascinated with the One to whom I am praying.

Frankly, I think a lot of people are bored with prayer because they are bored with God. And that means they don't know the true God of the Bible. It should be obvious that if you are bored with God you obviously won't have a prayer life.

To what extent should our prayers reflect the emotional state of our hearts?

The simple answer is: as much as the Bible tells us to.

For instance, the Psalms show us the full range of emotions and feelings that Christians can legitimately express. There is an enormous diversity of emotional expression there. The psalmists are very aware of their own thoughts and feelings when they are speaking to God. They talk of jubilation, strong desires and even admit at times to discouragement and despair. They are honest about how they feel. And they relate to God without pretending to be something other than they are.

Our problem today, especially in Presbyterian circles, is that we have limited ourselves to what we believe is an acceptable range of emotions. The problem in our part of the church is that there is little emotional intensity or variation in how we pray for different sorts of things. Most of the emotion is levelled off along

the way. We ask God for things or say "thank you" in much the same way as we approach sales assistants in supermarkets!

Please don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that these simple sorts of unemotional requests are bad. Clearly, there is a place for them. However, the point I want to make is that the range and variety of emotions expressed in the Psalms is much larger than the way we normally give expression to them in our churches. I think we can sometimes hold on to our emotions too tightly in prayer.

For instance, the psalmist never just says a perfunctory "thank you" to God. His attempts at thanksgiving sometimes break forth into praise, jubilation and, occasionally, religious ecstasy. On the other hand, his intercession is often very intense. Sometimes the psalmist's cries arise out of enormous anxiety over the situations he faces. At other times he is moved by righteous anger or frustration over the seeming good fortunes of the wicked. These various expressions of emotion in the Psalms are our "permission slip" to be this way before God too.

Many people tend to compare God with their parents. I guess it's a very natural and understandable thing to do. But it can be very limiting in the way we think about God. Suddenly, we think of God as afflicted with all these emotional difficulties Himself. We assume that He is not caring enough, or big enough or capable enough to accept a wide range of emotions from us – all because our own parents couldn't. Fortunately, the Psalms tell us that we can connect with God in many different emotional states – from intense exultation to dark despair. God is always there and our emotions never faze Him.

Is there some pattern for prayer in the Bible? What's helpful for the ordinary Christian?

Most Christians stick to the familiar territory of the Bible that is the New Testament. This is perfectly understandable because parts of the Old Testament are hard to read and we can identify more readily with the New. The problem is that when we do this it's a bit like reading only the appendix or footnotes of a book.

Let me explain what I mean. When you look at the teaching about prayer in the New Testament you can almost count on your fingers the number of explicit passages that deal with it. There's just not much there. We are told to pray without ceasing, to give thanks and Paul gives us a few other instructions such as in 1 Timothy 2:1-3. But there's really not all that much. The biggest thing, of course, is the Lord's Prayer. But all up, we're only talking about 10 major passages or so. And none of them is much more than a chapter. If you think about these statistics, you might be led to believe that perhaps prayer isn't all that important for Christians. Otherwise, why didn't the New Testament writers give more attention to it?

But the New Testament doesn't talk a great deal about prayer because it assumes that it has already been dealt with in some detail in the Old Testament. For example, when Acts 2 talks about "the prayers", Luke is referring to the Jewish prayers that were a part of temple and synagogue worship in Old Testament times.

So, yes, there are patterns for prayer – all kinds of prayer. Unfortunately, we can't find that much variety in the New Testament because, relatively speaking, it doesn't spend as much space on the subject as does the Old Testament. But, as I have said, the reason it says so little is that it has all been said before. There's a wealth of material in the Old Testament – everything from the Psalms to Solomon's dedication of the temple, to the prayers of Daniel and the prayers of Moses and the patriarchs. The numbers of prayers in the Old Testament are enormous.

How should we look at God if we're going to develop a vibrant prayer life? Should we struggle for more variety in the ways we address Him?

Yes, I definitely think we should. If we learn to vary the way we address God and speak to Him, then it will help us to bring ourselves to Him in fresh and new ways.

Many of us have special names for people with very close relationships with us. It's not uncommon to have nicknames or terms of endearment for husbands and wives or fiancés. And these affectionate names are often very special in those relationships.

The problem is that the names sometimes get worn-out through unthinking repetition. For instance, after 20 years of marriage and four kids it's possible to scream "sweetheart" in the middle of an argument. It no longer means what it used

The problem for Presbyterians is that there is little emotional intensity or variation in how we pray.

to. We've stopped thinking about it in the right way.

Now this can happen with us and God too. We are accustomed to using certain names, such as "Father", largely because we think that the New Testament tells us we must. But it doesn't. If you look carefully at the titles by which God is addressed in the New Testament, you'll see that there's no one way. If we vary the names or titles by which we address God, as the Bible does, for example – my shield, my stronghold, my refuge – those things can be very enlivening in the way we talk to God. It's like coming up with a new nickname. It can make a real difference.

A.W. Tozer said that evangelicals have lost the "Oh!" quality in worship. How do we recover a sense of God's greatness? What part should meditating on God's attributes play in that process?

I guess I'm convinced now more than ever that the main way the Bible reveals God is as king. The problem is that in a world where the powers of absolute monarchs are a thing of the past, it's hard for us to grasp what is meant by "God is king over all". But this is the main way that the Bible speaks of Him.

In fact all the other metaphors and ways that the Bible refers to God actually flow out of His kingship. So I think that the first step in recovering a greater vision of God is that we have to somehow reaffirm the Bible's basic revelation of who He is. God is not a Father Christmas or our own personal genie. He is the absolute and unchallenged sovereign of the universe. We have every reason to stand in utter awe and dread because of His majesty.

But here's the strange thing. Not only does God surround Himself with grandeur; He also does things that are astounding for a king – He becomes involved in our lives and actually cares about us. Now I think you'll agree that a king who is only transcendent and far away from us is irrelevant. On the other hand, a God who is simply close and caring does not command our respect. However, a God who is both a transcendent king and one who cares about our needs and destiny – that, I would submit, is a God of Whom we should be amazed.

This means that Christians have to come to grips with the biblical teaching on kingship. In fact, when Jesus says in the Lord's prayer "our Father in heaven", he was using an ancient description that kings often used of themselves – "the

father in heaven". Every image associated with this is of God as a king enthroned.

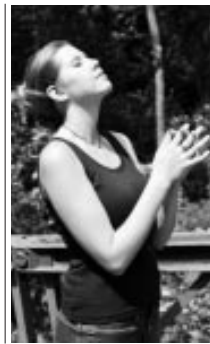
Unfortunately a lot of Christians feel loved and cared for by God, but they don't understand how amazing it is that God would care for them, because they have lost sight of His grandeur.

Someone said that evangelicals tend to pray like Greek philosophers – speaking about God in static terms. Should our prayers focus more on God-in-action?

The psalmist certainly focuses on God-in-action.

The typical Presbyterian in Australia or America believes in God and in Christ because we are convinced that it's reasonable to do so. However, we are often

Varying the names by which we address God can be very enlivening in the way we talk to Him.



unable to move ourselves beyond the orbit of secularism so that we can see that God is alive and active.

Christians tend to think about God in the same way as insurance companies in the USA. You are no doubt aware of exclusion clauses in those contracts. That's all the fine print on the bottom which says that everything is covered except earthquakes, tornados, and acts of God. "Acts of God" are things that we can't explain any other way. In our modern world we have all kinds of explanations for these things. So when we reserve "acts of God" to things for which we have no other explanation, they become fewer and fewer in number. After a while, we become so accustomed to explaining God's involvement away without introducing God into the picture that He simply disappears and becomes utterly redundant. That's why we don't think of God being active any more.

One unfortunate consequence of this is that the doctrine of providence has declined in importance in the minds of many Christians. We secularise events. What we have forgotten is that the hand of God is deeply involved in all that happens.

We have to remember that the world is

a place of God's work and God's time. We have to reinvigorate and reanimate our understanding of the universe. This means that when someone goes to hospital and comes home safely after having major surgery, we see this as the hand of God, regardless of how great and skilled the surgeon may have been. Incidentally, these two factors – the hand of God and the surgeon's skill – are not contradictory. When the Red Sea parted, the wind blew, and God was behind it all. God uses second causes, but it's still God at work.

The problem with praying to God as though He is static is that we are refusing to see Him as alive and working today. We have actually bought into what the world is saying. We have to look at the universe with completely new eyes.

God is said to be present everywhere. However, is there a sense in which we can experience a special presence of God in prayer, and how do we go about it?

The Bible does say that God is omnipresent. When we teach children the catechism at church, the question "Where is God?" is answered by "He is everywhere". And that is true. As the psalmist says, "If I go down to the deepest depths, God is there..." (Ps 139:8).

But the Bible also speaks of God as being more attentive to certain places at certain times. Our tendency is to think of God in very binary terms. Either He is omnipresent, or He is not omnipresent (in other words, he is absent in certain parts of the world).

But the Bible doesn't think in these terms. It speaks of God as omnipresent, but it also says that God's presence can vary in its intensity. For instance, He reveals His presence and manifests Himself to us at certain times and in special ways. For example, it's true to say that while God was present in Australia in 1300 BC, He was present in a very special way when He was leading the Israelites through the Red Sea. Clearly, God's presence at the Red Sea was different from His presence here. We need to understand this difference.

Psalm 42:1 says "as the deer pants for the water, so my soul longs after you". This psalm is a song about a man who wants to go to the temple in Jerusalem and experience God's presence. In his longing he is remembering the times when he went there before. His problem is that he can no longer get there. So he is really missing God's intense presence.

When we are thinking of God's special

presence we need to remember what God said to Solomon in 1 Kings 9:3: "I will put My Name there (at the temple) forever. My eyes and My heart will always be there." When God says that He will put His Name there He goes on to explain that that's where His eyes and heart will be. That's why this man wants to go to the temple. He senses that God is at his temple in a special way. Although he knows that God still hears his prayer from far away, he also knows the difference between the distant sense of God's presence and the intense centre of it.

Some of us think that when Jesus came to this earth he changed all that. But that's not true. It's true that there is no longer a building in Jerusalem where God's special presence dwells, but there are still places where God is more especially present than others. Jesus put it in terms of "when two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:19,20). And that's what we mean when we say that the gathering of God's people is worship in God's presence. When Christians assemble to worship God, that's where His eyes, His ears and His heart are. And so when I hear people saying things like "I can pray anywhere" – it sounds to me as though these people don't have a real sense of what it means to worship in the immediate presence of God.

I occasionally hear people say "I can worship God on a golf course or while I'm driving the car". Really? Let me say if you are truly worshipping the Lord in the same sense that you do in the holy assembly, then you are going to crash the car or completely miss the ball when you tee off. Strolling around a golf course has got nothing to do with that intense experience of God's presence that is found whenever Christians gather for worship. We have to get to where we understand the absence of God and the presence of God.

We live between the first and the second comings of Jesus. We've received some blessings like forgiveness and the Holy Spirit, but we still look forward to new bodies etc. How does that affect our prayer?

It affects our prayer by helping us develop realistic expectations of how God will answer our requests. Unfortunately, it's possible to ask for things that God hasn't promised to give us in this age. This is what the health, wealth and prosperity teaching does. It excites all sorts of false expectations in believers. For instance, it teaches that if you have just enough faith, then God will give you everything that He

has promised in the Bible.

Now the fact is that God has promised us a lot. Indeed, he's promised us all things. Everything! We will receive every blessing that God has to give through His Son, Jesus. He's promised us bodies that will never die, wealth beyond imagination, happiness that is unceasing, and an existence in a new world order where there will be no more tears, pain, or sorrow. These promises are simply amazing.

There's only one catch. God hasn't promised to give all of it to us now. And the problem these days is that these "health, wealth and prosperity" people are telling us that God has promised more than He actually has. The result, of course, is that they create all sorts of false expectations in Christians. They tell us that if we just pray hard enough, God will never let us get sick, or we'll be successful in business, or we'll

God has promised us bodies that will never die, wealth beyond imagination, happiness that is unceasing – but not all now.

only experience happiness.

However, this is not the truth of the Scriptures. Instead, the Bible says that all we can expect before Jesus' return is the down-payment of our inheritance – the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Holy Spirit in our lives is the guarantee, the down-payment, so to speak, that we will receive all God's blessings when Jesus returns. We need to learn that God does not promise us material prosperity ... what He has promised us is the blessing, joy, and fruit of the Spirit. These are the kinds of things that materialistic Christians don't cherish very much, but when we get into trials they become extraordinarily valuable to us.

I have seen a very dramatic expression of this at Auschwitz concentration camp. I visited a cell in which a Roman Catholic priest had died. He had been starved to death along with a group of other men. When you visit this cell now, there is a plaque there. And there is also a crucifix which is scratched into the wall. Apparently, as the priest was starving to death he carved the crucifix on the wall and cried out to God, seeking His help. When I think of this priest I like to remind people that here was a man seek-



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ing God's help. I tell them, "here is a man who had no clothes, no water, no food, but God never failed to fulfil one single promise He had made. Why? Because there is the crucifix evidence that he had the Holy Spirit.

You see, we have shoes, clothes, and wealth ... but it's not promised to us. It's a sheer gift. We can't claim it as something that God has promised before Jesus returns. So realising that we live between the first and the second comings is extremely valuable to us. Sometimes we are praying for things that God has promised to help us with ... His strength, comfort, teaching, and presence. When we pray for these things in a time of need we can be sure that we can ask with great confidence. But when we ask for something like a new car, that's not a promise.

Why pray when God knows and controls everything?

The simple answer that Presbyterians always give is that God's Word commands us to. But that's not the only reason. The Bible also tells us that the prayer of the righteous man is effectual.

It is actually a misconception to ask the question "if God's ordained it, why ask Him for it?" The fact is that God has ordained the means too, and we as creatures have a responsibility to use the means given to us. Prayer is a means by which God accomplishes His purpose. So if we are faced with the question "why should we pray?", the answer is really very simple. "Because that's the way things get done." Our problem is not that we have not understood these things ... our theologians understand them. Our big problem is this: we believe there are many different kinds of secondary means or causes, and we believe that some of them are more powerful than others. But what we forget is that prayer is the most powerful of all. Sadly, we think it's one of the least powerful.

We often say "I'll pray for you John,

but what else can I do?" We want to do things that we think are more important than praying. We'll spend two hours mowing the grass for someone who is ill, but would we pray for two hours and think we are being useful? I believe that God has ordained prayer as a second cause, but not a weak second cause.

Some people think that prayers are only effective if they are spontaneous and not written down. Is that what the Bible says?

Every prayer in the Bible is a written prayer. The Psalms is a collection of prayers designed to be repeated over and over again.

A lot of evangelicals have come from backgrounds that are more liturgical, and so they find spontaneous prayers more invigorating. The flip of that is true also.

The fact is that we are made for variety. There is a time for spontaneity and a time for careful reflection.

Even if you've been married for 31 years like I have, there are times when I have

Why should we pray? Because that's the way things get done.

to sit back and think about what I'm going to say to my wife. If it's a serious issue, something that I need to say carefully, I will think about it for days sometimes. And on the other hand, sometimes I'm very casual and say things spontaneously.

There are times when we will want to approach God with spontaneity, but on the other hand, there are many occasions where we will take the time to write our prayers or use the prayers of other people.

How does this affect prayer in public worship?

It is a great shame that in many church traditions, in my own as well, there is a move away from studying prayer. Nowadays we tend to train students to be ministers of the Word exclusively. We forget that the apostles believed that they were called to "prayer and the ministry of the Word" (Acts 6:4).

Studying prayer should be part and parcel of what we do in theological education.

Should we ever argue with God?

Yes, but only in the proper sense of the word. I prefer to use the term "present your case before God", such as when bar-

risters make their argument before a judge. Barristers don't dispute the judge; rather, they present their case before him. As Christians we are meant to present the best case possible with "reasons attached" for why we are asking for something.

I know many Christians think that if they are really trusting the Lord, they should ask for something and then let it go. However I don't think that's biblical. We show the sincerity of our hearts, how intense we are about a request and how much we really want it by supporting that request with the best reasons that we can muster. Job follows this method. So do the Psalms and Moses. Jesus did it too. Abraham provides a classic example. Do you remember when he's praying for Lot? He asks the Lord not to sweep away the righteous with the wicked when he destroys Sodom. He says, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only 10 can be found there?" (Gen. 18:32). The Lord responds, "For the sake of 10, I will not destroy it." Abraham was presenting a case before God.

To what extent is body language important in prayer? For example, kneeling, lifting up our hands to God, weeping and fasting?

The problem we face is that we often allow ourselves to adopt certain cultural expectations and practices of how we should behave when we are relating to God. These expectations often come from the particular subculture in which we find ourselves. Often this subculture places a high value on a certain kind of sophistication. In the West, we often think of a sophisticated person as one who is aloof and inexpressive and who is able to manage his or her emotions in such a way that they do not reveal their true self to others. Unfortunately, this desire for sophistication and self-protection leads to what the Bible calls "insincerity". I have a dear friend who, when she hears me talk about the need to express a full range of emotion in our dealings with God by letting down our guards of sophistication, looks at me and says, "I just can't do that."

We need to realise that when we are praying to God and worshipping Him we are not having the kind of experience that you expect to have in a corporate board meeting. In that sort of meeting, people are often jockeying for position and making sure everyone thinks the right thing about them. When we worship God we have to let down those barriers. We should be open to a greater variety of expressions in Presbyterian worship. ap

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How I pray

Counsel on approaching the Almighty

How should I pray? What exactly should I say? How long should I go on? Such were the questions Luther's barber and lifelong friend, Peter Beskendorf, put to him. In response, Luther composed A Simple Way to Pray, in which he showed how the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Apostles' Creed can guide prayer. Here is an excerpt of the first two sections of Luther's 1535 booklet.

