



Transforming Sydney & National Prayer Strategy for the Ten Domains



TRANSFORMING
SYDNEY

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

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

Prayer Calendar 2015

Check our 2015 Prayer Calendar for daily prayer points - www.transformingsydney.org/TSPayerCalendar.html

Note also on the end page is a daily prayer calendar for February to pray for the Church.

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In Praise of Heterosexual Marriage and Parenting

By Bill Muehlenberg, 25-Nov-2014

For over fifty years now the social sciences have been telling us with the utmost clarity that there is no better guarantee of a child's wellbeing than to have him or her raised in a heterosexual two-parent family, cemented by marriage. Thousands upon thousands of studies have made this perfectly clear. Children do best when raised by their own biological parents united in marriage.

I have been following this research for decades now. It is massive and irrefutable. Of course the radical social engineers want to ignore or discount this mountain of evidence, but they are simply living in denial. Family structure really does matter, and if the wellbeing of our children is paramount, then we should pay very close attention to what the research is telling us.

A few summary statements can be offered here. Armand Nicholi, a clinical professor of psychiatry at Harvard medical school who has studied over forty years of research on the question of parental absence and children's well-

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In Praise of Heterosexual Marriage and Parenting (...continued)

being said this: *“What has been shown over and over again to contribute most to the emotional development of the child is a close, warm, sustained and continuous relationship with both parents.”*

He goes on to make this observation: *“One other comment about this research. In addition to the magnitude of it, the studies taken as a whole paint an unmistakably clear picture of the adverse effects of parental absence. Yet this vast body of research is almost totally ignored by our society. Why have even the professionals tended to ignore this research? Perhaps the answer is, to put it most simply, because the findings are unacceptable.”*

Professor William Galston of the University of Maryland put it this way: *“A substantial body of research suggests that family structure is an independent factor influencing the well-being of children. Even after correcting for variables such as family income, parental education, and prior family history, children from single-parent families tend on average to fare less well economically, educationally, and emotionally, and encounter more difficulties on the road to becoming self-sustaining adults.”*

UK social science researcher Rebecca O’Neill makes this observation: *“The weight of evidence indicates that the traditional family based upon a married father and mother is still the best environment for raising children, and it forms the soundest basis for the wider society. For many mothers, fathers and children, the ‘fatherless family’ has meant poverty, emotional heartache, ill health, lost opportunities, and a lack of stability. The social fabric – once considered flexible enough to incorporate all types of lifestyles – has been stretched and strained. Although a good society should tolerate people’s rights to live as they wish, it must also hold adults responsible for the consequences of their actions.”*

And American family researcher David Blankenhorn put it this way: *“Marriage does many fine things for human beings, but this one is probably the finest: It gives me as a child the mother and the father who made me.”* He continues, *“Marriage is the great gift that parents and society give to children.”*

The evidence keeps mounting up. Just this week a new study by Professor Patrick Parkinson of the University of Sydney reaffirmed what the social sciences are telling us. In his important study, “For Kids’ Sake,” he documents how both children’s wellbeing and the state of heterosexual marriage have deteriorated in recent decades.

“Marriage is the great gift that parents and society give to children.”
David Blankenhorn

One press report covers this as follows: *“The well-being of Australia’s children and young adults has declined sharply in the past decade - and sliding marriage rates are partly to blame, a study has found. Spiralling rates of child abuse and neglect, of children being placed in foster care and of teenage mental health problems - including a dramatic rise in hospitalisation for self-harm - are rooted in the rise of one-parent families and de facto couples, violent or unstable relationships and divorce.”*

“Its author, Patrick Parkinson, a Sydney University law professor, has called for a review of government family policy. ‘Governments in Australia cannot continue to ignore the reality that two parents tend to provide better outcomes for children than one, and that the most stable, safe and nurturing environment for children is when their parents are, and remain, married to one another,’” the report says.

“Among the signs of deteriorating well-being were:

- *A tripling in the number of children notified for abuse or neglect since 1998.*
- *A doubling in the number of children in out-of-home care in 12 years.*
- *A 66 per cent increase in the rate of hospitalisation for self-harm for 12-14-year-olds between 1996-97 and 2005-06.*
- *An increase from 28 per cent to 38 per cent in female school students experiencing unwanted sex between 2002 and 2008.*
- *A doubling in the rate of hospitalisation for alcohol intoxication for women aged 15-24 between 1998-99 and 2005-06.”*

Of interest, even the former Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett has gotten on board with this report. This is what he says in an opinion piece today: *“Many people think - but have been afraid to express it - that married couples in a loving relationship provide our children the best opportunity to prepare for a fulfilling and happy life.”* A report released this week, titled *For Kids’ Sake* and authored by Professor Patrick Parkinson of the University of Sydney, is a sober reminder of this.

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In Praise of Heterosexual Marriage and Parenting (...continued)

“It says, in part: ‘The wellbeing of Australia’s children and young adults has declined sharply in the past decade, and ...sliding marriage rates are partly to blame’. During my 11-year leadership of beyondblue, the national depression initiative, I have become increasingly concerned that so many children starting out in primary school are already stressed and anxious - at only five years old.

“Sadly, in most cases this stress and anxiousness is a direct result of the family learning pattern many children receive and observe at home. I further contend that the first seven years of a child’s life are the most important as this sets the values for children for the rest of their lives.

“Clearly the best environment in which to bring a child into the world is a stable, loving environment in which a male and female are married to each other. The existence of both genders is the environment in which that child will live his or her life - in a wider community where both genders are almost equally represented.”

He continues, *“Sadly, many adults take their marriage vows lightly. It is perhaps an indication of the plastic society we live in today, where everything is changeable and tradeable. When challenges arise, some people feel it is best not to work through them but to walk away from the responsibilities that are a part of every relationship.*

“With changes to family law in the 1970s, many marriages have become more easily disposable. This should never be the case, particularly when children are involved. As adults I think it is incumbent on us to do all we can as parents to resolve issues within a marriage, in the interests of those we have seen fit to bring into the world. Or at least until they have reached a mature age to handle any separation of parents.”

Kennett concludes: *“All we can do is give our children the best possible opportunity in which to start their lives - being part of a family that is based on a marriage, in a loving relationship, that stands the test of time.”*

Exactly right. All this is simply a matter of common sense. But sadly common sense is under a massive attack today

by the various activist groups. Radical feminist and homosexual lobbies have been warring against the institutions of marriage and family for decades now.

“...many marriages have become more easily disposable. This should never be the case, particularly when children are involved.” Jeff Kennett

Sadly, they have been fairly successful in all this, and today we are seeing the devastating results. Children everywhere are in crisis, as marriages break down and families crumble. And with more and

more children deliberately being brought into the world outside of a heterosexual marriage, things will only get worse.

As Professor David Popenoe of Rutgers University puts it: *“In three decades of work as a social scientist, I know of few other bodies of data in which the weight of evidence is so decisively on one side of the issue: on the whole, for children, two-parent families are preferable to single-parent families and step-families. If our prevailing views on family structure hinged solely on scholarly evidence, the current debate would never have arisen in the first place.”*

If we continue to ignore this massive body of data, our societies and families will continue to crumble. And the biggest losers of all will be our children.

<http://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/life/falling-marriage-rates-hurting-children-report-20110905-1jubf.html>

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/opinion/children-need-mum-and-dad-for-best-mental-health/story-e6frfhqf-1226132579875>

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

For more information and how to help please go to

www.generate.org.au



Leading our children to the Lord

(Written by Bella Blaiklock)

Proverbs 22:6 (KJV) *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."*

With this tumultuous season that we are in, I believe that as parents we need to lead our children more passionately in the "ways of the Lord". We need to teach them to pray and seek out the presence of God for themselves with a whole new enthusiasm and diligence...so they will learn about living a life of prayer where they can seek the Father of Heaven and Jesus and as they learn to bond in relationship with Jesus and he will reveal the calling and destiny of their lives.