Dear Master Peter: I will tell you as best I can what I do personally when I pray. May our dear Lord grant to you and to everybody to do it better than I! Amen.

When I feel that I have become cool and joyless in prayer because of other tasks or thoughts (for the flesh and the Devil always impede and obstruct prayer), I take my little Psalter, hurry to my room, or, if it be the day and hour for it, to the church where a congregation is assembled and, as time permits, I say quietly to myself and word-for-word the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and, if I have time, some words of Christ or of Paul, or some psalms, just as a child might do.

It is a good thing to let prayer be the first business of the morning and the last at night. Guard yourself carefully against those false, deluding ideas which tell you, "Wait a little while. I will pray in an hour; first I must attend to this or that." Such thoughts get you away from prayer into other affairs which so hold your attention and involve you that nothing comes of prayer for that day.

It may well be that you may have some tasks which are as good as or better than prayer, especially in an emergency. There is a saving ascribed to St. Jerome that everything a believer does is prayer, and a proverb, "He who works faithfully prays twice." Yet we must be careful not to break the habit of true prayer and imagine other works to be necessary which, after all, are nothing of the kind. Thus at the end we become lax and lazy, cool and listless toward prayer. The Devil, who besets us, is not lazy or careless, and our flesh is too ready and eager to sin and is disinclined to the spirit of prayer.

When your heart has been warmed by such recitation to yourself (of the Ten



**Martin
Luther**

Commandments, the words of Christ, etc) and is intent upon the matter, kneel or stand with your hands folded and your eyes toward heaven and speak or think as briefly as you can,

"O Heavenly Father, dear God, I am a poor unworthy sinner. I do not deserve to raise my eyes or hands toward Thee or to pray. But because Thou hast commanded us all to pray and hast promised to hear us and through Thy dear Son Jesus Christ hast taught us both how and what to pray, I come to Thee in obedience to Thy word, trusting in Thy gracious promise. I pray in the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, together with all Thy saints and Christians on earth as he has taught us: Our Father who art, etc.," through the whole prayer, word for word.

Luther then advises that Peter repeat and elaborate on each petition. For example, here is how the second petition, "Thy kingdom come," might be developed:

Say: "O dear Lord, God and Father, Thou seest how worldly wisdom and reason not only profane Thy name and ascribe the honour due to Thee, to lies and to the Devil, but how they also take the power, might, wealth and glory which Thou hast given them on earth for ruling the world, and thus serving Thee, and use it in their own ambition to oppose Thy kingdom. They are many and mighty; they plague and hinder the tiny flock of Thy kingdom who are weak, despised, and few.

"Convert them and defend us. Convert those who are still to become children and members of Thy kingdom so that they with us and we with them may serve Thee in Thy kingdom in true faith and unfeigned love and that from Thy

kingdom which has begun, we may enter into Thy eternal kingdom. Defend us against those who will not turn away their might and power from the destruction of Thy kingdom, so that when they are cast down from their thrones and humbled, they will have to cease from their efforts. Amen."

Or as another example, take the sixth petition, "And lead us not into temptation."

Say: "O dear Lord, Father and God, keep us fit and alert, eager and diligent in Thy word and service, so that we do not become complacent, lazy, and slothful as though we had already achieved everything. In that way the fearful Devil cannot fall upon us, surprise us, and deprive us of Thy precious word or stir up strife and factions among us and lead us into other sin and disgrace, both spiritually and physically. Rather grant us wisdom and strength through Thy Spirit that we may valiantly resist him and gain the victory. Amen."

Mark this, that you must always speak the *Amen* firmly. Never doubt that God in His mercy will surely hear you and say "yes" to your prayers. Never think that you are kneeling, or standing alone; rather, think that the whole of Christendom, all devout Christians, are standing there beside you, and you are standing among them in a common, united petition, which God cannot disdain. Do not leave your prayer without having said or thought, "Very well, God has heard my prayer; this I know as a certainty and a truth." That is what Amen means.

You should also know that I do not want you to recite all these words in your prayer. That would make it nothing but idle chatter and prattle. Rather do I want your heart to be stirred and guided concerning the thoughts which ought to be comprehended in the Lord's Prayer.

I do not bind myself to such words or syllables, but say my prayers in one fashion today, in another tomorrow, depending upon my mood and feeling. I stay, however, as nearly as I can, with the same general thoughts and ideas. It may happen occasionally that I may get lost among so many ideas in one petition that I forgo the

**Keep us fit
and alert,
eager and
diligent in
Thy word
and service.**

other six. If such an abundance of good thoughts comes to us, we ought to disregard petitions, make room for such thoughts, listen in silence, and under no circumstances obstruct them. The Holy Spirit Himself preaches here, and one word of His sermon is far better than a thousand of our prayers. Many times I have learned more from one prayer than I might have learned from much reading and speculation.

It is of great importance that the heart be made ready and eager for prayer. What else is it but tempting God when your mouth babbles and the mind wanders to other thoughts?

A good and attentive barber keeps his thoughts, attention, and eyes on the razor and hair and does not forget how far he has gotten with his shaving or cutting. If he wants to engage in too much conversation or let his mind wander or look somewhere else he is likely to cut his customer's mouth, nose, or even his throat. How much more does prayer call for concentration and singleness of heart!

This, in short, is the way I use the Lord's Prayer when I pray it. To this day I suckle at the Lord's Prayer like a child, and as an old man eat and drink from it and never get my fill. It is the very

best prayer, even better than the Psalter, which is so very dear to me. It is surely evident that a real Master composed and taught it.

If I have had time and opportunity to go through the Lord's Prayer, I do the same with the Ten Commandments.

I divide each commandment into four parts, thereby fashioning a garland of four strands. That is, I think of each commandment as, first, instruction, which is really what it is intended to be, and consider what the Lord God demands of me so earnestly. Second, I turn it into a thanksgiving; third, a confession; and fourth, a prayer.

Luther demonstrates his approach for the first commandment, "I am the Lord your God ... You shall have no other gods before me."

Here I earnestly consider that God expects and teaches me to trust Him sincerely in all things and that it is his most earnest purpose to be my God. I

must think of Him in this way at the risk of losing eternal salvation. My heart must not build upon anything else or trust in any other thing, be it wealth, prestige, wisdom, might, piety, or anything else.

Second, I give thanks for His infinite compassion by which He has come to me in such a fatherly way and, unasked, unbidden, and unmerited, has offered to be my God, to care for me, and to be my comfort, guardian, help, and strength in every time of need. We poor mortals have sought so many gods and would have to seek them still if He did not enable us to hear Him openly tell us in our own language that He intends to be our God. How could we ever – in all eternity – thank Him enough!

Third, I confess and acknowledge my great sin and ingratitude for having so shamefully despised such sublime teachings and such a precious gift throughout my whole life, and for having provoked His wrath by countless acts of idolatry. I repent of these and ask for His grace.

Fourth, I pray and say, "O my God and Lord, help me by Thy grace to learn and understand Thy commandments more fully every day and to live by them in sincere confidence. Preserve my heart so that I shall never again become forgetful and ungrateful, that I may never seek after other gods or other consolation on earth or in any creature, but cling truly and solely to Thee, my only God. Amen, dear Lord and Father. Amen."

These are the Ten Commandments in their fourfold aspect, namely, as a school text, song book, penitential book, and prayer book. They are intended to help the heart come to itself and grow zealous in prayer.

Take care, however, not to undertake all of this or so much that one becomes weary in spirit. Likewise, a good prayer should not be lengthy or drawn out, but frequent and ardent. It is enough to consider one section or half a section which kindles a fire in the heart. This the Spirit will grant us and continually instruct us in when, by God's word, our hearts have been cleared and freed of outside concerns.

Nothing can be said here about the part of faith and Holy Scriptures [in prayer] because there would be no end to what could be said. With practice one can take the Ten Commandments on one day, a psalm or chapter of Holy Scripture the next day, and use them as flint and steel to kindle a flame in the heart.

A good prayer should not be lengthy or drawn out, but frequent and ardent.

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Prayer, revival and missions go together – or not at all.

No one can study the development of the modern missionary movement and not be impressed with the extent to which prayer and missions have gone hand in hand.

As Helen Montgomery says: “Every fresh putting forth of missionary energy has been preceded by believing prayer. The seed of the missionary enterprise has been planted and has germinated in the hearts of believing, praying disciples.”

The modern missionary movement was born in a revival of prayer.

Justinian Welz was one of the few persons to raise a prophetic voice on behalf of missions in the 17th century. In one of his essays he wrote: “Whoever will be used in the worthy activity of spreading the evangelical faith must be diligent in prayer in all his doings. If he wishes to undertake this office, he must begin with prayer. If he wishes to accomplish anything glorious, he must adhere to it with persistent prayer to his dearest master, Jesus Christ. If anything is to reach a blessed conclusion, he must seek to attain it through devout prayer. It is prayer — only prayer — that softens the stony heathen heart and makes it fit to obey Christ.”

Justinian Welz was a voice crying in the wilderness. Few people paid any attention to him; consequently the beginning of the modern missionary movement had to await the arrival of the Pietist Movement under the leadership of Jacob Spener and August Francke. The outstanding feature of the Pietist Movement was the cultivation of the inner life by Bible study and prayer.

The modern missionary movement may be said to have begun in earnest with the Moravians. When a group of exiled Moravians under Christian David arrived in Saxony in 1722, Count Zinzendorf gave them shelter on his estate, later known as Herrnhut — the Lord’s Watch. The colony developed rapidly as additional exiles arrived, built homes and workshops, dug wells, laid out roads, established orphanages, and erected a meeting house and school. Under the dynamic leadership of Zinzendorf, Herrnhut became the nerve centre of a worldwide missionary movement unique in the history of the church.



J. Herbert Kane

It all began with prayer. A three-month revival at Herrnhut in the summer of 1727 led to the establishment of a round-the-clock prayer watch, seven days a week, by 24 single brothers and 24 single sisters. This prayer watch continued without interruption for one hundred years! Their first mission (1732) was to the Negro slaves on the Danish island of St Thomas in the Virgin Islands. Greenland was next in 1733. Within 20 years, the Moravian Brethren had started more missions than Anglicans and Protestants had started during the two preceding centuries.

About the same time the Holy Spirit was moving among the churches in England. In 1723 Robert Millar, a Presbyterian minister in Paisley, wrote *A History of the Propagation of Christianity and the Overthrow of Paganism*, in which he advocated intercession as the primary means of converting the heathen. This book was soon followed by the rise of Methodism, whose first society was formed in 1739.

The great Methodist revival, which

spread rapidly over the English-speaking world, was the first evidence of the church’s interest in world missions. It began in the hearts of a little group of students in Oxford University who met regularly for prayer and Bible study. The idea soon caught on. Prayer groups began meeting all over the British Isles. Their chief petition was for the conversion of the heathen world.

In 1746 a memorial was sent to Boston inviting the Christians there to enter into a seven-year “Concert of Prayer” for missionary work. The memorial evoked a ready response from Jonathan Edwards, who the following year issued a call to all believers to engage in intercessory prayer for the spread of the gospel throughout the world.

Some 30 years later, in 1783, Edwards’s pamphlet was introduced to the churches in England by John Sutcliff in the Northamptonshire Ministerial Association. Following the reading of the pamphlet, a motion was made that all Baptist churches and ministers set aside the first Monday of each month for united intercession for the heathen world. It read: “Let the whole interest of the Redeemer be affectionately remembered, and the spread of the Gospel to the most distant parts of the habitable globe be the object of your most fervent requests. Who can tell what the consequences of such a united effort in prayer may be?”

The “consequences” were not long in coming. In 1792 William Carey sailed for India under the Baptist Missionary Society. Other societies were formed in rapid suc-

The great Methodist revival was the first evidence of the church’s interest in world missions.



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cession: the London Missionary Society (1795), the Scottish and Glasgow Missionary Societies (1796), the Netherlands Missionary Society (1797), and the Church Missionary Society (1799).

The first mission field of the London Missionary Society in 1795 was the Society Islands in the Pacific Ocean. Eighteen members of the first party of 30 landed on Tahiti. After an encouraging beginning the situation worsened. King Pomare turned against the missionaries. Some were killed, others fled, and some died of disease. In 1804 the king died and was succeeded by his son, Pomare II, who was even more cruel than his father, and harassed and persecuted the missionaries to the point where they began to despair.

Just when the situation looked hopeless, friends back in London called for a special meeting to pray specifically for the conversion of King Pomare. That was in July 1812. That same month the king was converted and became an ardent supporter of Christian missions. At his own expense he built a large church where, in the presence of four thousand of his subjects, he was baptized. In a comparatively short time Tahiti became predominantly Christian.

Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, was above all else a man of prayer. His philosophy of the Christian life was summed up in four phrases: There is a living God; He has spoken in His Word; He means what He says; He always keeps His promise. Taylor gave 50 years of loving service to

the people of inland China. During that time the sun never rose in China without finding Hudson Taylor on his knees. For more than 100 years the China Inland Mission (now the Overseas Missionary Fellowship) has followed the principle laid down by its founder — moving men through God by prayer alone. In 1889 the mission prayed for 100 new workers and got them. In the depth of the Depression (1932-33), when other missions were retrenching, the mission prayed for 200 new workers—and got them!

Gossner, by prayer alone, sent out and supported 200 missionaries, including wives.

Hudson Taylor is often referred to as the “father of faith missions”, but that honour really goes to John Evangelist Gossner, a German pastor in Berlin, who at the age of 63 founded the

Gossner Mission in 1836. During the remainder of his life Gossner, by prayer alone, sent out and supported 200 missionaries, including wives. At his funeral it was said of him that “he prayed mission stations into being, and missionaries into faith; he prayed open the hearts of the rich, and gold from the most distant lands.”

Pastor Louis Harms, founder of the Hermannsburg Mission near Alice Springs, over a period of 30 years recruited and supported 350 missionaries who planted a church of more than 13,000

members. In his journal he wrote: “Last year, 1857, I needed for the mission fifteen thousand crowns, and the Lord gave me that and sixty over. This year I need double, and the Lord has given me double and one hundred and forty over.”

On the whole, Christian missions have not been very successful on the great continent of Asia. After 250 years of Protestant missionary work, and a much longer period of Roman Catholic missions, slightly less than 3 per cent of the population are professing Christians. One bright spot, however, has been Korea.

There church growth has been described as “wildfire”. By far the strongest churches in Asia are in Korea, and the growth continues unabated. Several factors have contributed to this phenomenal growth, but the greatest single factor would have to be the great revival of 1907.

For five months prior to that time both missionaries and native Christians had been meeting daily for prayer, seeking for a deeper, more satisfying experience of the abundant life in Christ. On January 14, 1907, the Holy Spirit fell on the 700 Christians gathered in Pyongyang for the annual Bible classes conducted by the missionaries. There is no doubt that the revival was the direct result of five months of earnest prayer.

The revival lasted for two weeks, during which all other work was suspended and the Christians gave themselves to prayer, confession, and restitution. The revival spread to Seoul and other cities of Korea, and beyond the borders of Korea into Manchuria and China. To this day the church in Korea has a quality of spiritual life seldom seen in other parts of the world. Many of the churches have an early morning prayer service every day of the year, with several hundred in attendance. There is no doubt that the vitality of the Korean church can be traced directly to the revival of 1907 and the enormous volume of prayer engendered at that time.

Three things have always gone together: prayer, revival, and missions. If church history has taught us anything it is that a moribund church can never engage in the task of worldwide missions. It must be revived in order to be ready for its chief task. And revival doesn't “just happen”. It is always preceded by a period of prolonged and earnest prayer. This is just as true today as it was 200 or 2000 years ago.

This extract is taken from Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective (Baker, 1976).

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School of prayer



20 daily Bible studies on Psalms 139-150

The disciples said to Jesus, “Lord, teach us to pray.” We all need a fair bit of extra coaching in the School of Prayer. It is hard enough finding (or perhaps it should be allocating) time for prayer in our busy schedule. A lot of our problem is how to use the time we do have effectively.

The people of God have always found the Psalter a great source of inspiration for prayer – not only to spur us on and to show us how to pray, but also as a compendium of actual prayers we can use for ourselves.

The first seven of the 12 psalms we will be looking at this month are attributed in the title to King David. Although a king, he is someone to whom even the lowliest of us can relate. He knew what it was like to be down, really down. He knew what it was like to have enemies, even members of his own family. He knew what it was like to be in danger, to be desperately ill. But he also knew how to cry out to his God in earnest prayer. More than this, David was a “pointer” to his descendant, the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom many of these psalms ultimately apply. The other five psalms could also easily be the work of David. They teach us how to praise God in prayer. May these studies encourage us all in prayer.

Bruce Christian

DAY 1

The inescapable God

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 139:1-12

THE POINT It is part of our sinful condition that we think there are parts of our lives that somehow God is not involved in. Are we always conscious of God’s presence beside us when we are watching a TV program that’s a bit iffy, or having a heated argument in a church meeting or with a neighbour, or when we’re angry with our spouse? It is good to be reminded that there is absolutely nothing we can ever hide from God’s all-seeing eye, and then to realise how much we depend on His grace and mercy. Perhaps this is the starting point for an honest and effective prayer life!

THE PARTICULARS

- God’s searchlight reaches every corner of my life and of my mind; everything I think and everything I say are fully known to Him.
- God prepares the way ahead of us and picks up the pieces behind us; He can deal with all our yesterdays and all our tomorrows.
- We can’t easily understand God’s omniscience and omnipresence.
- God is always for us, not against us, if we look to Him in faith.
- All our deeds are done in broad daylight in God’s perspective.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- What difference will it make to each of your activities and attitudes today as you think of God beside you constantly?

DAY 2

God’s precious embryos

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 139:13-18

THE POINT Scientific Man is not satisfied with being like God – he wants to be God. God is clear and unambiguous in His Word that human life begins at conception – and that each human life is precious to Him. He will call to account anyone who treats an embryo as anything less than a human-being-made-in-His-image (see v. 19).

THE PARTICULARS

- The conception, development and birth of a baby ought to be proof enough of the existence of a personal Creator to whom we owe allegiance and who is worthy of all our praise.
- In spite of our amazing advances in medical science in general, and in understanding the reproductive process in terms of genetics and DNA in particular, there remains a deep mystery about the origin of human life that is incomprehensible without God.
- Every detail of our lives, including the span of our earthly pilgrimage, is in God’s sovereign hands from all eternity; this reassures us in our hope of eternal life beyond the grave (v. 18b).
- Our only appropriate response to all this is unlimited praise.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- When did you last thank God for His precious gift of life itself to you, and to those with whom you share His love? Do it now.

DAY 3 *God is holy*

THE PASSAGE PSALM 139:19-24

THE POINT In the psalms we will be reading this month there will be a number of instances where the psalmist calls on God to punish his enemies most severely. While this seems to be at variance with Jesus' command to love and pray for, not against, our enemies at a personal level, it is quite consistent with the teaching of the whole Bible about the necessity for God's people to speak out against everything that fails to uphold the holiness of his name.

- THE PARTICULARS**
- It is interesting to us today that David should have this sudden outburst of anger against wickedness and the shedding of innocent blood in the context of his statement about the value of an unformed body (embryo) in God's sight (verse 16) – there were 100,000 abortions performed last year in Australia, 275 a day.
 - To fail to treat every human as a being made in God's image is to speak evil against God, to misuse His holy name (cf Exodus 20:7), in fact to "hate" the Lord and to "rise up against" Him.
 - Speaking out against evil must always be accompanied by a heart that humbles itself before God and seeks to acknowledge its own failings and submit to His cleansing and refining power.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Are you jealous for God's holiness in your world? your heart?

DAY 4 *Protection through prayer*

THE PASSAGE PSALM 140:1-13

THE POINT God reminds us constantly in His Word that we are involved in a fierce spiritual battle. In the Old Testament especially this often took on physical proportions. By using physical imagery, the psalms are a great prayer resource for the Church today as it engages with Satan in the battle for truth and the hearts of men.

- THE PARTICULARS**
- Opposition, both physical and verbal, is to be expected by those who seek to follow God's way in a world that has set itself up against His authority at a personal and at a corporate level; this was Jesus' own experience, and what He said would be ours as well (Matt. 5:11-12). God expects us to cry out to Him in prayer for help and to look to Him for our protection and deliverance.
 - The grounds on which we can be confident in prayer include:
 - we are in a personal relationship with God ("my God") (6);
 - the LORD (Jehovah/Yahweh) has made reliable covenant promises to His chosen people (Genesis 15:18, Leviticus 26:45);
 - He is able to help us because He has proven himself to be a strong deliverer in previous battles (7);
 - He is a God of mercy (6), integrity/humility (8), and justice (12).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- How important is prayer in your daily life (see Exod. 17:8-16)?

DAY 5 *A right balance in prayer*

THE PASSAGE PSALM 141:1-10

THE POINT Solomon warned us to "guard your steps" and "let your words be few" when we come into God's presence (Ecclesiastes 5:1-2). His father gives us the same warning here about our prayer life. The right approach to prayer sustains our confidence in God.

- THE PARTICULARS**
- David was not afraid to press God with urgent cries for help.
 - David recognised certain conditions in the practice of prayer:
 - it is like a humble, pious, sacrificial offering to a holy God (2);
 - our speech must never be inappropriate to God's holiness (3);
 - sin in the heart, or even association with sinful behaviour in others, can be a hindrance to prayer (cf 1 Peter 3:7) (4);
 - we must always be open to godly correction and discipline (5).
 - Eventually, the wicked and their rulers will also recognise that because God is holy He is serious about how man relates to Him.
 - Thus, David could remain confident in his Sovereign Lord to protect him from all his enemies and in the end to vindicate him.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- How can we balance the tension between taking up our loving heavenly Father's invitation to bring everything to Him in prayer (Philippians 4:6), and being too cavalier in our approach?

DAY 6 *What a friend we have in Jesus*

THE PASSAGE PSALM 142:1-7

THE POINT Those of us with a disposition towards the blues are sometimes convinced that we don't have a single friend in the world. It seems that David had a tendency in this direction, as did Elijah and Jeremiah and others. On the up side, it provides us with an opportunity to rediscover how accessible and dependable God is.

- THE PARTICULARS**
- David's heartfelt, desperate cry for help mixed together an element of penitence (1) and an element of petition for justice (2). Desperate prayers don't have to pass the test of good logic!
 - When we are too weak to know how to pray God understands; He cares when it seems no-one else does; if we feel vulnerable to the schemes of stronger opponents He guides and protects us; He is always a safe refuge throughout all our earthly pilgrimage.
 - Depression can give us the feeling of being trapped in a cage, but God is able to set us free. David's cry for help is followed by a statement of confidence in what the outcome will be.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Do you remember to praise God when He answers your prayer?
- What are the advantages/disadvantages of being a pessimist? What are the advantages/disadvantages of being an optimist?

DAY 7 *The enemy pursues me*

THE PASSAGE PSALM 143:1-6

THE POINT There are times when we can really identify with David here. The "enemy" (it might be a person, perhaps even someone we had previously trusted as a friend, or it might be the enemy within – a besetting sin? – or the pressure of deadlines or of work generally) is really making life hard for us and we feel crushed and faint and discouraged. We don't feel much like praying because we've let our daily devotions slip a bit lately and there are few other aspects of our spiritual walk that we'd rather not talk about. Psalm 143 can help us with the recovery process.

- THE PARTICULARS**
- When we turn to God in prayer it can only be on the basis of His mercy, His faithfulness and His righteousness – not on ours.
 - Verse 2 is a good reminder of what Jesus did for us on the cross.
 - It is good to reflect on what God has done in the past when the present seems dark and hopeless. Psalm 139 helps us to do this.
 - Sometimes God has to bring us to a point of utter, empty-handed despair to teach us how to pray. "Nothing in my hand I bring; simply to your cross I cling; naked come to you for dress ..."

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- How does Romans 8:32 help us to keep things in perspective?

DAY 8 *Prayer tips*

THE PASSAGE PSALM 143:7-12

THE POINT God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

- THE PARTICULARS**
- David's prayer, because it is in Scripture, can act as a model for us and give us some important guidelines to help us in our struggle with prayer. Here are some of them:
 - it is OK to be urgent with our requests in desperate times (7);
 - it is OK at times to feel that we are "losing it" and that unless God stops hiding His face from us we will go under (7);
 - it is OK to set a deadline for God to give us some specific indicator that He does love us and can rescue us from danger (8);
 - we need to be fully committed to trusting God completely (8);
 - it is OK to ask God for specific guidance (8);
 - God is a safe refuge from danger when we hide in Him (9, 11f);
 - the Holy Spirit is a reliable Teacher and Guide (10);
 - there is a close link between trust and obedience (9-10-11);
 - the bottom line is God's righteousness and love/mercy (12) – and these are ultimately and fully appropriated to us in Jesus.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- How can we make prayer a more significant part of our daily lives? Do you miss out on blessings through lack of prayer?



Come worship with us!

If you are passing through or moving nearby, feel free to ring the Minister, Clerk or Elder.

australian capital territory

CANBERRA, BELCONNEN

Cnr Gatty St. & Ross Smith Cres, Scullin.
Sunday Service 10:00 am
Elder: Mr R Howe (02) 6247 9586

CANBERRA, FORREST (St Andrew's)

1 State Circle (opp Parliament House).
Service Times: 9.30am. & 7.00pm.

Church Office: (02) 6295 3457

CANBERRA, TUGGERANONG

Isabella Plains: Isabella Plains Primary School,
Ellerstone Ave.
Worship Service & Sunday School 10.00am.
(02) 6292 6772

new south wales

ABBOTSFORD-FIVE DOCK

443 Great North Rd., Abbotsford. 9.00am &
5.00pm. Rev. Moses Hahn (02) 9713 2939.

ANNANDALE-LEICHHARDT

Hunter Baillie, Johnston & Collins Sts.
10.00am, 6.30pm. 2nd & 4th Sunday.
Rev. Peter Dunstan

ARMIDALE (St. Paul's)

Faulkner St, 9.30am. & 7.00pm.
I.M. Rev. David M. Seaman (02) 6772 3093

ASHFIELD

Liverpool Rd. & Knox St. 10.15am & 6.00pm
Rev Peter Hastie (02) 9798 6572.

ASHTONFIELD

19 Galway bay Dr. (Shamrock Hill Multi-
Purpose Ctr.) 10.00am.
Rev. Russell Vandervelden (02) 4933 8174.

BEACON HILL-NARRAWEENA

244 Warringah Rd. 9.30am. & 7.00pm.
Rev. Trevor Cheetham (02) 9451 5076.

BEECROFT

Mary St., 8.45am. 10.30am. & 6.30pm.

BEGA — EDEN

Bega -Upper St; Eden — CWA Rooms,
Imlay St. Clerk: Mrs J Gill (02) 6495 6062

BONDI

Cnr. Castlefield & Miller Sts.
10.00am & 7.00pm.
Rev John Graham: (02) 9597 5214

BONNYRIGG

Western Regions Chinese Church
14-16 Bibbys Place. 9.30 am. (English) &
11.00 am. (Mandarin)
S.Clerk: Stanley Chen (02) 9753 2073

BOWRAL — MITTAGONG

Bowral: 20 Bendooley St. 10.30am.
Kid's Church: 9.30 am. 1st & 3rd Sunday

Mittagong: Cr Alice & Edwards Sts. 9.00am.
Rev. Doug McPherson: (02) 4872 4052.

BURWOOD (St. James)

46-48 Belmore St. 9.15am & 5.00pm
Rev. David Maher (02) 9744 6542

BURWOOD CHINESE

46-48 Belmore St. 9.15am & 11.00am
(Cantonese). 5.00pm (English).
Church Office: (02) 9715 3889.

Rev. Dennis Law 0414 812 776.

Rev. Eugene Hor 0414 992 106.

CAMPBELLTOWN

34 Lithgow St. 8.30 am. 10.00 am. 6.30 pm.
Rev. Jim Elliot (02) 4625 1037.

CARINGBAH

393 Port Hacking Rd.
Rev. Darren Middleton (02) 9540 4469.

CHATSWOOD

St Andrew's, Anderson St.
9.00am.& 7.00 pm.
Lane Cove, St James, Farran St. 11.00am.
Rev. Jeff Read (02) 9419 5932 (W) 2077 (H)

CHERRYBROOK

John Purchase Public School Hall, Purchase
Road, Cherrybrook 9.30 am
Rev John Irvin (Minister) (02) 9875 4894

CHINESE CHURCH

Cnr Crown & Albion Sts. Surry Hills.
English/Cantonese/Mandarin/Bilingual
Services. Office (02) 9331 4459.

Rev Joe Mock (02) 9642 8861(H).

Rev Daniel Ng (02) 9797 2342(H).

Rev Ezra Tseng (02) 9500 1259(H).

COFFS HARBOUR (St Andrew's)
187 High St. 8.00am. 9.45am. & 6.30pm.

Rev Peter Moore (02) 6652 3183(O).

CONCORD

Cornerstone Presbyterian Community Church
Meets Concord Public School 9.30 am.
Cnr Burwood Rd. & Stanley St. Concord
Rev. C S Tang (02) 9688 7880 (H)

COOTAMUNDRA (Scots)

Cnr Parker & Francis Sts 11.00 am.
I.M. Rev F. Monckton (02) 6977 1642

COWRA

46 Macquarie St. Also Gooloogong,
Morongla. Ph (02) 6342 1467.

CRONULLA

13 Croydon St. 9.30am.
Rev. Russell Stark (02) 9523 5875.

EAST MAITLAND

George St. **Beresfield:** Beresford Ave.
Raymond Terrace: Irrawang St.
I.M. Rev. David J Campbell (02) 4943 0284.

EPPING

Bridge & Rawson Sts.
Rev David Tsai (02) 9876 1188.

FORSTER/TUNCURRY

Bruce St. Forster, 9.30am.
Rev. John Thompson (02) 6552 1082

GILGANDRA (St Stephens)

14 Myrtle St. 11.00am. & 9.00am. (4th Sun).
Rev. Tony Adams (02) 6847 2036

GOSFORD

14-16 Young St. West Gosford. 8.00am.
9.45am. 6.30 pm. Office: Ph (02) 4323 2490.

GRIFFITH

Opp. Collina Oval, Blumer Ave. 9.30 am.
Rev. Peter Gobbo (02) 6962 4827.

Dr L. Thorpe (02) 6962 1934

GUNNEDAH

Marquis & Barber Sts. **Boggabri:** Court
House (02) 6742 0551

HURSTVILLE

Cnr. Park Rd. & McMahan St. English:
9.30am. & 6.30pm. Indonesian: 4.00pm.
Rev Kevin Murray (02) 9153 8176.

KIAMA

Terralong St. 9.00am & 5.30pm.
Pastor: Noel Creighton (02) 4233 1554

KOGARAH

Cnr Kensington & Derby Sts.
9.30am. & 7.00pm. (02) 9587 5577.

KOREAN, SYDNEY (Young Nak)

7-9 Manson St, Telopea. 9.30am. 11.00am.
3.00pm. S.Clerk (02) 9816 3807

LEETON

Cnr. Sycamore & Cypress Sts. 10.00 am.
Rev. Richard Keith (02) 4272 9407

LISMORE (St Paul's)

188 Keen St. 9.00 am. & 7.00 pm.

MACQUARIE

Herring & Abuklea Rds, Marsfield
Rev. Rex Swavley (02) 9878 4202

MANLY (St Andrew's)

Raglan St. & Augusta Lane. 9.45am.
Quarterly (Communion) 5.30pm.

Rev. Derek Bullen (02) 9976 2801

MAROUBRA, Kingsford

8 Robey St, **Maroubra.** 9.30 am. 7.15 pm.
94 Houston Rd, **Kingsford** 11.15am

Chinese Service, **Maroubra** 4 pm.

Rev Johnnie Li (02) 9349 1312

MOREE (St Andrew's)

Cnr Albert & Auburn Sts, 10.00am.

Rev. L. Fowler (02) 6752 1083

MOSMAN (Scots Kirk)

Belmont Rd. (nr Military Rd), 9.00am.

Rev R J McCracken (02) 9969 6101.

NEWCASTLE (St Andrews)

Cnr. Laman & Auckland Sts 9.15am & 7.00pm.
Office: (02) 4929 2857

NEWCASTLE EAST (St. Philip's)

48 Watt St., 10.00am.

Surfside Evangelical: 7.00pm.

Rev. John Macintyre (02) 4929 2379.

NORTH SYDNEY-GREENWICH

(St Peter's) 234 Blues Point Rd. 10.00am.
& 6.45pm. Wednesday 1.15pm.

Greenwich: (Taylor Memorial)

86A Greenwich Rd. 10.00am.
 Rev. Dr Paul Logan (02) 9955 1662.
 Rev. Matthew Oates (02) 9405 2235.
ORANGE (St James)
 Cnr Anson St. & Matthews Ave. 10.00am.
 Rev. William Stewart (02) 6362 6304
PARRAMATTA CITY
 Cumberland High School, Dunmore Ave.
 Carlingford. Rev. Luke Tattersall.
 S. Clerk: Mike Whiteman (02) 9484 1240.
PENRITH (St Andrew's)
 Doonmore St. near High St, 9.00am. &
 7.00pm. Rev William Morrow (02) 4721 2440.
PORT MACQUARIE (St Andrew's)
 Cnr William/Munster Sts, 9.00am., 10.30am
 Rev S Donnellan (02) 6582 2505
RANDWICK
 Alison Rd. & Cook St. 10.00am. & 5.00pm.
 Rev. Grant Thorpe (02) 9399 3183.
ROSE BAY (St Andrew's)
 Cnr Dover Rd. & Carlisle St.
 10.00am & 6.00pm.
 Rev Bruce Christian (02) 9388 1206(O).
SOUTHERN CROSS
 Park Ave. East Lismore
 Rev. Stephen Cree (02) 6621 3655
SPRINGWOOD
 160 Macquarie Rd. 10.30am. & 6.00pm.
Winmalee : 481 Hawkesbury Rd. 9.00am.
 (02) 4751 1188(O).
 Rev. Robert Benn (02) 4751 9968
STRATHFIELD (St David's)
 Barker Rd. & Marion St. 10.00am. & 6.30pm.
 Rev Robert McKean (02) 9746 8123.
SUTHERLAND
 Cnr Flora & Glencoe Sts. 9.30am & 5.30pm
 Rev Andrew Clausen (02) 9521 2361
SYDNEY (Scots Church)
 St Patrick's Hall, 20 Grosvenor St. (temporary).
 Service Time: 10.30 am.
 Rev. Adrian Van Ash (02) 9817 0587.
TAMWORTH (St Stephen's)
 Cnr Matthews & Crown St. 9.30am &
 6.30pm. **Moonbi** 9.00am.
 Rev Stuart Andrews (02) 6765 8754.
Tamworth Community Presb Church,
 Oxley High School Piper St Nth T'worth
 10 am. Rev Keith Walker (02) 6762 5759
Manilla: Court St.
 Rev. Vic Johnson (02) 6785 1627.
TAREE
 Albert St. 9.00am.
 Rev John Thompson (02) 6552 1082(O).
TENTERFIELD
 117 Logan St. (07) 6977 1642
TERRIGAL (Scots Kirk)
 2 Willoughby Rd. S. Clerk (02) 4384 3018.
 I.M. Rev. R. Boase (02) 4333 9009
WAHROONGA
 Wahroonga Presbyterian Church,
 Cnr. Illoura Ave. & Stuart St. 9.30am.
 Rev. Murray Fraser (02) 9489 3690
WAGGA WAGGA SOUTH
 60-62 Coleman St. Turvey Park
 9.00am & 10.30am.
 Rev. Sandy McMillan (02) 6925 1228.
WEE WAA
 Mitchell St. Rev. Mark Powell (02) 6795 4259
WELSH CHURCH: St Peter's, North Sydney.
 2nd Sunday of the month. 3.00pm.
 Rev. Dr Paul Logan (02) 9955 1662.