Our children are in our hands for a season, and in God's hands for an eternity.

How do we teach our children to commune with God?

The best teaching comes by leading by example. We the parents are are their example, especially when they are young, as they get older they module themselves on other peers. If we don't activity involve God in our everyday home life, we are teaching our children to fail. If the only time our children pray are when they are in church, or if we believe that the responsibility for our children is our church or scripture teachers, we are missing it!

Here are two simple activities that can (and will) revolutionise your children's lives (and possibly yours!).

Bring back the family dinner!!!!!!

Over the past 15 years researchers have confirmed what parents have known for a long time: sharing a family meal is good for the spirit, the brain and the health of all family members. Recent studies link regular family dinners with many behaviors that parents pray for: lower rates of substance abuse, teen pregnancy and depression, as well as higher grade-point averages and self-esteem. Studies also indicate that dinner conversation is a more potent vocabulary-booster than reading, and the stories told around the kitchen table help our children build resilience. The icing on the cake is that regular family meals also lower the rates of obesity and eating disorders in children and adolescents. What else can families do that takes only about an hour a day and packs such a punch?

<http://thefamilydinnerproject.org/resources/faq/>

Provide the meal time not just for saying "Grace" and blessing the food but also is a chance for corporate family pray, ask your children; "Is there something you would like us to pray for? Is there anyone at school we can pray for?"

Bring back "Grace" with the Family Dinner. Connecting "around the dinner table" is arguably one of the most important parts of family living. It brings the family closer and a time of togetherness. Switch off the T.V., remove the Ipad, switch off the phone and CONNECT!!!!

Bring back Prayer before bedtime!

Setting up a routine of reading the bible (instead of apps and games) before bed is beneficial to our children's learning of the bible and spiritual growth. Create a routine around bible reading. Also create a space in your own home for bible reading time, create a 'bible chair'. By this I mean a chair somewhere in your home dedicated to reading the word. Let your children see you reading the bible. There have been major changes in people's lives just by reading the bible 15 minutes a day. So take out your diary and book yourself with bible. There are lots of bible reading plans on the internet for 15 minutes, as well the bible is now in app form and on the internet so there are no excuses!.

Acts 2:17 (NIV) *"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams."*

Find different ways that God speaks to our children. If our children are small, sometimes they will see pictures, or they will hear God speak to them. Its good to have a journal next to their beds and if they get a picture get them to draw it and colour it in. If they get a word, get them to write it down. If they are too young, you can draw and write for them. Get creative, make the bible interesting.

If you have teenagers, find some good online study guides for things they're interested in. Such as leadership training and gifts of the spirit. Don't limit your teenager as God has put giftings and callings into each one of them for His purpose and Destiny.

Jeremiah 29:11 *'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. 12'Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to*

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Leading our children to the Lord (...continued)

Me, and I will listen to you....'

Teach your children to pray. Sometimes we need to pray for help. It is good to have prayers in the home and not 'crisis prayers' which are prayers in a time of crisis. We need to teach our children that Jesus is with our all the time and we can pray to him anytime we like. If we limit our praying for when there is a crisis, our children will grow up with this attitude as well.

Prayers don't have to be formal. They can be conversation. You might have a problem, and just ask God "what should I do". Seek God for an answer.

Teach our children to have a "chat" with God. "Hi God, how are you today? Can you help me with my friends and school? What about helping me with my homework. I'm excited about things you have planned for me. Show me something about you". Keep it simple at their level of understanding. Make it personal.

Matthew 18,3 *"... 3and said, Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. 4Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven...."*

Prayers for Safety! Pray for safety to and from school, at school and on transports. Pray for Health, Pray for the family when a family member gets sick, this shows that God cares for us when we are sick. Pray for God's healing power.

There are lots of different prayers and ways our children can learn to have God in part of our lives. Even though what I have shared today is extremely basic, we want our children to grow-up in God. To create their own relationship with him, so they seek God for themselves.

God predestined us to be born for this time, in this season in a time where people are absorbed with technology, the younger generation is constantly on their mobile phones and facebooking and twittering. As this is happening traditional christian values and boundaries are being ever so tested by outside influences than ever before.

How will they learn to hear the voice of God amongst all the technology? We need to lead our children to God more than ever before and setup practises within our homes to lead them to Christ.

Dear Lord, Help us and lead us Lord with our children each day. Help us to setup family and home-life that is honourable to you. Help us lead our children to you each day. AMEN

Prayer for the Illawarra

Thank you for prayer support for the Illawarra (Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama Council areas). This year the Illawarra celebrates its bicentenary. In August there will be a combined churches massed choir event called Worship Over Wollongong (WOW). This year has started with a flurry of combined church prayer meetings fuelled by the local desire for revival.



Revivals don't just happen at a whim of God. Prayer and unity are essential. In the 1990's, the AD2000 movement formed a network of combined church prayer meetings in the Illawarra. In the year 2000 there was a Greg Laurie outreach event in Wollongong supported by about 90 churches and subsequently the pastors of the region established an organisation called "Rise Up" but since pastor's priorities lay elsewhere, the group met spasmodically and was unable to find a clear vision closing in 2007.

This did not spell the end of church unity in the Illawarra, but changed the way it progressed. A growing number of ministries in the Illawarra are run by lay people and the membership of these ministries is usually open to Christians from any church. Christians from different churches are meeting together and forming friendships. The pastors of the region are generally supportive of such ministries which include groups for men, women, missions, intercession, healing, and singing. The Illawarra Prayer Network (IPN) is another one of these.

Today, the IPN emails a fortnightly ePrayerletter called "Clearing the Way for Jesus", to inform Christians about the area's prayer concerns and advertise upcoming combined church events. It has a distribution of over 3,200, including nearly all of the 158 Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Pentecostal and Multicultural churches of the Illawarra.

Another influence on church unity is the region's multicultural character. This stems from the days when the Port Kembla steel industry employed migrant workers. This trend has continued recently with the Illawarra becoming home to many refugees (there are three African churches) and the University of Wollongong attracts many overseas students.

We Christians who live in the Illawarra are responding to the Holy Spirit's desire to save all people and we are very grateful for your prayer support.

12 January 2015 - Derek Thompson, Coordinator, Illawarra Prayer Network. - www.5icm.org.au

What Children at Risk Need and How the Church Can Help Them Best (part 1 of 3)

Lausanne Consultation on Children at Risk

Quito, Ecuador, 17-20 November, 2014

Contributing Paper by Ruslan Maliuta

Introduction: Children must be Protected from the World's Violence

The latest research revealed by the US government indicates that more than 1 billion children, almost half of all the children in the world, are exposed to violence every year¹. UNICEF identifies four types of violence: physical, sexual, mental, and neglect or negligent treatment². There are many factors that negatively affect children, such as poverty, diseases, wars, natural disasters, and others. The number of conflicts globally is increasing, with the wars in Syria, Iraq and Eastern Ukraine being the most recent examples; and there are more refugees and internally displaced people now than ever before. In each of these situations children are the ones who suffer the most from the consequences of these tragic developments, especially in countries with struggling economies.

A striking example of how poverty can significantly increase the negative impact of a particular crisis is the ongoing Ebola outbreak in Western Africa. BBC News reports “at least 3,700 children in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone who have lost one or both parents to Ebola this year face being shunned... Children were discovered alone in the hospitals where their parents had died, or back in their communities where, if they were lucky, they were being fed by neighbors - but all other contact with them was being avoided.”³

At the same time, violence against children is not only taking place in countries which go through some kind of a major challenge; it is putting children in danger regardless of where they live, what their social or economic status is, or if they are formally classified as children at risk. Even children who live in the most affluent communities of developed nations are being neglected, abused, and maltreated, often by the very people who are supposed to take care of them. And children can experience violence even before they are born: abortion is another form of violence against children that is accepted and widely practiced in far too many places. Children become victims of violence at home, in school, on streets, or even at church, and then suffer life-long consequences of the trauma they have experienced. The impact of violence against children on overall social and economic development is difficult to estimate, yet the examples are compelling. “Exposure to childhood violence leads to graded increases in the four NCDs (non-communicable diseases) – cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic lung disease, and diabetes – that accounted for 60% of the 53 million deaths globally in 2010”⁴. Violence negatively impacts the whole child.