WENTWORTH FALLS (St Andrew's)
 Falls Rd. 9.00 am. Session Clerk: Mr Bernie
 Tucker (02) 4757 3518
WENTWORTHVILLE
 7 McKem St. 9.45am & 6.00pm.
Girraween: 15 Tungarra Rd. 8.15am.
Ghana Congregation (Girraween) 10.30am.
 Rev. David Griffin Phone: (02) 9896 3297.
WESTLAKES
 Warnervale Community Hall, Warnervale Rd
 S.School 8.30 am. Service 9.30 am.
 Rev. Esa Hukkinen (02) 4393 5530
WEST WYALONG
 Pioneer Memorial, Court St. 11.00am.
 Also at **Barmedman, Mahda, Tallimba &
 Weethalle.** Various times.
 Mr. Lance Jackson (02) 6972 2143.
WOLLONGONG (St Andrew's)
 Cnr Kembla & Burelli Sts. 9.45am. &
 6.00pm. Rev Bruce Hammonds
 (02) 4271 1545(H) (02) 4226 1725(O).
WOOLGOOLGA
 Cnr Scarborough St. & Landrigan Cl.
 9.00am. Rev. Peter Moore (02) 6651 2301.
WOONONA
 7 Gray St. Rev Peter Currie (02) 4284 4057.
WOY WOI
 120 Blackwall Rd. 9.00 & 10.30 am.
 Rev. Jamie Newans (02) 4342 2856



ACACIA RIDGE
 Cnr. Mortimer & Beaudesert Rds.
 9.00am. & 6.00pm. Pastor Stephen Teale,
 (07) 3277 0010, (07) 3711 3022 (H).
ASCOT
 68 Charlton St. (Near Airport).
Nundah: 14 Rode Rd
 Rev Guido Kettmiss (07) 3216 4151.
 Rev Les Hall (07) 3267 0558
ATHERTON
 Cnr. Alice & Jack Sts. 10.00am & 6.00pm.
 Rev. John Trappett (07) 4091 1375.
BALD HILLS
 58 Strathpine Rd. 8.30am. & 7.00pm.
 Rev Peter Bloomfield (07) 3261 4305.
BRISBANE KOREAN
 145 Ann St. 8.00am. 12.00 noon, 7.30pm.
 Rev Dr M. M. Y. Kim (07) 3300 3132
BRISBANE (St Paul's)
 53 St Pauls Tce. Spring Hill.
 Rev A. Gardiner (07) 3831 7458(O).
BUNDABERG (Scots')
 Cnr. Water & Alice Sts. 9.00am & 7.00pm.
 Rev David Newman (07) 4153 2954
CABOOLTURE
 24 Cottrill Road. 9.00am & 6.00pm.
 Rev. G. Watt (07) 5494 1181
CAIRNS
 85 Sheridan St. 9.15 am. & 6.30 pm.
 Church Office (07) 4051 2238
CALLIDE VALLEY
Biloela: Cnr. Kariboe & Melton Sts.
 10.00am. **Jambin:** Three Ways 8.30am.
 Rev. Mal Pierce (07) 4992 1441.
CALOUNDRA
 Cnr Kalinga & Ormutz Sts. 9.30am. &
 7.00pm. Rev N. Thomason (07) 5493 3594

CHARLEVILLE/BLACKALL
 78 Galatea St. 9.00am.
 Pastor Alan Grant (07) 4654 3100.
CHARTERSTOWERS
 Blackthorn Hall, Thornburgh College,
 King St. Mr. S. Mcdonald (07) 4787 3395
CLAYFIELD (Scots Memorial)
 29 Bellevue Terrace, 9.30am.
 Rev. Andrew Richardson
COORPAROO
 Emlyn St. 10.00am. & 7.00pm.
 Rev. Bruce Lowe
CREEK ROAD
 Presbyterian Ministry Centre, Cnr. Creek &
 Fursden Rds. **Carina** 9.00 am & 6.30 pm.
 Centre: (07) 3398 4333.
 Rev Peter Barson (07) 3399 3607.
DALBY
 Condamine St. (cnr. Patrick St).
 Rev Roland Lowther (07) 4669 7074
DECEPTION BAY-BURPENGARY
 Peace Presbyterian Church. 9.30am.
 155-157 Maine Terrace, Deception Bay.
 Rev. John Gilmour (07) 3203 2526.
EUMUNDI
 Memorial Drive, 10.45am. (weekly) &
 6.30pm. (2nd & 4th Sunday).
 I.M. Rev. Noel C. Thomason (07) 5493 3594
GAYNDAH
 Warton St. 10.00am.
 I.M. Rev. Noel C. Thomason (07) 5493 3594
GLADSTONE (St Andrew's)
 Goondoon & Bramston Sts. 10.00am. &
 7.00pm. **Benaraby:** O'Connor Rd. 8.00am.
Calliope: Dawson H'way (Stirrat St.) 2nd
 Sunday 9.30am; 4th Sunday 8.00am. Rev. D.
 Secomb (07) 4972 1058 (O); 4972 1057 (H).
GOLD COAST (I)
Arundel: 132 Allied Drive 9.15am.
 Rev. Russell van Delden
Robina: Cnr University & Cottesloe Drives
 10.00 am. & 6.30 pm.
 Rev. Kevin Ridley (07) 5571 1416
GOLD COAST (II)
Mudgeeraba: Cnr Mudgeeraba Rd &
 Regency Pde. 9.00am & 6.30 pm.
 Rev. Glenn Samuel (07) 5530 7003
GOLD COAST (III)
Palm Beach/Elanora: 'The Meeting Place'
 Cnr. Coolgardie & Guineas Creek Rds.
 (cnr. Pines Shopping Ctre) 9.00am &
 6.00pm. Rev. Donald Geddes (07) 5522 8982.
GRACEVILLE
 12 Bank Road. 9.30am.
 Rev. Norm Bartlett (07) 3712 0508
GYMPIE
 11 Crown St. 9.00am. **Woolooga** 11.00am.
 Rev. D Cranney (07) 5482 7629(O).
HERVEY BAY (St David's)
 Denmans Rd, Scarness, 9.30am. & 7.00pm.
 Rev. John T Roth (07) 4124 7018.
ITHACA
 100 Enogerra Tce, Paddington.
 Service: 9.30 am. 6.30pm.
 Rev. Robert Herrgott (07) 3300 6158.
IPSWICH
 Cnr Limestone & Gordon Sts. 9.30am,
 10.00am & 6.30pm.
Forest Hill: Church St, 9.00am.
 Rev. John Langbridge (07) 3294 7999.
 Rev. Wesley Redgen (07) 3282 9829.
 Pastor Paul Blake (07) 3281 0427.

Rev. John Kirkpatrick (07) 3281 5930.
MACGREGOR
 268 Padstow Rd. Eight Mile Plains 8.30am.
 I.M. Rev. Dan Mihailovic (07) 3800 3799
MACKAY
 Cnr Harvey St. & Evans Ave. Nth Mackay.
 7.30am; 9.30am & 7pm (Except Schl Hols
 then 8.30am). **Sarina:** Sarina Beach Rd.
 9.00am each Sunday; 7pm 2nd Sunday.
Gargett: Anglican Church, 4.00pm (1st &
 3rd Sunday). Rev. Jim Brown (07) 4955 3829.
MALENY
 Cedar St. 9.00am.
 Rev. Noel Thomason (07) 5493 3594
MARANOVA
Roma: Queen Street 9.00am.
Surat: (1st Sunday) 11.15am.
 Pastor Walter Posthuma (07) 4622 1158
MAROOCHYDORE
 Okinja Rd. Alexandra Headland.
 9.00am. & 7.00pm.
 Rev Peter Barber (07) 5445 9209.
MARYBOROUGH
 523 Alice St. 9.00am.
 Pastor John Tucker (07) 4123 5920.
MONTO
 Bell St. 10.00am. **Abercorn** 11.45am. (1st
 Sunday). **Kalpovar:** 5.30pm.
 Pastor Elton Wiltshire (07) 4166 1441.
NAMBOUR
 21 Solanda St. 8.45am
 I.M. Rev. Noel C. Thomason (07) 5493 3594.
NORTH PINE
 57 Old Dayboro Rd. Petrie. 10.00am. &
 6.30pm. Rev Neil McKinlay (07) 3285 2104.
REDCLIFFE PENINSULA
 Woody Point, Cnr. Ellen & Hawthorne Sts.
 9.30am. & 6.00pm.
Scarborough: Jeays St. 8.00am.
 Rev. Peter Whitney (07) 3284 2578.
ROCKHAMPTON (St Andrew's)
 51 Denham St. (cnr Alma Lne) 9.00am. &
 6.00pm. Rev C. Kennedy (07) 4922 8241.
ROCKHAMPTON (John Knox)
 Rundle St. 10.00 am. & 7.30 pm.
 Rev. Jon Chandler (07) 4922 1825 (O)
 (07) 4922 1540 (A/H).
ROCKHAMPTON (St Stephen's)
 Burnett St. Nth Rockhampton, 8.30am.
 Rev. Jon Chandler (07) 4922 1825 (O)
 (07) 4922 1540 (A/H).
Mt Morgan: St Enoch's, East St. 4.00pm.
 Rev. Jon Chandler (07) 4922 1825 (O)
 (07) 4922 1540 (A/H).
SANDGATE
 Loudon St. 9.00am. & 6.00pm.
 I.M. Rev. D. Todd (Em.) (07) 3269 9359
SPRINGSURE
 Charles St. 10.30am.
Emerald: Cnr Ruby & Egerton Sts., 8.30am.
 Rev B J Harrison Phone (07) 4984 1550.
TEWANTIN
 Anglican Church, William St. 11.45am.
 Rev Peter Barber (07) 5445 9209.
THE GAP
 1195 Waterworks Rd., 9.00am.
 Rev David Niven (07) 3300 2987.
THURINGOWA -TOWNSVILLE
 John Calvin, Carthew St. Kirwan. **Condon:**
 I.M. Rev. Colin Barwise (07) 4728 4224.
TOOWOOMBA NORTH (St David's)
 Mary St. Also at **Geham**

TOWNSVILLE (John Calvin Thuringowa)
 26 Carthew St. Kirwan 9.30am & 6.30pm
 Rev. David McDougall (07) 4723 8022
TOWNSVILLE (St Andrew's)
 113 Wills St. City. 9.30am. & 6.30pm.
 Rev. Rudi Schwartz (07) 4771 2460
WEST TOOWOOMBA
 Cnr Greenwattle & South Sts.
 8.00am, 10.00am & 6.00pm.
 Rev R. Sondergeld (07) 4633 4188.
 Church Office (07) 4633 4000.
WINDSOR
 Maygar St. 8.30am.
Wilston: Macgregor St. 10.00am.
Newmarket: Wilmington St. 6.00pm.
 Rev. Eric Noble (07) 3356 4124.
WYNNUM
 Cnr Bay Tce & Cedar St. 9.00 am & 6.00 pm.
 Rev Dr George Logan (07) 3893 1712

south australia

ADELAIDE (St Andrew's)
 92-98 Archer St. North Adelaide. 10.30 am.
 Supply: Rev. Dr G. Lyman (08) 8563 2147.
ELIZABETH
 106 Goodman Rd, Elizabeth South. 9.30am.
 Session Clerk: Mr Bob Arstall (08) 8825 5226.
 Mod. Rev. Dr Reg Mathews.
LARGS NORTH
 Brenda Terrace. 11.00am.
 Pastor Norman Carter (08) 8263 9692.
MILLICENT
 Cnr Fifth & Sixth Sts. 10.30 am.
 I.M. Rev. Alan Clarkson (08) 8737 2984.
 Also **Rendelsham**
MT BARKER
 Hutchison St. 10.30 am.
 Pastor Rupert Hanna (08) 8391 3151.
 Mod. Rev. John Campbell (08) 8261 3045.
MT GAMBIER
 Allison St. 10.00 am. 5.30 pm. Also **Allendale**,
Glenburnie, Nelson (Vic), OB Flat.
 Rev Gary Ware (08) 8723 9028.
MURRAY BRIDGE
 Pastor Rupert Hanna (08) 8391 3151.
NARACOORTE
 Church St. 10.00am.
 I.M. Rev. A. Clarkson (08) 8737 2984.
NORWOOD (St Giles)
 79 The Parade. 9.15am & 7.00pm.
 Rev Dr Reg Mathews (08) 8395 7841
PARA HILLS
 174 Maxwell Rd. 10.45 am.
 Rev Dr Reg Mathews (08) 8395 7841
PENOLA
 Portland St. 10.45 am. Rev. Alan Clarkson
 (08) 8737 2984 Also **Dergholm, Kalangadoo**
PORT AUGUSTA
 Jervois St. 10.00 am.
 Barry Rossiter PIM Padre (08) 8642 2059.
SEACLIFF
 Kauri Pde. **Seacliff.** 9.30am. Rev. S. Slucki
 (08) 8296 1581. Also **Seaford Rise**.
WHYALLA
 28 Ramsay St. 10.00 am.
 S/Clerk H. Mashford (08) 8645 0818.
 I.Mod. Rev. J. Campbell (08) 8265 3045.

tasmania

CORNERSTONE (Hobart) 10.00am.
 The Philip Smith Centre, 2 Edward St, The
 Glebe. Rev. David Jones (03) 6223 4701.
CROSSROADS 6.30pm.
 Underground at 86 Murray St.
 H.M. Michael Lynch 0414 669 554.
DEVONPORT (St Columba's)
 Edward St. 10.00am. **Don:** Waverley Rd.
 Rev. Steve Warwick (02) 6424 6066
HOBART
 (St John's) 10.00 am & 7.00 pm
 188 Macquarie St. (03) 6223 7213
 Rev. Robert White (03) 6229 7657
LAUNCESTON (St Andrew's)
 Civic Square. 9.30 & 11.00 am. & 5.00 pm.
 (Dec/Jan 10.00 am. & 5.00 pm.)
 Church Office: (03) 6331 5412
 Rev. Peter Thorneycroft 0438 315 412
MONTROSE
 Cnr. Islington Rd. & Walker St. 10.00 am.
 Mod. Rev. Robert White (03) 6278 1370.
RIVERSIDE
 Eden St. 10.45am.
Glengarry: 9.15am. Frankford H'way.
Winkleigh: 2.00pm, 2nd Sunday.
 Ps. Norman Shellard (03) 6327 2967
ROKEBY
 Presby. Community Church, Tollard Dr.
 Mod. Rev Dr. D. Mitchell (03) 6223 4860.
SCOTTSDALE
 George St. **Bridport:** Westwood St.
 Mod.Ps. Bryan Crawford (03) 6352 4024
STANLEY (St James)
 Fletcher St. **Rocky Cape, Mawbanna**
 Mod. Mr I Bessell (03) 6443 4299
ULVERSTONE (St Andrew's)
 65 Main Rd. 10.00am.
 Rev Daniel Combridge (03) 6425 9525.
WEST TAMAR
 Auld Kirk, Sidmouth and Mole Creek
 Mod: Rev. John Britton (03) 6339 4480

victoria

ARARAT
 Cnr. Campbell St. (Pyrenees H'way) and
 Queen St. 10 am. Mr Norman Sharp
 O.(03) 5334 3747 H. (03) 5352 4054
ASHBURTON
 Junction of High St. and High Street Rd.
 near Warrigal Rd. 10.15am.
 Rev Peter Orchard (03) 9889 6034.
ASPENDALE
 Cnr Station St. & Lyle Grv. 9.00am. &
 6.00pm. Rev A. Campbell (03) 9580 0530.
AUBURN
 Cnr Rathmines & Station Sts
 Hawthorn East 10.00 am. (03) 9882 5256
BAIRNSDALE
 7th Day Adventist Church, 149 Nicholson
 St. 10.00 am. 1st of Month 5.00pm.
 S/school 9.00 am.
 Past. Laurie Leighton (03) 5153 1669
BALACLAVA
 Hotham St. & Denman Ave. 10.00am.

I.M. Rev. Bob Thomas (03) 9537 1642.

BENDIGO (St John's)

Forest St. 10.30am.

Rev Andrew Clarke (03) 5443 6189.

BLACKBURN

53 Gardenia St. 11.00am.

Rev P Locke (03) 9725 6417

BUNDOORA

Bundoora Hall, Noorong Ave. 10.00am.

Admin: Mrs M. Goodson (03) 9431 4980.

BURWOOD

(Chinese Presbyterian Church) 11.00am.

Cnr. Greenwood & Tennyson Sts.

Rev Dr John Elnatan (03) 9801 7645.

CAMBERWELL- Trinity

cnr Riversdale & Waterloo Sts. 10.00am.

Rev. Philip Mercer (03) 9882 8102

CAMPERDOWN-TERANG-GARVOC

9.30 am Aug — Jan. 11am Feb — July

Terang: 1 Warrnambool Rd.