When these statistics [are] considered, a case might be made that violence is the biggest risk for children in the world. A widespread assumption is that poverty tops the list of the factors that negatively impact children. Without a doubt it is a huge global challenge that is directly linked with and influences many other adversities children experience and all possible measures should be implemented to release children from poverty. But I would argue that violence is increasingly becoming a major concern regarding children's wellbeing that extends beyond poverty, especially as our awareness and understanding of this phenomenon grows.

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¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/vacs/index.html>

² UNICEF. Hidden in Plain Sight: A Statistical Analysis of Violence Against Children. 2014. p.4.http://files.unicef.org/publications/files/Hidden_in_plain_sight_statistical_analysis_EN_3_Sept_2014.pdf

³ BBC News. Ebola Outbreak: ‘Thousands of Orphans Shunned. (Sept. 30, 2014), <http://www.bbc.com/news/worldafrica-29424919>

⁴ 4 James A. Mercy, Susan D. Hillis, Alexander Butchart and others. Interpersonal Violence: Global Impact and Paths to Prevention. 2014

What Children at Risk Need (...continued)

The World Bank indicates that 400 million children worldwide live in extreme poverty while children who experience violence, as was indicated above, are more than twice this number. In many ways it is easier to define and scale poverty than violence. And because the stressors that impoverished families face tend to increase incidence of abuse, many children experiencing violence are very likely to be poor. However, as demonstrated, violence is not confined by socio-economic status.

For example the real prevalence of sexual abuse against children can only be roughly estimated as so few victims are willing or able to report it. Some experts believe that as many as 30% of all children, regardless of their socio-economical status, were sexually abused at some point of their life.

Violence against children is an immense global challenge but it is not inevitable and it is preventable. Children can and should be protected from violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation and this is something the Whole World is responsible to do. Recently UNICEF launched #ENDViolence against children campaign⁵. Their work with governments and grassroots movements around the world to find solutions to this problem is commendable, yet I would argue that secular NGO efforts are incomplete.

In this paper I would like to explore two aspects that are often overlooked but that are essential for the success of the movement towards ending violence against children. The first is the crucial role of the permanent relationships with loving and caring adults in a child's life. The second is the importance of the global Church as the means to transform the Whole World into a safe and caring place for children.

The Heart of the Matter: Why Children Are at Risk?

There are many reasons why children are at-risk and I would suggest one that seems to be the key to understanding addressing risk and reducing it. What puts a child at risk of violence or other negative factors more than anything else and anywhere in the world is the absence or lack of stable, safe, and nurturing relationships with loving and caring adults. In God's design, family should provide such an environment for each child, not just to protect her or him from danger but also to assist in fulfilling the God-given potential of each one⁶. God's concept of family includes a father and a mother, but not just these two; it is supposed to be a wonderful multi-generational network of people who embrace a child in a web of loving and caring relationships, which last a lifetime.

Unfortunately, that's not how it works for far too many children in this world. What matters is not only the presence of parents or caregivers, but their willingness and capacity to act in their children's best interests. Let's consider just some of the disturbing situations and statistics. According to UNICEF, there are 162 million orphans in the world; children who have lost one or both parents due to any cause. Many more children are being raised by a single parent either as a result of divorce or being born to an unwed mother. Between 5 and 20 million children grow up in institutions, and estimated 100 million children live on the streets. The number of children of caregivers who have migrated to other nations and are separated from their children is constantly increasing. In many countries, growing economic pressure, cultural traditions or other factors, such as workaholicism, result in more children having absentee fathers, when children become de facto fatherless even if their parents are alive, haven't divorced, or gone to work in another country. Even worse, more often than not, parents and relatives become the very people who neglect, maltreat, and abuse children. All these circumstances shatter the hopes of hundreds of millions children who deserve healthy, holistic development.

One can argue that even loving and caring parents or caregivers may not be able to help their children in the context of severe poverty, in the midst of war, or after a major natural disaster. While this is true to a degree, existence of such relationships in the life of a child significantly increases her chances of survival and successful development.

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⁵ <http://www.unicef.org/endviolence/about.html>

⁶ Ephesians 6:4 and other

What Children at Risk Need (...continued)

Let's take a look at two cases of children impacted by the crisis in Eastern Ukraine to illustrate this point.

When the pro-Russian separatists shot down the Malaysian plane in August 2014, parts of the aircraft as well as some bodies of its passengers fell on the grounds of an orphanage in the city of Torez. Many children were playing outside when it happened and although, fortunately, none of them was hurt physically, it's hard to overestimate the emotional trauma they've experienced by becoming firsthand witnesses of such a horrible tragedy. Sometime later armed men showed up at the orphanage and at gunpoint ordered the director to collect the children and put them on buses so that they could be transported to Russia. It took a lot of effort on behalf of Ukrainian government and some NGOs to bring the children back to their home country. We can only guess what these children were thinking and how they were feeling in the course of all these events. There was no one to explain to them what was happening and no one to provide them with individual attention and care at a time when they needed it most. Although their basic needs for shelter, food and relative safety were met, they had to face this crisis with no support from familiar, loving adults.

In contrast to the orphans' experience, not too far from Torez there is the city of Mariupol, the home of the Isaev family. Several years ago Evgeny and Svetlana became the first Ukrainians to take into their home an HIV-positive child. Eventually they've adopted six more children with this condition and become a model for many other families in Ukraine and beyond. The first time they had to evacuate from their city was in May when the separatists occupied it and they could hear shooting taking place a mere few hundred feet away from their house. After the Ukrainian army liberated the city, the Isaevs returned home and thought that their life would be normal again. But in August the regular Russian army invaded Ukraine and the aggressors' tanks came as close as 15 miles to the city. Evgeny and Svetlana had to wake up the children in the middle of the night, put together some belongings, and flee to Kyiv. They became refugees for the second time in less than three months. As hard as their situation was, the thought of giving away the children they've taken into their family has never crossed their mind. In spite of all the difficulties, they are there for their children, loving them and caring for them as much as they can. Although very often we can't prevent crises like this from happening, the presence of loving and caring adults in the life of a child would make a world of a difference as they do all they can to protect their child, help her cope with the situation, and ensure her well-being.

The vitality of this kind of relationships is confirmed when we look at the life of a person from Biblical perspective. While safety, development, and realization of one's potential certainly are important aspects, it is the relationship with the Creator or absence of it that determines overall success of a person's life. "What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?"⁷ The personal relationship with Jesus Christ is foundational and determinative not only for our eternal life but for bringing true meaning and accomplishment to our pilgrimage here on Earth.

⁷ Matthew 16:26

Continued next month: Part 2 - the crucial role of permanent relationships with loving and caring adults in a child's life, and the importance of the global Church as the means to transform the Whole World into a safe and caring place for children. In March: Part 3 - Taking the Initiative.



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

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

Pray for Australian Politicians and their Portfolios 2015

Dear friends in Christ

Welcome to our first message to pray for our Australian Politicians.

We continue to uphold our Government in prayer. This year our focus is on the Government by each Portfolio, let us embark again this year with our God and ask Him to give us wisdom, strength, power, motivation, all energies to continue our mission to pray for our leaders.

Here is the verse where this powerful piece of revelation is being given to us by the Lord:

“Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” (Matthew 18:19)

Jesus Himself will actually be in the midst of us believers who are praying in agreement and in union with one another to God the Father, this also means Jesus is hearing our prayers loud and clear. And because Jesus is hearing this loud and clear, then those of us believers will have a very good chance on getting our prayer answered by God the Father.

”His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 3:10)

From www.australia.gov.au/directories/australian-government-directories/government-by-portfolio

What is a portfolio?

A portfolio is a minister's area of responsibility as a member of Cabinet. As a general rule, there is one department in each portfolio.

The Governor-General appoints ministers, establishes departments of state and allocates responsibility among ministers through an Administrative Arrangements Order (AAO)

www.dpmc.gov.au/pmc/parliamentary-information

Each government department has its own departmental website with ministers and parliamentary secretaries often having their own websites as well. Within each portfolio there are also numerous agency and program websites.

Portfolios

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Commonwealth Parliament | 11. Health |
| 2. Agriculture | 12. Immigration and Border Protection |
| 3. Attorney-General's | 13. Industry and Science |
| 4. Communications | 14. Infrastructure and Regional Development |
| 5. Defence | 15. Prime Minister and Cabinet |
| 6. Education and Training | 16. Social Services |
| 7. Employment | 17. Treasury |
| 8. Environment | 18. Courts |
| 9. Finance | 19. Council of Australian Governments |
| 10. Foreign Affairs and Trade | |

Let us pray together as a team and ask God to send the Holy Spirit to be with us in this journey.

I will be sending a message on the 1st week of Feb to start praying for these 2 portfolios

♥ Commonwealth Parliament

♥ Agriculture

If you wish to be included in this monthly email, please let me know and I will add you to our prayer list.

God bless you

Lilian Schmid

National Prayer Strategy for the Ten Domains

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PRAYER POINTS FOR AUSTRALIA DAY 2015

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The Australian Prayer Network <http://ausprayernet.org.au/> is again this year calling its member Churches, Prayer Groups and Individuals to a night of prayer for our nation to be held on Sunday 25th January 2015, the eve of Australia Day. Timing and venue for each gathering across the nation is at the discretion of the organiser and prayer gatherings do not have to be registered with us.

We have drawn up an extensive list of prayer points (see below) for those organising gatherings on that night. Thank you for your support of this initiative



Australia Day Eve
25 January 2015
Night of Prayer
for Australia

to undergird our nation in prayer on our national day and at the beginning of another year.

Prayer Points for Australia Day Eve Prayer Gatherings

Following are 8 prayer segments for Australia Day Prayer

Segment 1

- Give thanks for the rich Christian heritage of our nation. Give thanks for those who have bathed this nation in prayer from its foundations.
- Give thanks for the pioneers of the Christian faith in Australia who helped establish Christianity as the underlying value system of our nation. Pray that our generation will continue to hold Christ high as a guiding light for all to know The Way, The Truth and The Life.
- Pray that despite the challenges we currently face as a Nation that we will rise above them and that emerging generations will continue to preserve and build on that heritage for future generations.

Segment 2

- Give thanks that freedom of personal religious faith and public expression of that have been preserved in our nation down through the years. Pray that the many pressures within modern society that threaten to restrict that freedom will be resisted, and our hard fought for freedoms are protected.
- Ask God to be present with us tonight and to continue to bless our nation into the future.
- Cry out for a revival of faith amongst God's people and for a return to Godly values in the year ahead.

Segment 3

- Pray for our National leaders. Governor General Peter Cosgrove, Prime Minister Tony Abbott and Opposition leader Bill Shorten.
- Pray for your State leaders: Governors, Premiers and Opposition leaders of the respective States and for all elected leaders within our Territories.
- Pray for those who lead within Local Government nationwide - Mayors and Councillors of local Councils.

Segment 4

- Pray for Godly Government, for God fearing leaders who will seek to govern according to God's laws.
- Pray for the people of Australia that we would be able to read the signs of the age and heed God's call to return to Him as a nation
- Pray for all levels of education in Australia. Our Universities, Colleges and Schools that they would instil in our children and youth the spiritual values that have undergirded our nation since its foundation, as well as to train them up academically. Pray that a Christian worldview would replace the humanistic worldview currently resident within many of our educational institutions.

Segment 5

- Give thanks for the message of the Gospel and its power to change lives. Witness the eternal relevance of God's word to those hearts who seek for truth and righteousness.
- Give thanks for all those who found faith in Jesus Christ during the past year and for those who will discover his love and saving grace in 2015.
- Pray for an increasing unity of the spirit amongst all Christians living and serving in Australia. Pray for a strong and

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Prayer Points for Australia Day Eve (...continued)

united Christian witness to impact our nation for good through all levels of society.

Segment 6

- Pray that the Church in Australia will receive a renewed vision of its role and purpose in our nation. Pray that individual Christians will also capture a renewed understanding of the heart of God that will enable our nation to see as well as hear the Gospel message as it is expressed in both word and deed.
- Pray for the raising up of professing and committed Christians into positions of leadership within our nation and for those already in positions of influence to be empowered afresh to stand strong in their faith to see significant change towards a restoration of the Christian faith as the foundation of our national life.
- Pray for a strong prophetic voice to emerge within the Church in Australia that will shed light on the path ahead for both Church and nation.

Segment 7

- Give thanks for the abundant blessings God has bestowed upon our nation since the beginning of time.
- Ask for wisdom and discernment in ensuring we do not take such blessings for granted. Pray that we preserve the Godly values He has given us in all fields of endeavour, be that politics, business, education, or the fields of art, entertainment and sport.
- Pray for a return to biblical ethics and values in the making of laws and statutes that we are governed by. Pray too for the overturning of ungodly and unjust laws.

Segment 8

- Pray for a revival of faith to sweep our nation. Pray for a renewed interest in the teachings of Jesus amongst the emerging generations as they search for truth in a confused world.
- Pray for every knee to bow in worship and adoration of Jesus Christ and for every tongue to confess His Lordship over us individually and corporately.
- Pray that we His people will arise in the power of His Holy Spirit to take back that which the enemy has stolen from us and reclaim our nation as the Great Southland of the Holy Spirit.

The Presidential Prayer Team (USA) - Who We Are!

The ministry of *The Presidential Prayer Team* can trace its roots back to the 1990s as a conversation among several people about the importance of praying for the United States and its leaders. There were even several attempts to launch it, but then... The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 served as a wakeup call to Americans and it became obvious to many that the necessity of our Prayer Team mission needed to become a reality. And so, the ministry of prayer was born.

Since 2001, *The Presidential Prayer Team* has been the source of encouragement and inspiration for millions of Americans in praying for our nation, its president, national leaders and members of our Armed Forces. This ministry is not a part of the White House or any official government entity, but seeks to build relationships with government officials by letting them know we are praying for them. We are the largest full-time group of prayer intercessors for America, sending out more than 128 million communications per year.

Our core belief is reflected in I Timothy 2:1-2:

"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."

The challenges for leaders and exhortations to pray for them are clearly seen throughout the Bible's pages. James, a brother of Jesus, cautions those who would become leaders to weigh such a decision carefully because of the increased risks, burdens, and obligations. (James 3:1)

There are also abundant lessons on the importance of thinking of others, considering their situations and supporting them through prayer. (1 Thessalonians 5:11-13, Hebrews 13:17-18) It is also clear that such service is for more than the leaders themselves. It is also to God, who places and influences all leaders. (Proverbs 21:1, Romans 13:1)

We are a national ministry that also seeks to serve as a catalyst for the development of a robust prayer lifestyle. Membership is free and we provide members with a variety of tools and resources to assist and support their prayer life. These resources are communicated to members through email, website articles, social media, mobile phones and other communication tools. Ultimately, we believe that prayer will transform our nation, one heart at a time.

We believe that Almighty God rules over the affairs of men and moves in response to the prayers of His people. So, with unflinching devotion, members of *The Presidential Prayer Team* are working everyday to raise the shield of prayer over our beloved country.

Mobilizing America to pray ... www.presidentialprayerteam.org



Gender Bias in Asia

Sugar and spice and all things nice – that’s what little girls are made of! – but, not for some!