Camperdown: Campbell & Brooke Sts.

Garvoc: 2:30pm. 2nd & 4th Sunday.

Pastor Bernie Thomas (03) 5592 1041

CANTERBURY

146 Canterbury Rd. 10.30am. & 7 pm.

Rev. Grant Lawry (03) 9836 4601.

CANTERBURY JAPANESE

146 Canterbury Rd. 10.30 am

Mr Sam McGeown (03) 9894 2384.

CAULFIELD-ELWOOD

Caulfield: Neerim/Bambra Rds. 11.15am.

Elwood: Scott/Tennyson Sts. 9.15am & 4.00pm.

I.M. Rev. S. Bonnington (03) 9874 1007.

CHELTENHAM Pioneers' Presbyterian

8 Park Rd. Cnr. Charman Rd. 9.30am.

Rev. David Palmer (03) 9583 2785

CLIFTON HILL

Cnr Michael & McKean Sts North Fitzroy.

10.45 am. Rev. Peter Phillips (03) 9346 8044.

CROYDON HILLS

Good Shepherd Lutheran Primary School

57 Plymouth Rd. Croydon. 10.00am.

Rev. Matt James (03) 9725 5370

DANDENONG

51 Potter St. 10.00am.

Rev. John Rickard (03) 9792 4252.

DONVALE

Cnr. Springvale & McGowan's Rds. 8.30am,

10.30 am & 6.30pm. Rev Gerald Vanderwert

(03) 9842 9493. (03) 9841 7020 (O)

DROMANA — MORNINGTON

Dromana: St Andrew's, Gibson St. 9.00am.

Mornington (TheChapel) Cnr Strachans

Rd. & Nepean Hwy. 11.00am.

I.M. Rev. A Campbell (03) 9580 6161.

DROUIN

Church St. 9am. 10.30am. 7.30pm.

Sept-April; 7.00pm. May-Aug.

Rev. Ken Brown (03) 5625 1126.

ELTHAM

23 Batman Rd. 10.00 am

Rev. Don Elliott (03) 9439 9720

FRANKSTON

30 Radiata St. 10.30am. & 6.00pm.

Rev David Kumnick (03) 9786 2976.

GEELONG (St. Georges)

Cnr. Latrobe Tce & Rylie St.

10.00am & 7.00pm.

Rev. Graeme L. Weber (03) 5229 5493.

GEELONG WEST (Scots)

Cnr. Pakington & Waratah Sts. 10.00am.

I.M. Dr. Allan Harman (03) 5256 2134.

GLEN WAVERLEY-KNOXFIELD

Neighbourhood House, 6 Mount St., Glen

Waverley. 9.30am. 5.30pm 2nd Sunday.

Rev. Trevor Cox (03) 9764 9141.

HAMILTON

St Andrew's, Gray & McIntyre Sts. 10.00am.

& 5.00pm. (last Sunday of month)

Rev Keith Bell (03) 5572 1009

HAWTHORN

580 Glenferrie Rd. 11.00 am. & 7.00 pm.

Rev. Graham Nicholson (03) 9819 5347.

KANGAROO GROUND

265 Eltham-Yarra Glen Rd. 9.30am.

S. Clerk: Dr R. Baldock. (03) 9437 1265

KOREAN

16 Walnut Rd. North Balwyn.

English language service. 11.00 am

LEONGATHA

Cnr. Bent & Turner Sts. 10.00am.

Session Clerk: (03) 5662 2107

MALVERN

161 Wattletree Rd. 10.30am. & 5.00 pm.

Rev. Philip Daffy (03) 9509 7373.

MELBOURNE

The Scots' Church, Cnr. Russell & Collins

Sts. 11am & 7pm. Wed. 1.00pm.

Rev. Douglas Robertson (03) 9650 9903.

MELTON

Mowbray College, Centenary Ave.

Rev Peter Owen (03) 9747 8195.

MOE — YARRAM

Moe: 34 Fowler St. 10.00am.

Yarram: Cnr. Dougherty & Montgomery

Sts. 2.00pm. Rev Jared Hood (03) 5127 1296.

NOORAT-DARLINGTON

Noorat: Cnr Mc Kinnons Bridge &

Glenormiston Rds. 10.30 am.

Darlington: Hall St. 8.45 am. (1st & 3rd

Sundays) Rev. Barry Oakes (03) 5592 5220

NORTH GEELONG-NORTH SHORE

Nth Geelong: Cnr Victoria St. & Balmoral

Cr. 10.00 am (alt. Sundays) & 5.00pm (2nd

Sunday of month).

North Shore: Cnr Seabeach Pde & Myrtle

Gv. 10.00 am. (alt. Sundays)

Rev. Allan Lendon (03) 5278 1887.

NUMURKAH

58 Saxton St. 11.15am.

Tallygaropna: Victoria St. 9.30am.

Cobram: Cnr High and Pine Sts. (Anglican

Church) 2.30pm.

RESERVOIR

81 Edwardes St. 10.00 am. & 7.00 pm.

I.M. Rev. N. Chambers (03) 9455 3369

RINGWOOD-HEATHMONT

Cnr. Waterloo St. & Canterbury Rd.

Heathmont 10.00am.

Rev. Andrew Venn (03) 9870 5182.

ROCHESTER

Cnr. Victoria St. & Echuca Rd. 11.00am. &

7.30pm. **Permering** 9.30 am

Rev. A. Perona (03) 5484 1927.

ST KILDA

Cnr Alma Rd. & Barkly St. 11.00am &

7.00pm. Rev Bob Thomas (03) 9537 1642 (O)

SHEPPARTON

Cnr. Hayes & Leithen Sts. 9.00am. &

7.00pm. Also **Stanhope, Kyabram.**

Rev Kyung Ee (03) 5831 6494.

SOMERVILLE

Cnr Jones Rd. & Park Lane.

Rev. Ian Brown (03) 5977 5469.

SOUTH YARRA

621 Punt Rd. 10.00 am. & 6.30 pm.

Rev. Stuart Bonnington (03) 9867 4637

SORRENTO-RYE

Rye: St David's, Col'wood & Lyons Sts. 9.30am.

Sorrento: St Andrew's, Kerferd Rd. 11.00am.

SUNSHINE

McKay Memorial, Anderson Rd.

10.00am. & 6.00pm.

Rev Cor Vanderhorn (03) 9311 1661

SURREY HILLS (St Stephen's)

Canterbury & Warrigal Rds. 10.15am &

7.00pm. Family Services 6.00pm (2nd & 4th

Sunday). Deaf Christian Fellowship 2.30pm.

Rev. Chris Siriweera (03) 9833 3306.

UPPER YARRA — WARBURTON

3471 Warburton H'way. 10.00am. & 6.00pm.

Mr. Tony Archer (03) 5966 2309.

WANGARATTA — REGIONAL PARISH

Wangaratta, 158 Rowan St. Yarrowonga,

47 Orr St. Myrtleford, 78 Standish St

Rev. Neil Harvey (03) 5721 6444

WARRNAMBOOL (St John's)

Warrnambool: Cnr Spence & Manifold Sts.

10.00am & 7.00 pm. Sunday Night Life 5.30

South Warrnambool: McDonald St. 9.30

Woodford: Mill St. 11.00 am

Warrnambool Office: (03) 5562 2029

Rev Chris ten Broeke (03) 5561 5373

Rev. Philip Burns (03) 5561 7899.

WEST FOOTSCRAY

141 Essex St. (Scots) 10.00 am.

Session Clerk: Ms J Swift (03) 9687 5701

WILLIAMSTOWN (St Andrew's)

87 Cecil St. 10.00am.

Rev. Bruce Riding (03) 9397 5338

WOORI YALLOCK

Healesville Rd. 9.15am & 5 pm, (7pm DLS)

Rev David Brown (03) 5964 6014.

western australia

BASSENDEAN

14-16 Broadway. 9.30am.

Mr Ross Fraser (08) 9248 3252.

BICTON

Harris St. & View Tce. 9.00am & 7.00pm.

Rev. Andrew Robinson (08) 9339 3542

FREMANTLE (Scots)

Cnr South Tce & Parry St. 10.00 am

Chinese Worship & Sunday School. 3.00 pm.

Rev James Nocher (08) 9319 2208.

WHITFORDS (St Mark's)

Anglican School, St Marks Dr Hilarys.

9.00am. Rev Alan Perrie (08) 9447 1074.

To register your church in this section of the Australian Presbyterian is an easy, low cost exercise. Facsimile the AP office on:

(03) 9723 9685 or E-mail us at:

austpres@bigpond.net.au

The Annual Fees are:

Congregations under 50 \$45.00 plus GST

Congregations 51 -99 \$55.00 plus GST

Congregations 100 or more \$65.00 plus GST

DAY 9 *Spiritual warfare*

THE PASSAGE PSALM 144:1-8

THE POINT David was not allowed to build the Temple because of his military bias (see 1 Chr. 22:7-8). But his prowess as a soldier played a very significant part in the outworking of God's purposes. This Psalm gives us a wonderful picture of the inseparable link between David's physical valour and his spiritual walk with his God. His physical battles were spiritual battles; his enemies were God's enemies; his victories were God's victories.

THE PARTICULARS

- David saw his personal talents and abilities as gifts from God.
- David's total confidence for everything was in his Lord who loved him, protected him, and gave him his success. He was not ashamed to confess this openly to all who would listen.
- David, unlike his descendant Uzziah (see 2 Chr. 26:16), did not let success cause him to lose his perspective on who God is!
- David recognised God's power to use the weather to serve his military purposes (cf Judges 5:4f) – man is as nothing before Him.
- David's enemies were enemies of the God of truth (cf John 8:44).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Think of Jesus' battle of Gethsemane and Calvary. Do we need to be more actively and prayerfully involved in spiritual warfare?

DAY 10 *Sing a new song*

THE PASSAGE PSALM 144:9-15

THE POINT David now looks forward to the final victory, the defeat of all the forces of the Devil (the liar/deceiver), the coming of God's Kingdom with all its abundant blessings for God's people, and with the LORD (Jehovah) on His throne. Such a hope calls for a new song and much music (cf Psalms 33:3, 40:3, 96:1, 98:1, 149:1). This "new song" theme is picked up in Isaiah 42:10 and Revelation 5:9 and 14:3. Ultimately, the LORD is Jesus, David's Son.

THE PARTICULARS

- The praise of God through singing and music is the (super)natural response we make when we really take hold of His promises.
- David's aim was to establish a safe and secure city with stable, godly youth, a healthy economy, and without crime or war.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Are we lacking something in our praise when we come together in worship? Do we need the reviving power of God's Spirit?
- Every religion that fails to acknowledge Jesus as the Lord God is "full of lies" and "deceitful" (cf Rom. 1:18-20, 25). Do we share David's concern about their influence in the world? ... on us?
- Do we see evidence of the blessings of verses 12-14 in our society today? Are you praying that God's Kingdom will come?

DAY 11 *Great is the LORD*

THE PASSAGE PSALM 145:1-7

THE POINT David was so overwhelmed by the greatness of the LORD his God that he could not imagine a time in his present or future circumstances when he would not be singing His praises. Nor could he imagine the possibility of a future generation that would not be equally as excited as he was about telling others these things. His heart was overflowing with praise and joy.

THE PARTICULARS

- For David, the praise of his God the King was the single most constant thing in his life – "every day" and "for ever and ever".
- We praise God because He is worthy of it; it wouldn't do not to.
- The more we praise God, the more aware we become of our inability to understand the full extent, the depth, of His greatness.
- Telling others about God is itself a way of giving Him praise.
- God's greatness is evident in who He is (splendour, majesty, righteousness), in His works associated with Creation and Redemption, and in the way He looks after us and supplies our needs.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Are we slow to tell others about how great God is because we have let a culture develop among us where it isn't "cool" to do so, resulting in our failure even to think very much about it?

DAY 12 *The LORD is gracious*

THE PASSAGE PSALM 145:8-13A

THE POINT One of the most destructive effects of the Fall is the way our being made in the image of God has led to aggressive, I-want-it-all-my-way behaviour. Our inability to live together in peace and harmony at any level stems from this tendency. It is no wonder that when fallen Man has created his own gods in his image they are gods that instil fear and dread in their subjects. What a comfort it is to David, and to us, to know that the one true God, the LORD, who has revealed himself in Creation and in His Word (see Psalm 19), and finally for us in Jesus (see Hebrews 1:1-2) is gracious and compassionate! How ever could we remain silent?

THE PARTICULARS

- Grace and compassion are a fundamental part of God's nature; although He cannot tolerate sin, the greatness of His love/mercy to every part of His Creation restrains His righteous anger.
- God's attributes of grace/compassion/love/mercy, far from diminishing His glory/might/power/splendour, enhance it.
- God's "saints" are those being made "gracious/holy" by Him. They, above all, will want to tell the whole world about Him.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Why can't world leaders today see that just acting tough and abusing military and financial power does not win men's hearts?

DAY 13 *The LORD is faithful*

THE PASSAGE PSALM 145:13B-16

THE POINT (Psalm 145 is an acrostic poem, each verse starting with consecutive letters. In the traditional Hebrew text the letter 'N' is missing from this pattern, but other reliable texts include an 'N' verse – verse '13b' in the RSV, NIV, etc, but missing from KJV.) Following on from God's grace and compassion is His faithfulness to all His promises so that we can depend on Him to remain true to the eternal covenant He has made with His elect people.

THE PARTICULARS

- The NIV words "love"(8), "saints"(10) and "loving"(13b, 17) all come from the same Hebrew root word meaning love/mercy/grace/kindness/holiness/piety [KJV translates it "mercy" (8) and "holy" (17)]. It is one of the attributes of the LORD that marks Him off from all others, and that moved Him to send Jesus to die.
- God always keeps His word. It is this faithfulness, combined with His love/mercy, that assures His elect that the sin that trips them up and makes them feel ashamed has been dealt with.
- His faithfulness also guarantees to His people the adequate supply of food, and all their other needs as well.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Are you trusting in God's faithfulness for eternal salvation? Are you trusting in His faithfulness for today's challenges?

DAY 14 *The LORD is righteous*

THE PASSAGE PSALM 145:17-21

THE POINT God can be trusted to keep His word; His faithfulness and love/mercy guarantee the eternal well-being of all who belong to Him. But His goodness must never be just taken for granted (as many do today). He is also righteous. It is His righteousness, combined with the other attributes, that sent Jesus to the cross. Jesus took our place of condemnation at Calvary, and when we turn to Him in repentance and faith our sins are forgiven and we are clothed with the righteousness He had through perfect obedience to His Father's will. Our sins are transferred to His account; His righteousness is transferred to our account.

THE PARTICULARS

- The Lord answers when we cry out to Him to save us from the consequences of sin, but our cry, and our confession of guilt in the presence of a holy God, must be sincere. This is what is implied in "call on Him in truth" (18) and "fear Him" (19).
- His righteousness is further emphasised by the fact that He will not only save and protect all who cry out to Him, but will finally destroy all who choose to remain in their wicked condition.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Does the reality of your salvation by God's grace move you to speak in praise of Him to others? Whom will you tell today?

DAY 15

Hallelujah!

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 146:1-10

THE POINT So far this month we have sat with David as he poured out his heart to his God in prayer. His prayers for help have also been full of praise to the LORD in whom he placed all his confidence. The remaining five psalms of the Psalter are not attributed to David in the title but they could well have been written by him. Each begins and ends with the Hebrew command “Hallelu-jah” or “Praise the LORD” and in between they give many reasons why.

THE PARTICULARS

- The psalmist calls on us to join him in total praise to the LORD.
- There is no point in putting our trust in even the most important of men because, like everyone else, they too will come to nought.
- Our only reliable hope is in the God of the Bible, the LORD who has revealed himself in Creation and through His personal covenant dealings in history with His chosen people, such as Jacob.
- We know Him by His faithfulness, His concern for the victims of poverty and oppression, His power to heal the sick and give hope to the broken-hearted, His protection of the refugee and the vulnerable, His command over evil powers. We know Him as Jesus!

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- For which of the things listed in Psalm 146 can you give praise to God today ... in a physical sense? ... in a spiritual sense?

DAY 16

How fitting to praise God

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 147:1-11

THE POINT Much of what we do when we come together each Lord’s Day focusses on what we can do for God and how we can give expression to our gifts, rather than on how great He is and on how much we depend on Him, and how grateful we are, for what He did/does for us. Psalm 147 helps us to restore some balance.

THE PARTICULARS

- Because we are made in God’s image, praising Him should be the most natural and enjoyable thing we ever do. It is only our sinful nature that makes us feel otherwise and enjoy other things more.
- The Lord has a covenant concern for the health and growth of His Church (Israel in the OT) – and for its unity.
- The span of the Lord’s concern for His Creation stretches from the hurting, broken-hearted sinner on earth to the farthest star!
- God’s Universe is testimony of His infinite power and wisdom; but He is also personally concerned for the humble person who bows before Him in awe and wonder, trusting in His love/mercy.
- God is more pleased with a joyful, grateful, singing heart that responds to His abundant, gracious provision, than with a proud heart that focusses on its own abilities and achievements.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- What has God done for you recently? Have you thanked him?

DAY 17

God cares for His church

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 147:12-20

THE POINT Jerusalem/Zion/Israel are all OT names for the body of God’s elect people, His Church. All the OT promises He gave to Israel as eternal promises are now the inheritance of the Church. What God did for His ancient people through the out-working of His covenant love and grace, He is now doing for His Church, the Body of Christ, the Elect whom He has redeemed with the blood of Christ. We come into God’s Kingdom individually through faith in Christ, but having come, we have our true identity as part of His Church. It is through the Church that God operates.