Little girls – boxes and bows – They are loved by their parents but, not for some!

For vulnerable women in Asia, every stage from birth to death is a minefield of peril.

Will She Be Allowed to Be Born?

Even before a baby girl is born, her life is at risk. If her mother has the chance to determine her female gender with an illegal ultrasound, the chances are high that she will abort the baby.

Making it outside of the womb doesn’t increase a baby girl’s chance of acceptance. In a story reported from India, one woman had twins, a boy and a girl. The family rejoiced over the boy, but the new mother took the fragile little girl upstairs and threw her out of a second-story window, watching her die as she hit the street below.

How could a mother do this? Because girls in Asia are considered worthless, merely another mouth to feed. And because, perhaps, this mother wanted to spare her daughter from enduring life as a woman.

The most feared three words in Asia – is “It’s a girl!”

Preteen Years: Terror on Every Side

The girls who survive childhood navigate their preteen years like walking through a minefield.

At the least, adolescent girls are subjected to the lewd comments and harassment of men in their neighbourhood. Some men consider it their right to get pleasure from any female they lay eyes on.

In the dark corners of most Asian cities linger evil men who prey upon young girls, snatching them up to sell into the ever-booming sex trade. Because parents consider girls such a liability, many sell their young daughters to a pimp so they can make a profit.

Sena was a beautiful, intelligent 14-year-old Asian girl with a very bright future. But she, like so many women in Asia, was merely considered a toy for men to use. She faced constant sexual harassment in her own neighbourhood. She was stalked and subjected to lewd comments and indecent exposure. Finally she was thrown to the ground and assaulted by a group of men. Neighbours saw it happening—and did nothing.

Tormented and unable to bear the humiliation, Sena turned to the only escape she knew. She was found hanging from a ceiling fan in her parents’ home.

The suicide rate among young women in India is 10 times higher than the world’s average.

Marriage Years Bring More Bondage

If a girl makes it to marriageable age, she will be negotiated away to the man her parents choose and move to her husband’s home, where she is most likely not welcome. Husbands who feel the dowry they received for their new bride was too low will take matters into their own hands. Every year, there are more than 9,000 reported cases of bride burning in India. Beatings by alcoholic husbands are so common they aren’t even tracked. The hopelessness is so rampant that suicide is the number-one cause of death among women at this stage of life.

The wife may receive favour for a while if she is lucky enough to give birth to a son. But if she bears daughters, that only brings further grief. One husband took a knife and cut off his wife’s nose because she gave birth to a second daughter. It was two days before she received any medical care—and no justice was ever served.

Cursed for Her Husband’s Death

If at any time a woman’s husband dies, no matter what the cause, she is blamed. She will be considered a curse on her family—made to dress in white to distinguish her as someone to avoid. If she is lucky her eldest son may give her a corner of his house to live out her life. Most are not that fortunate to have a corner to call home.

To deal with this “curse,” society adopted a series of rituals. The family will typically shave the widow’s head, take away her jewellery and kick her out of the home to live on the streets. Her only choice for survival will probably be begging or becoming a prostitute. From there, all she has to look forward to is eternity . . . apart from God.

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*The most feared three words
in Asia – is “It’s a girl!”*

Gender Bias in Asia (...continued)



Veil of Tears Movie

View the trailer and signup for the your **FREE DVD** www.gospelforasia.org.au

In South Asia a baby girl is often seen as a curse. Many don't even live past infancy, and if they do their life is short and hard. They are the lowest and the least, but God loves them. The problem is when the Male missionaries try and tell them they shy away. Thankfully God is raising up Woman of Compassion. They are totally dedicated and eager to share God's love with these women.

She understands their oppression. She sympathises with their hurt. She has lived that life. The only difference between her and any other woman in Asia is she has hope, she has Jesus... and she's eager to share! God has raised up approximately 2,000 women to reach out to the women around them who would not have otherwise heard of Jesus and the life that He brings. Through women's fellowships, literacy classes, leprosy care and lots of love these Bible Women are reaching the Women of Asia. Learn how you can support them!

This gripping new documentary film tells the untold story of millions of women in India who are culturally persecuted for no other reason than the fact that they are women. From birth until death, their life is a vicious cycle of poverty and oppression, from the mass epidemic of female suicides, dowry deaths, forced abortion to the high rate of illiteracy among the women and even how more than 46 MILLION widows are being cast aside and ostracized by society simply because their husband died.

These are the faces of true survivors. Those who have withstood a lifetime of adversity in the face of a culture stacked against them. Take a heartfelt journey through the eyes of these women, and others, who unveil their personal stories of triumph over persecution, rejection, abandonment and a life of tragedy. Get a glimpse of the true resilience of the human spirit and how the love of Jesus is restoring hope and dignity to a generation of broken women, and rebuilding shattered lives.

Narrated by Dove Award-Winning, Grammy-Nominated, CCM Recording Artist Natalie Grant, Directed & Produced by the critically-acclaimed filmmakers, Kenny & Kyle Saylor (Kimjongilia, The Gamebreaker, My Finish Line), this film was shot on-location across the stunning nation of India, in some of the most remote tribal villages in the world today. This is more than just a film, it is a journey into a world where few outsiders have gone before.

Gospel for Asia

However, despite more than a millennia of hardships, the Gospel is being spread into the remote villages as Gospel for Asia (GFA) Woman of Compassion are now rising up across the entire nation of India; bringing cultural change in every area of life for these generations of broken women, through the hope of Jesus Christ.

While the film, "Veil of Tears", brings into focus the truth behind a dark reality existing in the world today, we are excited to highlight the hope being given to countless millions of women each day through the work and ministry of GFA.

Changing Villages, One Person at a Time

With the ever-expanding population of people in Asia, the need for aid, education and Jesus' love is growing day by day. Gospel for Asia is involved in sharing the love of Christ through national missionaries. These men and women missionaries are trained in Bible colleges for three years to share the hope found in Christ. After training, they go to the unreached people of South Asia and share the love of God in the nations they serve. We also minister to children through our Bridge of Hope program, providing education, quality meals and a loving environment to over 72,000 children in South Asia. For over 34 years, Gospel for Asia has continued to bring aid and hope to some of the most downtrodden people in South Asia.

Geoff Darr

Manager of Gospel for Asia Australia

www.gospelforasia.org.au



Praying for the Persecuted Church

*"Sing, O heavens! Be joyful, O earth! And break out in singing, O mountains!
For the Lord has comforted His people, And will have mercy on His afflicted." [Isaiah 49:13]*

LEBANON: Pray for Syrian Family and Ministry

A Syrian family is committed to working with Christian ministry that is reaching out to other Syrians who have fled into Lebanon. Both 'Hakim' and his wife, 'Yara' and their children care for those in Syria and are part of a team that have helped distribute food, blankets, stoves and oil to those in their city. Hakim and Yara ensured that each of the families also received a New Testament and children's books with Bible stories.

A VOM contact who has established relationships with about 200 families asks for ongoing prayers for the ministry workers and "all these families that God will open their hearts through the literature they have taken."

Source: Voice of the Martyrs USA

Prayer Points

- ♥ Thank the Lord for Hakim, Yara and others involved in reaching out to Syrians in Lebanon, pray the Lord will use them mightily as witnesses for His Gospel; pray also for their protection.
- ♥ Pray the Lord will bear much fruit from his important ministry, drawing many to Himself as they read His word.
- ♥ Pray the churches in Lebanon will be welcoming of Muslim background believers and may be used by the Lord to help new believers grow in their faith.

LIBYA: Christians Targeted

On the morning of Saturday 3 January armed militants kidnapped at least 13 Egyptian Christians from a housing complex in Sirte, Libya.

Militants went room to room checking ID cards and specifically taking Christians while leaving Muslim Egyptians unharmed. This is the third incident of violence by extremists against Christians in Libya in just the past two weeks, and is just the latest in a long line of attacks against Christians in the violence-riddled country.

Fr Philemon Attia, a priest of the Mar Girgis church in Beni Suef, whose nephew Abanoub Ayad Attia was among those taken spoke with a representative of the Foreign Ministry and provided the names the 13 men who were kidnapped: Maged Shehata Suleiman - Abanoub Ayad Attia - Youssef Shokry Younan - Hany Abdel Massih Salib - Kerros Bushra Fawzy - Milad Makeen Zaky - Makram Youssef Tawadros - Samuel Stephanos Kamel - Bishop Stephanos Kamel - Mina Fayeze Aziz - Malak Ibrahim Tanewt - Girgis Milad Tanewt - Bishoy Adel. "The representative said that they would do its best to investigate and follow up on the case," Fr. Philemon said.

This latest abduction comes just five days after seven Coptic Christians were abducted Tuesday, 30 December from a microbus as they were trying to return to Egypt.

According to Fr. Philemon, the seven who were abducted on Tuesday were living in the same housing complex and that was raided on Saturday. Abanoub told his uncle that he and others for more than a month had been wanting to leave Libya but did not have a safe way to exit the country. These two incidents follow closely the brutal murder of Magdy Sobhy Tawfiq, an Egyptian doctor, Sahar, his pharmacist wife, and the couple's 13-year-old daughter, Catherine, which occurred 23-25 December, also in Sirte, Libya. Fr Philemon also appealed to President Sisi to intervene on behalf of those abducted in Libya and to work for their release.

Source: International Christian Concern

Prayer Points

- ♥ Ask the Lord to deliver these Christians from their captors so they may be able to return to their homes and families.
- ♥ Pray that in the meantime, the Lord will strengthen them so they will not despair but hope in the Him during this time of severe trial.
- ♥ Pray the Lord will grow His church in Libya in spite of the severe opposition.

IRAN: Arrest of Believers during Christmas Period

Iranian Christians have requested our prayers following a spate of arrests of Christians during Christmas celebrations. On 25 December security officials raided a house in Roudehen - a city to the west of Tehran. They

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Praying for the Persecuted Church (...continued)

arrested nine Christians, named as Mehdi Kiyan, Ali Sadreddine, Mohammad Kazemi, Azin Foroodi, Mohammad-Hossein Moridian, Maryam Narimani, Alireza Naseri, Br Matin and an unidentified person. These people were taken to an unknown location, presumably for interrogation.

On 26 December security officials raided the house of Pastor Victor Bet-Tamarz, a prominent Assyrian Christian who used to serve in the leadership of Shahr-Ara Pentecostal Church in Tehran. They conducted body searches and confiscated Bibles, mobile phones and identity papers belonging to people who were attending a Christmas celebration. They detained all present, about 15 people, but most were later released with the warning that they may be summoned for further investigation. However, Pastor Victor was taken to Evin Prison in Tehran.

Another Christian present at the Christmas celebration, known as Amin, was taken back to his house, which was then searched. He also remains detained.

Prayer is also requested for Farshid Fathi, imprisoned in Rajai Shahr Prison in Karaj. Since 2010 he is serving a 6 year sentence.

On 29 December 2014, Farshid was taken to Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran where Judge Salavati issued him an additional one year sentence. The sentence was handed down in regard to the discovery of alcohol in a ward in Evin Prison, which led to an internationally controversial raid on the prison on 18 April 2014. Even though the alcohol was found in an adjacent ward, prison guards attributed it to Farshid and hence the additional 1 year sentence.

Source: Middle East Concern

Prayer Points

- ♥ Pray those arrested will know the Lord's presence, comfort and support, and that the Lord will guide and protect them during interrogation.
- ♥ Pray intimidation of Christians in Iran will not result in fear, but instead, faith will be strengthened and a clear witness maintained.
- ♥ Pray Farshid will not become discouraged with the additional sentence; pray that those in prison on account of their faith in Jesus, including Farshid and Pastor Victor, will be released.

IRAQ: Multitudes Turning to Faith in Jesus Christ

A trusted ministry partner of Voice of the Martyrs Canada recently provided the following encouraging update:

"An evangelical worker shared with us that many Muslims are very open to the Gospel now. Since ISIS began its terror raid on Mosul and surrounding cities and villages, thousands have fled to safe areas. Many of those who have responded with aid (to the immense needs of these refugees) are Christians from the West. Because of the kindness and love shown to the Muslim people, many hearts are open to the Gospel like never before. Another important dynamic is the brutality of the Islamic terrorists which has caused Muslims who do not support this group to turn away from Islam and instead place their faith in Jesus of the Bible.

"The Christian worker further told us that he visited more than 100 Muslims who are close to becoming believers in the Lord Jesus. It is exciting to see this openness! A strong prayer point can be found in Matthew 9:37-38 where Jesus said the workers are few. Because large numbers are coming to faith, there is a need for mature Christians who are able to disciple these new believers."

Source: Voice of the Martyrs Canada

Prayer Points

- ♥ Praise God for the ways in which He is moving in Iraq, despite the horrors inflicted upon the people by Islamic State. May His love and grace continue to abound within the hearts of the Iraqi people, resulting in a great harvest.
- ♥ Pray that the Lord will equip many "labourers" for this harvest to encourage and disciple the growing church.
- ♥ Pray the plans of the militant group be thwarted and that the establishment of God's peace and stability will instead prevail.



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GET READY IN 2015

BROKEN FORGOTTEN DREAMS & DESIRES ARE BEING RESTORED

By Amanda Wells

Ps 37 v 4 if you make God the utmost delight and pleasure in your life he will provide for you what you desire most
Jeremiah 29 v 11 For I know the thoughts and plans that I have for you, says the Lord, thoughts and plans for welfare and peace and not for evil, to give you hope in your final outcome.

Get ready, and brace yourself because dreams, and desires that have been shattered, broken, and even forgotten are going to be restored and healed in the blink of an eye this year.

No matter who you are or how long you have been following Jesus every one of us have a forgotten dream, desire, maybe something from childhood we have put out of our mind.

At 5pm on New Years Eve God spoke so clearly to me and said, '2015 is the year where broken and shattered even forgotten dreams are going to miraculously come to pass, and be restored.'

The number 5 is the Hebrew letter Hei, and Hei means the breath of His mouth, every word spoken, Hei also means the restoring of everything broken. It means to create and make all things fruitful, concrete and definite and to reproduce where there has been barrenness.

Hei means an outpouring of His presence and Spirit so as to restore in that encounter! That means there is a restoration to everything, even forgotten dreams and promises! God wants you to know that all your brokenness is being redeemed and mended this year!

In the dictionary, the word broken means having been fractured or damaged and is no longer in one piece or in working order, or if it concerns a person and they have given up all hope; and they are despairing.

I want you to know that 2015 is the year of HOPE RESTORED!

I believe that is such a prophetic word for this year and I would love to share the testimony that happened to me after I heard the voice of the Lord at 5pm, this was at 10pm that same night!

I used to dance. My mother was an amazing tap dancer; if war hadn't broken out she would have certainly become a professional tap dancer. My older sister was a ballet teacher but after two operations on her ankles this finished her small ballet school. My nephew was a Principal dancer for The Australian Ballet Company. So dancing ran in our blood you could say!

I loved ballet since I can ever remember, I didn't walk I flitted. I didn't like pop music I listened to Classical, Chopin, Tchaikovsky. I pleaded with my father for years to learn ballet, but the answer was always NO! 'No one makes money from dancing' he would answer.

I was terrible at school, I was always dreaming of dancing, I was graded in the bottom three of my class and my teachers despaired anything would ever become of me.

Finally my dad relented when I was in Grade 3, I was around 8 years old, and that was still a little old if you wanted to reach the pinnacle of dance but it could be done with hard work. He said to me, 'if you can get in the top six of my class in a science (basic science) exam that was coming up, I could start ballet.