THE PARTICULARS

- We come together as a body each Lord’s Day to extol our God.
- God is especially careful for all the needs of His Church: its security and peace, its daily welfare and provision (cf Matt. 16:18).
- God controls even the weather in the interests of His Church.
- God has entrusted His revealed Word to His Church. This is a great privilege, but also carries great responsibility on the Church to interpret it correctly, to uphold its truth, and to make it known so that others might be brought under its authority.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Has our society’s emphasis on the individual’s identity, rights and privileges drawn us away from how God sees His Church?

DAY 18

Praise the Creator

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 148:1-14

THE POINT Psalm 148 is a hymn of praise based on Genesis 1. The psalmist is in no doubt that the clear evidence of the wonder of Creation should cause every part of it, including and especially all of Mankind who are made in His image, to respond in unabated praise. Sadly, we are allowing the continuing secularisation of our society which searches for beginnings, purpose and meaning without reference to a personal Creator-God who has revealed himself in both the Creation and in the Bible (Psalm 19), to rob us of the joy of unashamed outbursts of praise like in this psalm.

THE PARTICULARS

- The extent, the diversity, the grandeur, the majesty, the beauty, the simplicity and the complexity of Creation are themselves a form of praise to God; it seems that it is only modern Man who is lagging behind in recognising this very obvious truth.
- Creation is firmly established by God’s eternal and covenantal decree. It cannot cease to exist – but we do look forward to its renewal in the New Creation (see Matt. 19:28; Revelation 21).
- No human being is exempted from the obligation to praise God.
- Christ the Saviour is an integral part of the Creator’s Plan (14).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Have you become secularised in your thinking about creation?

DAY 19

Victory song (and dance!?)

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 149:1-9

THE POINT God’s chosen people, His saints, will share in the victory celebration on the Last Day. But the victory has already been won by Christ’s death and resurrection, so there is a sense in which we are able already to sing a new song, even in the midst of our present struggle where so much seems to be against us. Even the saints in heaven are longing for that final victory (Rev. 6:9-11)!

THE PARTICULARS

- The people of God are called together to praise God because He is the one who made them, the one who established a covenant with them (the LORD), and the one who rules and protects them.
- Praise should always involve our whole being and not just our heads. There are times when it might even erupt into dancing!
- God saves us because He delights in us. We are prone to forget that the Church is Christ’s Bride, with all that that means!
- God’s saving grace inverts the whole world order – the humble become conquering kings, the great and powerful are finally and inescapably brought to justice, God’s people rejoice in victory.
- Our deeds are written down in a record against us.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Do we get excited about our salvation when we come together for worship? How could we be more joyful? What are the pitfalls?

DAY 20

An orchestra of praise

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 150:1-6

THE POINT Psalm 150 is only 37 words in Hebrew – and over 1/3 of them (13) are the command “hallelu” (“all of you, praise”). In fact, there’s no other verb! It is a very fitting final psalm as it calls on every created person and thing to praise their Creator in every possible way, in every possible place, because of who He is.

THE PARTICULARS

- It is appropriate to praise God in ourselves (“your body is a temple [sanctuary] of the Holy Spirit”- 1 Corinthians 6:19), together in a place where we specially meet for worship, and with all the heavenly beings in any corner of the Universe. “His glory fills the universe; His praise must do no less.”-Kidner
- We are to praise Him, both for what He does, and for who He is.
- The full range of musical instruments is listed as being appropriate for praising God. We are left to decide which ones are more appropriate under what circumstances so that they serve as an aid to focussing on God, and not a self-glorifying distraction!
- Verse 6 seems to imply that one reason God gave us breath was to use it to praise Him!

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Are there things in your life that might be a waste of breath?



Across Australia

A friendly feed

The Park Patrol (NSW) is celebrating its 18th year of operation. It is a food distribution program for homeless people in Sydney. More than 60 volunteers every month cut sandwiches and on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday nights they are distributed, along with socks, handkerchiefs, gloves, scarves, beanies (provided by PWA branches throughout NSW) as well as paperback books, pocket Bibles and Scripture verse cards. Special patrols at Christmas and Easter time give out gifts, sweets and a printed gospel message.

Outback support

A new Christian organisation called Spinifex Ministries has been launched.

Staffed by Phil and Cathy Stuart from the Westminister Presbyterian Church in Perth, its aim is to provide support and help to further the work of Jesus Christ in the outback and country areas of Australia by assisting, relieving and giving evangelical missionaries, full-time Christian worker and churches, pastoral care and/or building and property maintenance. The Stuarts can be contacted on spinifexministries@bigpond.com or 0417 983 385.

New NSW moderator

Rev. Dr Paul Logan, the clerk of the General Assembly of Australia and the Presbyterian Church of NSW has been elected moderator of the PCNSW and will be inducted when the NSW Assembly meets in July.

Moves

Rev. Rod Waterhouse was inducted assistant minister to Rev. Rob White at St John's, Hobart.

Rev. Jim Nocher, who has been the minister of Scots Church, Fremantle, since 1981 has advised the Presbytery of WA of his intension to demit the charge in July 2004.

Rev. Rod McAuliffe, who has been serving as a Defence Force Chaplain in Townsville, has been transferred to Darwin.

Rev. Ross Tucker has accepted a call to the Reservoir (Vic) congregation.

Rev. Paul Cooper was inducted into the Beecroft (NSW) congregation by the Presbytery of Sydney North last month.

Summer school

The Presbyterian Theological College Melbourne held its summer school of theology at the start of February around the theme of trends in Biblical studies and theology. Three full-time staff members took part: **Dr Tony Bird** (NT Commentaries), **Dr Greg Goswell** (Reading OT Narrative) and **Dr Douglas Milne** (The Doctrine of God).

Vale

On 29 January, the well known and much loved organist from the Woolsthorpe (Vic) congregation, **Mrs Mary Bennett**, was tragically killed in a car accident involving a milk tanker. Mary, the mother of APWM missionary **Douglas Bennett**, was widely known. Her late husband **Frank** was an elder in the Woolsthorpe Church. A thanksgiving service led by **Rev. Ian Leach** was held for the life of Mrs Bennett at the Woolsthorpe Church on 4 February.

Anna Sutherland who served for a number of years as a **Christian Witnesses to Israel** missionary in Sydney, died suddenly in Edinburgh on 22 January. Immediately before Miss Sutherland left Australia for Scotland at the end of her ministry in Australia she had been a member of the **Penshurst** (NSW) congregation.

AP has been advised of the death of **Alec Bruce McIntosh** (1930-2003), who served faithfully as an elder and lay preacher at **Ashford** and **Inverell** (NSW).

Jean McInnes (1920-2003) died on 28 December. Miss McInnes was a member of **St Andrew's, Chatswood** (NSW), where she served as secretary of the PWA. She was also a leading figure in the Dorcas Park Patrol.

Thinking bigger

St. Columba's, Castle Hill (Vic), held a congregational think-tank on 7 February at which "the eight quality characteristics of growing churches" were discussed.

Brimming with enthusiasm

The first service of the new **Brimbank Church** in the western suburbs of Melbourne was held on the 22 February at the Mackellar Primary School Gymnasium, Goldsmith Avenue, Delahay. Under the direction of the **Melton** session, the new church plant is being led by **Rev. Peter Owen**, assisted by **Mr Andres Miranda**, who completed his studies at the PTC Melbourne last year. The new outreach is being financed by Melton, the Presbytery of Melbourne West and it is the project charge of the Home Mission Committee.

Students productive

Chatswood (NSW) has three student ministers (**Warren Esdale, Matt Ham, David Powell**) and a student deaconess

THE SOUTH YARRA CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

The SYCCCD is an activity of the South Yarra Presbyterian Church which is located at 621 Punt Road South Yarra in the heart of inner urban Melbourne. In 2004 four Christian Growth Days are planned with guest speakers of international standard. The CGD run from 9:30am to 2:00pm, feature a bring and share lunch and cost \$10 to attend. There is plenty of free, secure parking on site.

SATURDAY 13 MARCH (OT FOCUS)

Alistair McEwen 'The Message of Judges – Then and Now'

SATURDAY 22 MAY (MISSIONS FOCUS)

(Part of the SYPC Missionary Weekend)
Allan Harman 'Covenant and Mission'

SATURDAY 3 JULY (CHURCH HISTORY FOCUS)

(Part of SYPC 150 Anniversary Celebrations)
Peter Barnes 'Robert McGowen'

SATURDAY 11 SEPTEMBER (MINISTRY EQUIPPING FOCUS)

Murray Capill 'Using the Bible in Ministry'

For further information please contact **Stuart Bonnington** on **9867 4637/9874 1007**
melbonn@bigpond.com

(**Nichole Thornborrow**) working in the two congregations that make up the parish this year. They were appointed at the start of 2003 and have contributed greatly to the growth of St Andrew's and St. James.

Prayer group

A monthly prayer group to support the work of **Prescare** (Qld) has commenced at the **Ann Street Church Hall** in central Brisbane between 2 and 3 pm on the last Friday afternoon of the month.

Witness to Israel

The Melbourne Christian Witness to Israel prayer group is meeting during 2004 at the **Glen Huntly PCEA** (cnr Grange Rd and Wattle Ave) on the second Monday night of each month from 7:30pm. For more details, contact 9705 1505.

Double appointment

A congregation drawn from all over Victoria as well as interstate visitors packed the **Sunraysia (Mildura) Presbyterian Church** on 29 January to witness the appointment of **Rev. Michael Willsmore** to the parish and also to the ministry of the **Presbyterian Inland Mission**. Mr Willsmore will work 75 per

cent of the time in the church and 25 per cent for the PIM, patrolling across the Murray in the far south-west of NSW. The appointment marks the latest in a series of important forward steps of the Sunraysia congregation, as it has slowly re-established itself since 1977.

Moving north

Paul and Janae Denness from **Bundoorra** (Vic) congregation have been approved as **APWM Partner Society** missionaries for service with **MAF** in the Northern Territory.

Wyndham welcome

The **Presbytery of Melbourne West** held a service of introduction for new home missionary **Shane Cassidy** to the congregation of **Wyndham Vale** on 11 February.

Perfectly cooked

The **PWMU Centenary Cookbook, 1904-2004** is about to appear in bookshops. A combined committee from the **PWMU** and the **Uniting Church** have worked on this new edition for several years. This revised and enlarged cook book marks the fact that it has been in print for a 100 years, with sales of well over 500,000 copies. It is due to be launched in late April and will be available

in bookshops or at the offices of the **PWMU** office, 156 Collins Street, Melbourne, or the **Uniting Church** office, 130 Little Collins St, Melbourne. The proceeds of the book are divided equally between the two denominations, and the money received by the **PWMU** goes towards scholarships for overseas students to receive theological training at the **PTC**, Melbourne. The expected retail price will be \$24.95.



Around the World

Patmos Centre attacked

The **Egyptian Army** has again attacked the **Christian Patmos Centre**. They blocked the entrance to the compound with a large pile of stones and rubble and then destroyed seven metres of adjoining wall. Workers from the centre rushed to the property to try to protect it. Shortly afterwards a bus ran off the road into the crowd and a staff member, **Kirilos Daoud**, was killed. Also injured was a female Christian worker who was beaten by soldiers.

Barnabas Fund

Gunmen kill pastor

Gunmen have burst into a churchyard in **Isfara** in the north of **Tajikistan** and fired several rounds through a window at **Pastor Sergei Bessarab**, killing him as he knelt in prayer.

A local newspaper had only a week before attacked Bessarab for his outreach work in this staunchly Muslim region. Bessarab's handing out of Christian literature aroused considerable local anger. It seems this was the likely motive for the murder, though police have not yet confirmed this.

Barnabas Fund

Pressure pays off

After being threatened with closure a church in **Karakol**, **Kyrgyzstan** and another one in **Osh** have finally had their applications for registration accepted. The authorities had previously blocked their applications and ordered them to close, but changed their minds due to international pressure.

Forum 18

Patrol Padre: North Queensland Patrol

The present Padre of the North Queensland Patrol will be concluding his ministry in March 2004. The Patrol is currently based in Richmond, North Queensland. Accordingly the PIM Committee invites applications for appointment to this position. The position is a full-time one, with the initial appointment being for four years effective from the 1st March 2004. The Patrol Padre is responsible for taking the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the remote and sparsely populated areas of the Inland. Experience suggests that a more mature man with a fully supportive wife is the best combination for a full-time patrol. Patrol Ministry is not for the person who desires a settled pastorate, rather it is for the practical person who thrives in the Outback and is prepared to get alongside people on isolated and remote properties. Applicants may be Ordained Ministers or Elders of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. Mature members of the Church are invited to apply. Others who are able to subscribe to the doctrines of the Reformed Faith may be considered. Applicants should provide a full CV and the names of three persons from whom a written report evaluating their suitability for this position may be sought.

Applications for this position close on the 1st April 2004. Another position will become available in Western Australia in 2004.

Applications should be marked "Patrol Padre Confidential" and sent to the Secretary PIM, Mr. K. Booker, PO Box 1508 FORTITUDE VALLEY QLD 4006.

No Christians allowed

In January an Islamic militant group in Mogadishu, Somalia issued a statement affirming that Somalia is 100 per cent Islamic, that no other religion can be propagated in the country and that no Christians can hold any position in the government.

Barnabas Fund

Indonesian elections

Democracy is still a recent concept for Indonesians. Free elections in 1999, after the fall of President Suharto, were the first in 44 years. This year the electorate will vote to fill 16,000 seats in national, provincial and district legislatures on 5 April. The presidential election will be held on 5 July, for which only parties which have won at least 3 per cent of the April vote will be able to field candidates. In the likely scenario that no candidate gains over 50 per cent of the July votes, a final poll on 20 September will decide between the two most popular candidates.

Political pressure is being applied by Islamist parties. After the Bali bombing, Muslim militants were forced to restrict their activities and many shifted tactics to campaigning in the political sphere. The **Islamist United Development Party** is already the third largest party and, along with the **Crescent Star Party**, it has made calls in the Indonesian parliament for the introduction of sharia (Islamic law). **Vice President Hamzah Haz** is also pro-sharia. Politicians with an Islamic agenda have seen success with the passing of the Education Act and are currently seeking to introduce a Religious Tolerance Bill which would restrict church building and conversions from one faith to another.

At a regional level sharia has already been introduced in Aceh Province and the authorities in Makassar, South Sulawesi, are considering following suit. Likewise the local government in West Sumatra has considered requests for such action from the United Development Party.

WEA Religious Liberty

Protestants watched

Eritrea's outlawed Protestants confirmed this week that their neighbours are being hired to report to security agents any gatherings of evangelical believers in their communities. Police "spies" are rewarded with special benefits, including exemption from military service and allotments of sugar and flour. Since May 2002,

when the government ordered Eritrea's 12 independent Pentecostal and charismatic churches closed, their 20,000 members have gathered secretly in small groups in private homes. Hundreds have been arrested for holding worship services, possessing Bibles or witnessing about their faith.

Currently at least 286 Eritrean evangelicals are known to be imprisoned in nine different locations in the country. Protestant pastors say the Department of Religious Affairs has made no progress toward the official registration of their churches.

Compass

Iraq backs sharia

The **Iraqi Governing Council** has voted to replace the country's civil family laws with Islamic Sharia Law.

The *Washington Post* has reported: "For four decades, Iraqi women have enjoyed some of the most modern legal protections in the Muslim world, under a civil code that prohibits marriage below the age of 18, arbitrary divorce or male favouritism in child custody and property disputes. Saddam Hussein did not touch those rights. But the US-backed Iraqi Governing Council has voted to wipe them out, ordering that family laws shall be "cancelled" and such issues placed under the jurisdiction of strict Islamic legal law or sharia.

"The order, narrowly approved by the 25-member council in a closed-door session on 29 December, was reportedly sponsored by conservative Shiites. The

order is being opposed by several liberal members and senior women in the Government."

LA Times staff reporter Alissa J. Rubin, comments that "the measure would shift women's fates from the hands of judges to those of clerics, most likely chosen by their husbands, who may have little commitment to protecting their rights.

WEA Religious Liberty

Mandaeans killed

The **Sabaeen Mandaean Association of Australia** reports that last December **Rafid Al-Khamisy**, a Mandaean, was confronted by Muslims in front of a number of people in Baghdad. They demanded that he convert to Islam. He refused, and the Muslims then killed him in front of the others who were present.

In January the Mandaeans said that in Falluja alone 35 Mandaean families have been forcibly converted to Islam. (Mandaeans follow the teachings and practice of John the Baptist.) This also involves forced circumcision. The Mandaean women and girls of these families have been forcibly married to Muslim men chosen by the Muslims. The suffering that has been inflicted is incalculable.

"It has also been reported to us (Mandaeans) that a group of Muslim men seized a seven-year-old Mandaean boy, doused him in petrol and set him alight. As the child was being burnt to death the Muslims were running around shouting, 'Burn the dirty infidel!'

WEA Religious Liberty

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On the Agenda

Keeping score

By Barney Zwartz

Melbourne handles interfaith issues much better than Sydney, due largely to the attitudes of its religious leaders, an international conference on Muslim-Christian relations in Melbourne was told last month.

Professor Gary Bouma, deputy vice chancellor of Melbourne's Monash University, said: "Melbourne has enjoyed largely productive interfaith relations characterised by mutual respect and a readiness to listen before reacting." But "the Melbourne story of productive, mutual respect-based interfaith harmony is not repeated in Sydney".

Professor Bouma's report was based on a series of community studies across Australia in 2002.

He said Melbourne leaders provided positive leadership to the religious realities of multicultural Australia in the 1980s, praising Anglican Archbishop David Penman, Catholic Archbishop Frank Little, Rabbi John Levi and especially

Sheik Fehmi of Preston Mosque. "The leadership of Sheik Fehmi has been critical in the emergence of a substantial Muslim community in Melbourne," he said.