Remember I was always 30th in a class of 32, this was it seemed impossible.

I decided to ask a girlfriend to come and stay a weekend at my house and we studied science the WHOLE weekend. The funny thing was she was not much better at school than I was, but we passed and we both did well. My friend came 4th in the class and I came 6th in my exam, in my class, first and ONLY time. My ballet lessons began! I adored it.

Living in Sydney, I started at a small school and then I moved to Miss Hazel Meldrum's Ballet school and I practiced every day. The only R.A.D exam my dad ever allowed me to sit was Elementary, as he still felt Ballet was a waste of time, but I would attend Saturday class and then in the changing room I would leave the door open during every class, and follow every class on Saturdays. I even copied the Solo Seal class. At 15, I was asked to sit my Solo Seal, which in those days was very young!

Sadly Ballet back 40 years ago was considered for nerds, and you were bullied badly at school, but it never stopped me. I had a dream and a goal; I wanted to go to the Australian Ballet Company, Sadlers Wells and Covent Garden.

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GET READY IN 2015 (...continued)

I had posters all over my bedroom wall, and the dream was in me every day.

It was just before summer school holidays, when Miss Hazel came to me and said, 'Miss Ferguson, you have won the scholarship for the 6 weeks holidays for full time at Sculley Boravansky's in Sydney.' I didn't know I'd even tried out for the scholarship.

I still remember the excitement; it was THE best school in Australia. Mum and dad said I could go and every day I caught a bus into the city and danced. My teacher was Dame Nellie Potts, the RAD examiner and part of the Australian Ballet Corp admissions. I adored it.

I was in a small class of only 8 girls and it was tough, on the last day we were doing Grande Jete's, Miss Potts screamed at me, 'Miss Ferguson do it again and again'. After the 10th time I lost count, and was almost in tears but one thing Ballet teaches you; is discipline and determination.

After the class Miss Potts called me to her office and said in few words. 'Miss Ferguson I want to offer you a full scholarship and an automatic entrance into the Australian Ballet Company'. I flew home and couldn't wait to tell mum and dad.

My dad said 'absolutely NOT, you are too young to be travelling into the city after school, the answer is NO, never bring it up again.'

Sobbing, I put my pointes away that day. They still had bloodstains from where we soaked our feet in methylated spirits, and danced till we bled. I pulled down every poster from my wall.

My dream was shattered. I never danced again from that day.

As the years went by, I was still able to achieve watching others fulfil their dream. I was asked out by a super nerdy medical student to see Swan Lake with Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev in Sydney before they retired! I saw Sir Robert Helpman in his last dance in Cinderella. My dream of Covent Garden was reached when I saw a Ballet there a few years ago. I even met Li Cunxin from Mao's Last dancer, at a conference in Melbourne.

But my dream to dance had died, it was shattered in pieces and I figured that it would never be restored again.

I thought about going back to Ballet, but kids, soccer, basketball, hockey, music lessons, for your children and lets be honest as a mum, you are always last.

I became critically ill, needing a double transplant. I had an amazing encounter with Heaven and Jesus when I died on the operating table. It is an encounter that changed my life, one that has kept me passionate about serving the Lord ever since.

Then I became critically ill, needing a double transplant. I had an amazing encounter with Heaven and Jesus when I died on the operating table. It is an encounter that changed my life, one that has kept me passionate about serving the Lord ever since. One thing the Lord asked me in that encounter was, 'What have you done with the gifts I have given you.' Ballet was a gift, but it was not one I could pick up and keep doing, it wasn't like art etc., it was age determined, so I never really felt it was a gift that I would give an account for: how wrong I was!!

Soon I reached an age where my metabolism was messed up so much because of the transplants that when the 'M' word came I went from a size 8 to ... lets say 'bigger'.

Roger my wonderful husband knew my love for Ballet and all through our marriage would take me to the Bloc Store in Fortitude Valley, and try his hardest to get me to buy some shoes... but my dream was dead.

Then on New Years Eve in 2014, I had lunch with a young woman in our church, a dancer who loved Ballet and yet had never been to see one. I asked would you like this 'nerd' to take you... oh yeah!

So as I was looking on the Queensland Ballet website that night to see what Ballets were coming up, my jaw fell onto the ground.

On January 12th 2015 they were advertising a boot camp for over 55's, and the person teaching is the Principal Dancer. It is designed for those who love ballet, but don't have the flexibility now but want the exercise.

It's in the Queensland Ballet Company Studios, and then they give you a lesson once a week after boot camp!

So my dream that was lost over 40 years ago, sprung to life in an instant. A Suddenly!

My God is so, so great He never forgets a dream, and no matter how long or how broken God WILL mend it and He WILL somehow bring it to pass.....

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GET READY IN 2015 (...continued)

God suddenly restored a dream I had over 40 years ago. It had been shattered, broken into pieces and trodden under foot, to the point where I had stopped even desiring it a long time ago.

In an instant the dream was restored! What was in the natural totally impossible in man's eyes, became possible, God opened the door, and in one encounter restoration took place!

I believe there is an urgency in the Heart of God today, He wants you to know and expect for the broken and forgotten dreams in your life to be restored this year.

There is no more waiting; THIS is your time for that broken, shattered dream to be restored.

Its time to get the pieces out, time to remember the dreams of childhood, because their being pieced together, He is restoring IT ALL!!!

Have an encounter with Him this year, feel His breath this year, let hope arise in your heart!!!

Can you sense Him can you feel Him? He is here!

Is it a broken wing... then you need to spread it ... you will fly! Is it a broken dream, go search He has it there, all you need to do is walk through the door, its your time its your season!

You will laugh again, you will love again, you will sing again, you will dance again, you will run again, C'mon, just get up, believe, trust and let that shattered dream create history!

Don't let your brokenness define you but let God work the brokenness together for good and make the Devil payback double for the trouble and pain he caused.

Your tears of brokenness have been liquid words in His ears, and He has heard and He will repair. There is a broken world that He has sent each and every one of us to go to and bring healing.

Your testimony of restoration over your brokenness is powerful, and it will be the inspiration someone needs to believe there is still hope for their dream!

GO FLY, you were created to fly, to dream and desire, don't let brokenness stop you, but let hope and restoration be the testimony of who you are.

Wings were created to fly in the midst of the greatest storms; a mother bird knows that if her little one doesn't know the power of its wings it will die. Know the power of your wings, you were born for today, you were born to bring hope to the hopeless. You were born to bring a testimony of victory to the desperate. You were born to change history.

Stop letting age, gender, circumstance, race define where you stay...

Get up, and FLY, and let 2015 be the greatest, best, full of increase, encounters and miracle that you have ever experienced.

BELIEVE AGAIN, HE IS WAITING!!

Now I need to go out and BUY my new Ballet shoes!

Amanda Wells

Amanda Wells Ministries

Email: Amanda@wellsministries.com.au

Website: wellsministries.com

Amanda Wells is a prophetic teacher and revivalist. Amanda lives in Brisbane Australia with her husband Roger. She is ordained in Glory City Church, Brisbane. After an encounter with heaven that totally transformed her, while on the operating table for transplant surgery, Amanda is passionate for every believer to encounter and engage Heaven and the supernatural and to fulfill their destiny here on earth. As an International speaker for 25 years in 63 Nations she has spoken on many platforms, has written 5 books, published through Destiny Image Publishing House and an active member of the Australian Prophetic Council. As well as ministry, she is heavily involved in the marketplace, has her own company as a business coach, to businesses and company's around the globe.



"A Taste of Banners" at St Peter's Church, Watsons Bay

An Introduction to Banners or a Refresher with David Stanfield

Greetings! I'm coming to Sydney in a few weeks and I would love to catch up with you again!

Carol Price is hosting an opportunity for you to invite colleagues who would enjoy the experience or simply have a refresher and join with others at one of our nation's gateways.