When he mentioned Sydney to Sheik Fehmi in a recent interview, the imam's face fell "as he reported that 'Sydney imams will not consult with us in Melbourne. They are at each other's throats'," Professor Bouma said.

Internal conflict relating to the Islamic Council of New South Wales and the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils showed a "much more contentious style of leadership which has long characterised these Muslim organisations".

However, Sydney's churches also scored poorly. There, Professor Bouma said, "the larger Christian environment is less inclined to be friendly to each other and to other faiths".

Professor Bouma, who is also an Anglican priest, said Sydney Anglicans regularly refused to meet many other Christians, let alone Muslims. Sydney Catholics were similarly "hard-edged".

However, these differences did not simply reflect religious leadership, but also the socio-cultural context. Levels of racism seemed higher in Sydney than Melbourne.

Professor Bouma said a senior medical

educator told him such differences were equally true of medical researchers. "He claims that there is comparatively little cooperative collaboration in Sydney while it abounds in Melbourne."

It was also true in Labor politics, with Labor in Melbourne cooler, more cerebral and reflective, while Sydney Labor was "less ideological, more blue collar and behaving like street fighters".

This article is reprinted from The Age.

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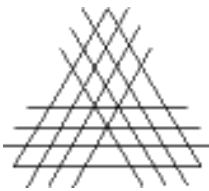


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Education for life

The church must seize its chance to reach school children.

Church-goers and the clergy who lead them by now have made lots of good plans for 2004. How many churches enrich the wellbeing of children and young people in school communities? Few school-age children and young people appear in church, yet they are at school and are open to the good news of Jesus Christ – especially pre-school and primary children. Some do not receive a lot of unconditional love from adults – which is where Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers excel.

CRE opens a door into the lives of generations of children and their families. In a recent study, 50 per cent of Australians traced their awareness of the Christian tradition to school days (as opposed to Sunday School, worship or youth fellowship).

The Council for Christian Education in Schools represents 12 mainline Protestant denominations, with a unique parliamentary charter to provide CRE in Victorian schools. If the council were able to cover all classes in Victorian primary schools – through its agreed syllabus *Religion in Life* and its accredited teachers – then principals would have to allow normal class time for the weekly program. I invite readers to see that CRE becomes one of their church's top missionary priorities for 2004. We need 5000 more teachers!

And though this article deals with Victoria, the need is great in the rest of Australia.

If the trend continues, only 40 per cent of primary state school children in Victoria will receive religious education by 2010. In 1998, 166,669 children were covered, or 54 per cent of total enrolments. Towards the end of 2003, only 152,698 received CRE (47.8 per cent). Over the same period, total enrolments increased by 11,000. And coverage is uneven, with the west, north and south particularly struggling: in the west we reach 14 per cent, north 20 per cent, and south 38 per cent. Goulburn-North Eastern Victoria is the least covered rural region, with 54 per cent.

There are 320,000 children in state primary schools, but only 47 per cent of

them in 2003 received the vital grounding in Christian faith and morality that CRE offers. This trend has serious implications for the personal and social wellbeing of Victorians. Yet recently, the Governor-General made a strong plea for an increase in moral and religious education in schools.

Each Christian community has a critical responsibility to invest in the health and resilience of young lives. Parents and education authorities seem to be more open than ever to community support and involvement – especially in areas such as spiritual and moral development. God is more interested in the importance a congregation attaches – reflected through budgets and programs – to sharing Christ with children, young people and families in its neighbourhood, than in self-serving pro-

**Neville
Carr**

*There is
an awesome
challenge
therefore for
the Christian
community.*

grammes with little or no impact on local communities and on the broader missionary context.

Jesus loves children and calls adults to account for their spiritual, moral, intellectual, emotional and physical development. Most parents today have no grounding in the Christian faith. What they pass on to their own children is filtered through a secular humanist worldview. The media adds its own alluring message of immediate self-gratification, consumerism and individualism. There is an awesome challenge therefore for the Christian community to invest heavily in the spiritual and moral development of children, many of whom are like rudderless boats on a river heading towards rapids.

I urge Christians and especially pastors in Victoria, to make every effort to get behind CRE – as teachers themselves perhaps, or as babysitters for teachers, as recruiters and prayer partners. The growth of our ageing churches and the wellbeing of our godless nation depend, among other factors, on our passion for communicating the Good News to children and youth, and on nurturing them in the Christian faith and righteousness.

Neville Carr is chief executive of the Victorian Council for Christian Education in Schools.

ap

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Movie Watch

The Passion of the Christ

Reviewed by Luke Tattersall

Mel Gibson's latest film *The Passion of the Christ* is drawing praise from all directions. The movie is being hailed as a masterpiece by Church leaders across the globe. The promotional material for the film has endorsements from Billy Graham, the Pope, Brian Houston (Hillsong, Sydney), Rick Warren (Saddleback, California), Glen Davies (Anglican Bishop, Sydney) and James Dobson (Focus on the Family), among others.

All these glowing endorsements leave me feeling a little awkward about criticising the film – but I have to say that I am not as enthusiastic about the movie as others appear to be.

Let me start by saying that there was much about the film that was praiseworthy. The acting is brilliant. The cinematography is breath-taking. And I think Gibson made the right choice in having it in the original languages. It gives a depth to the film that would have been lost with English or American accents. The whole package gives you the feel that this is what it would have been like. The characters are believable and real.

Gibson claims that he wanted to be "faithful to the Gospels". I suppose to a degree he has been. There is much that is simply taken from the Gospel accounts. A considerable amount of the dialogue is just the text of scripture. The sequence of events is largely faithful to the Gospel accounts.

Most of my discomfort with the film comes from the points where it departs from, or goes beyond, the original text. Sadly, my criticisms of the film slightly outweigh the positive aspects.

The first thing that strikes you about the film (and everyone comments on it) is the violence, which I found overdone. I didn't put a stopwatch on it, but I'm sure you'd find 30 per cent of the film – maybe more – was devoted to the punching, beating, flogging, whipping and scourging of Jesus. And that's before we even make it to the crucifixion. Gibson's Christ was beaten by the Jewish and Roman guards almost every step of the way from the Garden of Gethsemane to the cross; he was dropped off a bridge while bound and chained; and when he was finally nailed to



Gibson has tried to do something in the film that the Gospel writers don't do: He has dwelt on the violence.

the cross, in sheer spite the executioners turn the cross over twice with Jesus nailed to it. This is graphic violence that has no warrant in scripture. In fact, unlike the movie, the gospel writers don't dwell on the violence against Jesus at all. Yes, they say Jesus was beaten. Yes, he was flogged at Pilate's instigation. I never imagined the events to be without violence – but this seemed to take it far beyond anything you could have imagined given the accounts we have. (And at the very least, beyond what the gospel writers intended us to bring to mind.)

The arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane features a drawn out fight scene in Gibson's film. In contrast, in the Gospels it is limited to one blow with the sword.

The flogging and scourging scene is undoubtedly the most graphic in the movie. This is not for the faint-hearted – you see the flesh literally being ripped from Jesus' back. From what we can

understand, flogging in the Roman Empire at that time was a brutal thing. But again, a scene that lasts more than a few minutes in the movie is dealt with in a few words by the Gospel writers.

Gibson has tried to do something in the film that the Gospel writers don't do: He has dwelt on the violence. The Gospel writers all focus on the crucifixion of Jesus – but not in a bid to make us sympathetic to Jesus. They focus on it because it is the culmination of the work of Jesus.

People are praising the film because it is biblically accurate. And much of it is. My rough guess would be that maybe as much as 70 per cent of the film was simply taken from the text of the Gospels. The problem lies in the other 30 per cent.

A lot of what takes place in the film has no basis in scripture:

- Satan in the garden of Gethsemane speaking to Jesus and making regular appearance as Jesus moves toward Golgotha.
- Jesus crushing the serpent in the garden of Gethsemane.
- Jesus working as a carpenter.
- The Holy Spirit appearing as a dove at the trial.
- Mary speaking to Jesus as he carried the cross.
- Veronica giving Jesus a cloth to wipe his face as he carries his cross (Veronica is considered a saint in Catholic tradition).
- Pilate's wife (Claudia Proclua – considered to be a saint in Orthodox and Coptic tradition) taking a gift to Mary.
- The raven pecking at the head of the thief.
- The names given to those on the Cross (Gesmas and Dismas – Dismas, the Good Thief, is also a saint in Catholic tradition).
- Judas being tormented by children/demons before killing himself.
- Mary mopping up the blood after Jesus has been flogged.
- Not to mention the acts of violence noted above.

Before seeing the movie, a number of people told me that it made the Gospel message clear. But even at that point, I have to disagree.

Yes, we did have the text of Isaiah 53:5 on the screen at the beginning. There were a few other Bible references thrown in – a flashback to the Last Supper, Jesus making the statement about laying down his life for his friends. But I have to say that I don't think a non-believer would walk out of *The Passion* with a clear understanding of why Jesus had died. The idea of sin is not clearly defined. And I certainly don't

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think that it makes clear that the penalty for my sin and the sin of the world is paid for in the death of Jesus.

Those who walk into the movie with a clear understanding of the gospel message will be able to see the message – but you need to have that clear grasp of the Gospel to begin with.

To understand the Jesus who died on the cross, I need a context. I need to understand his life, read the accounts of his miracles, hear the power and authority of his teaching. When Christians watch a movie about the last 12 hours of the life of Jesus we already have in mind the 33 years of his life. More than that, we have in mind the plan of salvation that God put into place in the pages of Genesis.

In fact, in the “Study Guide” material provided by the Bible Society to be used in conjunction with the movie there is a quiz – 29 multiple choice questions. If you score less than 17 they say “you are unlikely to understand what is happening in this film unless you work through all the introductory activities”. The

“Introductory Activities” take you through the significant Christian beliefs about Jesus. They acknowledge that without that background you won’t understand what is happening. Eric Reed, Managing Editor of *Leadership Magazine* put it this way: “Gibson has done a masterful job of showing the “how” of the crucifixion; more than I ever wanted to know, frankly. But it will be up to Christians and pastors and small groups in subsequent conversations with their friends to answer “why”.

So should you go and see this film? Should you encourage your non-Christian friends to see it? Should you have a screening of the film as an outreach event in your church?

I suppose I would encourage



Christians to see the film – but primarily so they can talk about it intelligently when conversation comes up. There is certainly nothing in the film that is overly offensive or blasphemous – though you do need to be ready for the violence.

But I don’t think I would be encouraging my non-Christian friends to see it. If they do choose to see it I am sure we could generate some useful discussion. One of the difficulties in discussion will be the elements of the movie that aren’t biblical. How do you help them differentiate what is biblical and what is not?

I think I would rather encourage my non-Christian friends to read the book. The old adage was never more true than it is in this case: the book is much better than the movie. The place that God has revealed himself to us clearly is in his word. *The Passion* is certainly among the better “Jesus films”. But in the end I suppose I wonder if we should be making a film at all.

Luke Tattersall ministers at Parramatta City Presbyterian Church. 

The Passion of the Christ: A second view

By Peter Hastie

About a year ago I had the opportunity to visit the Philadelphia Art Museum which has, among other displays, one of the finest Christian art collections in the world. The collection spans almost 2000 years of artistic expression. What struck me most, apart from the brilliance of its paintings, was the different use of artistic imagination to recreate the biblical stories.

When an artist is working with a medium other than words, imagination plays a large part in giving visual expression to the history that underlies the story. The same is true with film, only more so. When a director decides to add sight and sound to a bare text, informed imagination will inevitably play a significant role. And it certainly does in *The Passion*. The question is: is Gibson’s imagination consistent with the text? On that score I think Gibson has stayed fairly close to the gospels. While some will protest that his recreation of the passion story contains a few ideas of 18th

century Catholic mystical writer and nun Anne Catherine Emmerich, Gibson by no means slavishly follows her works. I get the impression that he has tried hard to be faithful to Scripture. If he occasionally strays beyond the bounds, I am prepared to cut him some slack on the basis that, as a film director, he can be given a little artistic license in trying to breathe as much reality into the work as possible.

However, let’s not get hung-up on Gibson’s use of imagination. The main game, as far as he is concerned, is interpretation. He says: “Making this film is the most difficult thing that I have ever done.” The film itself is the result of Gibson’s intense theological reflection on Scripture. “This is not meant as an historical documentary”, he adds, “I think of it as contemplative in the sense that one is impelled to remember it in a spiritual way.” This explains why he concentrates on the last 12 hours in Christ’s life. For him it provides the key to understanding Jesus: “This is the most intense part of the Gospel account. I mean it’s our belief that by the sin of the first people, original sin, that the gates were closed to us, to eternal life, and that his sacrifice as redeemer of mankind was to open the

gates to all of us again.”

The whole of the film is controlled through the interpretive grid of Old Testament prophecy and symbolism – from Gibson’s skilful manipulation of light and darkness in the style of the Italian artist, Caravaggio, to emphasize the clash of the cosmic forces of good and evil as well as his subtle introduction of the serpent in Gethsemane where Christ crushes him underfoot. Again, the film begins against the backdrop of the suffering servant of Isaiah 53. Gibson’s repeated flashbacks to other events in the gospels drives the point home that Christ’s death is unlike any other: it is a death for sin.

For me, the most confronting part of the movie is the way Gibson carefully manipulates each scene to force the viewer to make a choice. The world is divided and polarized. Will we side with Christ or his enemies? Will we believe that he was wounded for our transgressions, or will we despise him?

If you go to the movies to relax, this is not a movie for you. The violence at points made me grimace. I was speechless after the film for more than an hour. But it did help me to appreciate the price Christ paid for my redemption.



Letters

Capitalism's fangs

There is a generation whose teeth are like swords, and whose fangs are like knives, to devour the poor from off the earth and the needy from among men" (Pr. 30:14). And guess what? We're it! The article "A capital idea" (*AP*, February) is a sad indictment of the materialistic Western church and totally ignores the fact that the current economic system favours the rich and not the poor.

Australia is blessed with a prosperity and equality that hasn't come from "true capitalism" but left-leaning socialist Labour governments, the legacies of which, free education and health, are rapidly being destroyed as we attempt to ape a patently anti-egalitarian US system, where only the rich can afford health care, education and a political voice.

Rather than trying to promote "true capitalism" Christians should be warning of the dangers of greed and covetousness, the engines of capitalism. Governments are headed by people and those people need to encourage mercy on the poor and discourage greed: "Mercy and truth preserve the king and by loving-kindness he upholds his throne" (Pr. 20:28). In stark contrast "Christian" leaders of the current free-market system enforce inequality, giving a pittance in aid with one hand (usually tied to defence or trade contracts) and taking liberally with the other, through protective tariffs, cheap labour and debt collecting in the developing world. Arton-Powell implies that welfare recipients in Australia are lazy, ignoring the fact that many of their jobs have flown to cheaper markets.

We are told that a Christian worldview will look to the Bible for guidelines on economics, but many of the clearest ones are ignored in the article. Is this

because they are so unpalatable to Western Christians? Rather than emulating Jesus (nowhere to lay his head), the disciples (given up everything to follow him), or the NT church (having all things in common – true capitalism or true socialism?), they look to the lifestyles of Abraham and Solomon for their economic model.

Perhaps most significant is the biblical ban on interest. The biblical injunctions against usury are frequent (Dt. 23:19, Neh. 5:7-15, Lk. 6:35) but passed over in an unembarrassed silence by Christians. We have to face the fact that our banks are quite legally keeping us rich and hundreds of millions of people poor, our multinationals are quite legally making monstrous profits (Exxon-Mobil: US\$17 billion – a world record this year) at the expense of the Third World and our own labour markets. Legal but unjust. We need a Christian worldview that sees this and then acts accordingly.

*Kester Scandrett
Hobart, Tas*

An unbiblical distinction

I'm certainly no socialist, and I believe that those Christians who substitute social action for the gospel are mistaken. However, I found John Arton-Powell's article rather unconvincing at many points. It seemed to be merely a glowing and uncritical endorsement of the books by Nash and Beisner – books that seem to use some rather dubious proof texting to give biblical endorsement to the fundamentals of the existing American economic system, a system that is fundamentally inconsistent. It insists on a free economic system within the USA yet, as the recent Free Trade Agreement has highlighted, equally insists on strict US government control and isolationism when it comes to imports from other countries that makes a world-wide free market impossible.

Arton-Powell uncritically accepts ideas such as "the biblical notion of lim-

ited civil government". Where does the bible prescribe the economic limitations of government? I see it defining the moral duties of government, in terms of ruling justly and wisely and punishing those who do wrong, etc. But the socialist-capitalist debate is simply not the bible's agenda.

Neither did the article adequately define terms. What exactly is a Socialist government? Is Australia a socialist country? The article equivocated over that question. How much "increased government control in a nation's economic agenda" constitutes socialism, and are all those who "call for" it automatically Marxist or socialist? Surely that is relative – in a completely laissez faire plutocracy effectively ruled by corrupt moguls and/or the army (such as Indonesia, perhaps?) it would be more than just Marxists who would be calling for government intervention. Were the 18th and 19th century evangelicals socialists because they called for governments to do something about the plight of the London poor, the children working in mills and as chimney sweeps, or the millions of Scottish and Irish starving in Clearances and potato famines? No, calling for more government intervention is not *always* a measure of socialist-Marxist leanings. It depends on the historical situation.

Both capitalism and communism fail to deal adequately with the fallen human condition. Arton-Powell concludes his article with "The reality is that all current economic systems fall short of God's standard for a moral and practically efficient outcome in the way in which we use the resources we have been given for the benefit of all." If only this conclusion reflected the tone of the rest of the article I would have wholeheartedly agreed, but it doesn't.

*Greg Munro
Scottsdale, Tas*

A capital article

It was with delight that I read, amongst many other excellent contributions, the article titled "A capital idea".

I enjoyed the refreshingly balanced and common sense approach to modern economics. But most of all I appreciated the clear insight into Christian/biblical views of economics that came through, a subject that can be completely obscured by the socialist drift of the "vox populi" of our day.

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The article was a worthy contribution to last month's welcome theme of Christian worldview.

It did occur to me that this article would be "well placed" in the hands of this nation's treasurer if permission were to be granted by the author.

*Pastor Bryan Crawford,
East Devonport, Tas*

Unfettered twaddle

Ronald Nash, a critic of postmodernism, should apply some postmodern deconstruction to his own economic analysis (quoted by John Arton-Powell, *AP*, February). It might help him see how much his advocacy for capitalism depends on the cultural and historical assumptions of modern America.

He talks of a Christian economic system, but no such system exists. Injustice flourishes under both unfettered socialism and unfettered capitalism alike.

His texts in support of limited government are extremely weak: Acts 5:29, where Peter is defying the Sanhedrin's attempt to ban the Gospel, and 1 Cor. 6:2, "the saints will judge the world". Yet, strangely, he omits Romans 13:1 ("everyone must submit to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established"), which – applying the same broad interpretation – could be taken as an argument for socialism.

Nash says it is impossible for socialism to bring justice; capitalism could, but has always been hindered by regulation and government intervention. Post-war China provides some argument against the first claim; as for the second, we've seen unfettered capitalism, for example, in industrial revolution England, with child-labour, workhouses and appalling poverty. Its excesses were eradicated by Christian efforts.

Nash (or Arton-Powell) seems appalled that a welfare state helps an underserving poor who are content to suck at the public teat and show no initiative, but is not in the slightest concerned about the rich who inherit wealth and do nothing to earn it. Arton-Powell claims the welfare state has led to moral disintegration: this is a big claim. I would have thought that, if we are indeed disintegrating, secular materialism and the postmodernist attack on absolutes, among other factors, shared some blame.

This letter, however, is by no means in support of socialism. The Christian view

of man makes it obvious that nothing can be unfettered, whether government control or the market. A mixed market-interventionist economic system, such as we have in Australia, is the best hope.

*Morag Zwartz
Ferntree Gully, Vic*

Love in deed

I was perturbed by the article by John Arton-Powell. In discussing the arguments of R. Nash and Beisner, he then offers no further options for Christians. Does he really believe Nash's assertion that capitalism is the "superior economic system"? Surely as Christians every area of our lives is to be transformed; we are called to display a radically new set of rules to our every thought and action. Our viewpoint on money should be so radical that we stand out and point to another worldview altogether – where the power of sin is broken and we are free from the selfishness, economic oppression and structural injustice so prevalent in our world.

"Whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:17-18).

*Moire Daniel,
Kettering, Tas*

Mental Conflict

Colin Young (*AP*, October) takes issue with Cheryl Willis (*AP*, June) about demon possession and mental illness. I don't know whether the person Cheryl saw was possessed, but I do grant the possibility that she may have been right.

As a social worker in a psychiatric ward, I too constantly work with people who are deemed to suffer from mental illness (which is different from "intellectual disability", a distinction Colin Young doesn't make).

I wouldn't by any means label all cases of madness as "demon possession" (since people can lose their sanity for a variety of reasons – trauma, abuse, chemical/physiological processes etc.), but at the same time I do believe that some people are genuinely spiritually oppressed.

The wonder of modern psychiatry is that it can intercept with medication (or even electric shock therapy) the chemical processes that occur in our brains which

accompany our psychological experiences. And thus the amazing management of illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorders, and even depression. However, it would be wrong to therefore conclude that all experiences are merely chemical or biological in nature or origin.

The psychiatric paradigm totally excludes the possibility of any spiritual explanations. I imagine that if a modern psychiatrist went to the Palestine of Jesus' day, he/she would label all the demon-possessed of the day as suffering from schizophrenia, Tourette's, multiple-personality disorder etc (since he assumes there can be no spiritual explanations).

Do we therefore reframe the Bible in the light of modern knowledge (which seems to be Young's suggestion)? If so, Christianity itself would now need to be discarded as even its most basic teaching is challenged by modern knowledge – for instance, what has traditionally been called as sin can now be redefined as psychiatric disorders – to be treated with the chemical strait jacket. The possibility of spiritual explanations for some people's mental illnesses should not therefore be excluded.

*Cecilia Heo,
Toongabbie, NSW*

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prayer

MARCH 2004

- 21 Stewart and Enid Mawson APWM (Australian Presbyterian World Mission) from Burwood NSW serving with WEC International.
- 22 Presbytery of Canberra 6 parishes and 4 home mission stations totaling 20 congregations with about 1525 c&a (communicants and adherents); 6 retired ministers; Peter Davidson clerk. Richard and Lynette Vaughan in Norman Park parish with about 30 c&a, 5 yf, (younger folk – children and youth), and 3 e (elders) and Bruce Lowe starting work in Coorparoo parish including Macgregor with about 100 c&a, 20 yf and 5 e.
- 24 Sami and Samia Gerges in his “exit appointment” (after completing theological studies) in the Arabic Merrylands parish western Sydney with about 225 c&a, 130 yf, and 5 e with Hamdy Awad.
- 25 Michael and Yvonne Willsmore commencing work in the Sunraysia (Mildura) Vic. parish with about 40 c&a, 7 yf, and 2 e and Presbyterian Inland Mission patrol work in the area.
- 26 Wally and Robyn Johnson starting ministry in Balranald home mission station NSW (up the road from Mildura) with about 40 c&a, 25 yf, and 4 e.
- 27 West Toowoomba parish with about 240 c&a, 100 yf, and 7 e; Roland and Betty Sondergeld, Ross Turner and Dan and Verena Bosshard.
- 28 Barbara Sayers APWM worker from Gordonvale, north Qld who continues her interest in aboriginal ministry after serving for many years with Wycliffe Bible Translators.
- 29 John and Denise Dickson APWM workers from NSW serving with Pioneers in Chiang Mai, Thailand.
- 30 St Andrews Canberra parish including also Weston Creek with about 680 c&a, 35 yf, and 48 e; Joy and Arnold

Bartholomew.

- 31 Scots Clayfield parish northern Brisbane with about 50 c&a, 12 yf, and 5 e; Andrew Richardson starting ministry .

APRIL

- 1 Presbytery of Bendigo, NW Vic., 4 parishes and 3 home mission stations totaling 10 congregations with about 500 c&a; 1 retired minister; Andrew Clarke clerk.
- 2 Gordon and Leanne Coleman in his exit appointment at Albion Park home mission station south of Sydney including Shellharbour, with about 60 c&a, 10 yf, and 7 e.
- 3 Bill and Bronwyn Gray (formerly with Presbyterian Inland Mission) taking up ministry in Gordonvale-Babinda parish North Queensland with about 45 c&a, 35 yf, and 6 e.
- 4 Pray that many who see the Mel Gibson film *The Passion of the Christ* will be led to search the Scriptures.
- 5 Sue Poynter APWM partner society worker from Canterbury, Melbourne preparing to return to Japan with Overseas Missionary Fellowship; she previously served there with the Presbyterian Church of Japan.
- 6 The Grace Presbyterian Church in New Zealand (nine congregations) formed a year ago: David Bayne, national secretary; and also evangelical congregations remaining in the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand.
- 7 Andrew Bell APWM partner society worker from Bundoora serving short term with Pioneers in Cambodia.
- 8 Tim Harland from Creek Road parish Brisbane working full time as tennis chaplain, and all the 160 chaplains to professional sport in Australia.
- 9 Pray that the message of the Cross will come to many today as the power and wisdom of God to salvation.
- 10 Andres Miranda in his exit appointment as a church planter at Caroline

Springs with Melton parish western Melbourne (about 70 c&a, 25 yf, and 6 e. Peter and Ruth Owen.)

- 11 That people in your area and through the world will this Easter have the joy of knowing the risen Christ.
- 12 Presbytery of Brisbane; 11 parishes totalling about 15 congregations with about 1175 c&a; 1 deaconess, 1 church department head, 1 mission leader, 2 ministerial students, 2 emeritus professors, 3 other retired ministers and 2 under jurisdiction, 1 missionary; Guido Kettmiss clerk.
- 13 Fayek and Samira Iskander APWM partner church workers from Sydney serving there and more widely educating church people in ministering among Muslims, and in broadcasting and chaplaincy.
- 14 The vacant Dungog parish NSW Hunter valley including also Stroud and three other centres with about 135 c&a, 15 yf, and 12 e. Pray for the interim moderator, preachers and filling of the vacancy.
- 15 Ringwood-Heathmont parish eastern Melbourne with about 25 c&a, and 2 e; Andrew and Marilyn Venn.
- 16 Luke and Hae-ja Yoo in his exit appointment at Young Nak Korean parish Telopea, northern Sydney, with about 250 c&a, 90 yf, and 6 e.
- 17 Paul and Janae Denness APWM partner society workers from Bundoora, Vic serving with Missionary Aviation Fellowship in the Northern Territory.
- 18 The Pavement Project of the Scripture Gift Mission as it seeks to reach and counsel street kids in the Philippines, India and South America.
- 19 North Pine parish, Petrie, northern Brisbane with about 80 c&a, 25 yf, and 8 e. Pray for the interim moderator, preachers and filling of the vacancy.
- 20 The vacant Kogarah parish southern Sydney with about 55 c&a, 10 yf, and 8 e. Pray for the interim moderator, preachers and filling of the vacancy.

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Books

Brothers, We Are Not Professionals

John Piper
Fearn: CFP, 2003
Reviewed by Mark Smith

In this book, John Piper addresses the “professionalisation” of Christian ministry. Throughout the book he gives examples of where he believes the church and its pastors have erred in their service to God. The main thrust of his argument comes from what he considers to be a misinterpreting of the biblical exhortation to “do all for the glory of God”. He believes that secular, managerial practices have come into the church to the detriment of the proper practice of the pastor. The issues raised are set in the American culture so the book must be read with that in mind.

Piper devotes a larger chapter to “Blowing the Trumpet for the Unborn”. In this chapter, he makes the point that abortion should be preached against, and that Christians should be made aware of this terrible act and speak against it. Piper does not go far enough in this argument. The church should not only speak against it but should be speaking about the solution(s) it can offer. Love and support to single mums-to-be and counsel to couples considering such a choice are just two areas that the church should be vocal about. In a couple of places, Piper sarcastically questions the use of technology (eg Pocket PCs) by pastors, but elsewhere he refers to his church’s internet site!

In 30 chapters, Piper covers numerous aspects of the pastor’s life and provides some helpful tips and reminders about priorities. The first priority is for God and the making known of His Name. Pastors are to give attention to the preaching of the Word and prayer. Pastors are to serve as Christ Himself served, in a humble and yet authoritative way. The example Piper gives in this regard is that when Jesus was washing the feet of his disciples, there was

no question even then as to who the leader was. Overall, the book is challenging, especially for pastors or those considering full-time ministry. Piper is concerned for the glory of God, and this, too, should be the number one aim of all who seek to serve him.

Mark Smith is a first year student at the PTC Melbourne.

**God & Adam:
Reformed Theology and
The Creation Covenant**

Rowland Ward
New Melbourne Press, 2003
Reviewed by Darren Middleton

In this small and easy to read monograph Rowland Ward will no doubt introduce some and remind others of the riches of Covenant theology, and in particular the reformed teaching concerning the Covenant of Works.

Conscious of the ambivalence and in some cases hostility in Reformed circles to the Adamic covenant, Rowland has put together an excellent monogram of historical theology. The book begins with an introduction to and an articulation of Covenant theology. Subsequent sections deal with the formulation, and credal expression (Westminster Confession 7:2) of the Adamic covenant to the close of the 17th century. From the perspective of historical theology it’s a very useful and comprehensive treatment.

The last section of the book deals with the developments to now. This is the most controversial section since it includes the developments at Westminster Theological Seminary (including the Shepherd case) as well as interacting with the various modern challenges to Reformed orthodoxy like the New Perspective and New Covenant theology. Though I differ with some of the author’s evaluations (like his generous assessment of Norman Shepherd’s reformulations and his statement that the concept of merit is universally rejected by Reformed writers in the Covenant of Works) nonetheless this is an excellent book and needs to be read by all who consider themselves Reformed.

In my opinion the significance of the book is predicated upon the importance of the topic, since the Covenant of Works (Hos. 6:7) is indispensable to a Reformed understanding of God’s redemptive purposes in Christ. Covenant theology has always rested heavily on the antithesis of

law and faith (Covenant of Works vs Covenant of Grace) as seen in the Pauline contrast between the two representative men, Adam and Christ (Rom 5:12-21; 1 Cor 15:20-22; 45-47).

Covenant theology and in particular its vociferous commitment to the active obedience of Christ (second Adam) as our law keeper and righteousness, is best placed to guard the gospel of grace and in particular, the doctrine of justification by faith alone. We should all be thankful to Rowland Ward for providing us this opportunity to drink afresh from these old but refreshing theological wells.

Darren Middleton is minister of Caringbah Presbyterian Church.

**Into the Den of Infidels:
Our Search for the Truth**

Lynn Copeland
Bartlesville: Living Sacrifice Book Company, 2003.
Reviewed by Peter Barnes

This book contains the stories of eight Muslims in Egypt who became Christians. Each account is a moving testimony to the grace of God. The intensity of the struggle to come out of such a powerful belief system as Islam and to embrace Jesus Christ as God and man is portrayed on every page. The hold that Islam has over its people can be very great indeed, but Christ enters closed doors. There is the occasional error – for example, the punishment for stealing in the Torah is not having one’s hand cut off but restitution plus compensation (pp.30-31). However, this is a book from which Christians will derive much encouragement and help in seeking to make the gospel known to Muslims.

Peter Barnes is books editor of AP.

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Methodical men

Harold Lindsell offers the secret to success.

Men are God's method. The Church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men." History has demonstrated the truth of this assertion over and over again. Is it not strange, however, that when prayer diminishes and the fruits of Christian service begin to decline, men generally do not turn to prayer; instead they feverishly speed up their activities, mistakenly thinking that more complex organisation, additional machinery, or novel approaches will make up the lack? They never do. God delights to use men, not methods and machinery.

Scripture is studded with spectacular illustrations of men whose success or failure for God turned on their own personal prayer relationship with Him without reference to armies, machinery, methods, or even personal diligence. When Judah was invaded by Moab, the children of Ammon, and Mount Seir, King Jehoshaphat had little to work with. His military might was miniscule when compared with that of the coalition formed against him. In his desperate dilemma he called for national prayer and fasting and publicly acknowledged his country's impotence. It was prayer, without recourse to human devices, human machinery, or armed might, which provided deliverance (2 Chronicles 20:1—25).

God was so jealous of His own glory that He forbade Judah to do anything which might lead anyone to conclude that the army or any human agency was responsible for the divine deliverance which was actually the direct result of prayer.

It was Hezekiah's prayer, not his army, which brought deliverance to himself and to his people from the hands of Sennacherib (2 Kings 19:14—35). Humanly speaking, the odds were all against him. His chances for victory against Assyria were nil. God used a praying man, not military might. Jerusalem was delivered and Judah saved, not on the field of battle, but with the importunate king on his knees on the floor of the house of God. Hezekiah fought a good

Harold Lindsell

fight, to be sure, but with a strange weapon — the prayer of faith. It was Hezekiah in fervent prayer again, not the skill of the physicians with all of their drugs, useful as these things are, which secured for him an additional 15 years of life when he was on his death bed (2 Kings 20:1—11).

It was Jacob's prayer, not methods, machinery, or the machinations at which he was so skillful, which brought him favor with his brother Esau and enabled him to return to his own land with family and goods secure (Gen. 32:9ff.).

Hezekiah fought a good fight, to be sure, but with a strange weapon — prayer.

It was God using a man, not a man using human agencies, which enabled Elijah to restore the widow's son from death.

In a more modern era, it was God using men in prayer, not money, methods, and machinery, which made possible the rise of the great Moravian missionary movement, as these people for years maintained 24-hour-a-day unbroken prayer vigils.

It was God who used men as they prayed out 100 new missionaries to China under the China Inland Mission in 1887.

It was "Praying Hyde", not methods and machinery, that blessed India, produced revivals, and won spiritual victories over sin and Satan.

It was a praying German pastor named Gossner, touched by God's Spirit, who was personally responsible for sending forth 144 missionaries to the ends of the earth. It was at Gossner's open grave that a single sentence from the final eulogy illuminated this vital truth: "He (Gossner) prayed up the walls of a hospi-

tal and the hearts of nurses; he prayed mission stations into being and missionaries into faith; he prayed open the hearts of the rich, and gold from the most distant lands."

Adoniram Judson suffered long and prayed hard, and he left behind him these imperishable words: "I was never deeply interested in any project, I never prayed sincerely and earnestly for anything, but it came at some time — no matter how far distant the day — somehow, in some shape, probably the last I should have devised — it came."

There are thousands of illustrations of God's use of men rather than His use of methods, devices, and machinery. Even redeemed men prefer to search out gimmicks, devise Madison Avenue advertising techniques, or employ research teams and turn to social engineering. But God appears curiously indifferent to all of these things. His ways are not our ways; His thoughts are not our thoughts. In His sovereign operations in the world God watches for men, obedient men, through whom to accomplish His will. Neither organisation, methods nor machinery are substitutes for such men, trained in the school of prayer.

This excerpt is taken from When You Pray by Harold Lindsell (Baker, 1969). ap

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