An invitation from Carol

A wonderful opportunity has come up for those of us who want to explore why banners have always played a significant role in Christian worship, spiritual warfare and ministry.

*David Stanfield, recognised by many around the world as "The Banner Man" will be holidaying in Sydney during January and has agreed to do a 'taster' workshop at **St Peter's Church in Watsons Bay on Tuesday 20th January 2015 from 10am to 3pm.***

St Peter's Church is a great location on the top of the cliffs overlooking the ocean and the gateway to Australia through the Sydney Heads. I look forward to seeing you and your friends there.

Blessings, Carol

P.S. It would be appreciated if you could indicate your intention to join us on either 0408 203 476, 02 9328 2996 or price.carol@bigpond.com.

**Tuesday January 20th 2015
10am to 3pm (bring your lunch)**

**St Peter's Anglican Church
331 Old South Head Rd
WATSONS BAY NSW2030**

No Charge - an offering will be taken.

Banners for sale

Plenty of parking on-site



"Every now and then throughout history, God raises up someone with an anointing to break through and establish something new. The opinions and thoughts of man will not deter them, for they are carrying a brand-new weapon in God's heavenly arsenal to be unfurled against the enemy.

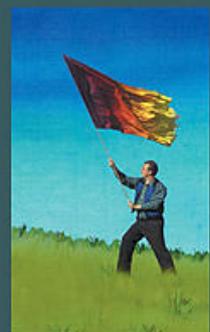
Flags and banners have been around for many years, but David Stanfield is emerging with a fresh insight into their use. He clearly carries the 'touch of God' on his life. David carries a cutting-edge anointing for the strategic and powerful release of flags and banners to be used for worship and warfare in the great 'End Time Army'.

God is using David and has uniquely gifted him to harness and train exuberant banner wavers of all ages and gender, bringing strategic order and purpose and a correct and biblical understanding of their use."

Merrilyn Billing,
Senior Pastor,
Zion's Hill, Launceston, Australia

David Stanfield
Out of Our Minds Banners
(07) 4638 3890

Changing the atmosphere over
nations, one person at a time!



Nailed Beauty

(By Dr. John Yates, issued October 2014)

Personal Matters

Early last Friday I was asking the Lord what the Church today is NOT seeing about him as her Husband. The Lord's reply was very embarrassing. He started to speak to me about his hand as the nailed hand which operates with a unique blend of sovereign power AND infinite tenderness (Luke 24:39; John 20:27; 2 Cor 10:1; Eph 4:32; Rev 1:17-18; 6:1ff.). I have rarely manifested this combination in my life, and certainly at times struggled with it in marriage. Then some hours later prior to my speaking on "The Bride of Revelation" a trusted intercessor began praying prophetically about the need to bring forth God's Word with strength in the form of gentleness. I was doubly embarrassed by my/our ignorance of such things.

Aussies just don't get power exercised through gentleness. Our only female Prime Minister stabbed her boss in the back to get his position, our present PM speaks brazenly of "shirt fronting" the head of another nation, our Finance Minister calls the leader of the Opposition a "girly boy"; this is leadership! Next morning I was still searching God about tender-hearted power when an answer came. The answer was in line with an experience I had in prayer some years ago; when the Father laid on the Son the guilt and punishment we all deserve his hand did this with the utmost gentleness.

Nailed Beauty

I was standing near a Porsche Boxster and the blokes coming into the meeting kept making comments about this powerful vehicle; but almost hidden behind it was the key to what the Lord wanted to say. There stood a life sized wooden cross studded with long nails (15cm). I pulled one of these out and the message of the Lord became transparent; "Crucified words are beautiful words." Consider these examples from the cross, "'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'" or "'Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.'" (Luke 23:34,

43). Jesus' power to forgive evil and open heaven to the wicked is unlimited, and the gentleness with which these he spoke these words is unmeasurable. Paul's comments help us here, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." (Eph 4:32). Crucified words are beautiful words because they proceed from a life totally surrendered to God (Luke 6:45). In this way Christ's death possesses a quality beauty that is eternal.

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A Beautiful Death

Old Testament worshippers offered to God a whole "burnt offering" that was completely consumed on the altar leaving nothing behind for the enjoyment of the worshipper. The Hebrew for such offerings is literally "that which ascends". The total destruction of these offerings ascends to become a "pleasing aroma" to the Lord (Gen 8:21; Ex 29:18; Lev 2:2; Ezek 16:19 etc.). Prophetically, when Israel herself is purged and purified by the destruction of land, temple and Babylonian exile she will become "a pleasing aroma" to God (Ezek 20:41). This is because in God's experience whatever is holy shares in his own beauty (Ps 96:9). All these Old Testament types point forward to Christ who is the consummating "fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" of untellable beauty (Eph 5:2).

As a lamb gently going to the slaughter Christ offers up his precious sinless life to the fiery annihilating power of God's wrath at the cross (Acts 8:32; 1 Pet 1:19). In supreme weakness he bears the arrogant power of our sin such that it is completely consumed (Mark 15:34; Rom 3:25; 1 Pet 2:24). Then in death Jesus speaks words of triumph, "Father into your hands I commit my spirit." (Luke 23:46) and his holy spirit ascends to heaven bringing untellable pleasure to the heart of the Father (Heb 9:23).

The power by which Jesus lives today is a power perfected through his submission to the sacrifice of the cross, "he was crucified in weakness but lives by the power of God" (2 Cor 12:9; 13:4). The power of the new creation in which Christ dwells in the closest presence of God resides in his flesh and blood because he gently laid down all his former strengths (Heb 2:14-15; 9:24). Such intimacy with the Father achieved through death-resurrection and ascension for us that is completely pleasing to the eyes, ears and nose of God (cf. Gen 8:21; Ps 34:15; Isa 37:29). In foolishly avoiding the truth that power is released supremely in sacrificial gentleness the modern Church has diminished the offence of the cross (Gal 5:11).

(continued next page)

Nailed Beauty (...continued)

A Little Nailing

As I grasped that long nail in my hands I was sure the Lord was saying that by shortening the nails of the cross we have diminished the revelation of his love (Rom 5:8). A fuller revelation of the infinite love of God amongst us will come when we allow the nails of the cross to shed blood amongst us (Heb 12:4). Such submission is not limited to physical persecutions.

The delightful sensations of life completely intoxicate those in love with this present world (2 Tim 4:10). Then there are realms of beauty in the mind; Donna teaches that maths is beautiful, this is beyond me, but the beauties in science and philosophy I can appreciate. None of these delights are however sufficiently beautiful to enter the new creation. Only crucified, resurrected and ascended beauty can dwell intimately with God forever. Today the Lord is seeking to turn the power all our natural affections into burnt offerings which ascend into heaven and become engulfed in the intimate presence of God (Rom 12:1-2). Then we will see manifestation of his supreme loveliness upon the earth. The Church in Australia is not short of gifted musicians, artists, engineers, lawyers, tradesmen, home-makers and so on. Yet the unsurpassable wisdom and beauty of Christ is rarely visible to the world about us through the supernatural mode of power AND tenderness (Eph 3:10). The Church needs to be taught once again that the intensification of all beauties comes through an experience of the cross whose nails have not been shortened. Here is what I have seen.

Conclusion

Donna and I have a precious relationship which is still being perfected. Praying recently about our mutual struggle to combine strength with gentleness in marriage I brought to her a picture for our prayers. This picture is also a message to the Church as Bride of Christ. It was a picture of two people (front to back) being crucified together by the same set of nails on the one cross. This picture may seem gruesome but it is the message of the gospel; "our old self was crucified with him so that the old self might be destroyed" (Rom 6:6 cf. Gal 2:20). As all our natural powers are crucified in union with the gentleness of Jesus a heavenly aroma will be released in our midst; his own beautiful presence (2 Cor 2:15). Strength through tenderness from the Church into the world speaks of a spiritual revolution that this nation has not yet seen. Such things are beyond my experience, but for this reason have continued to be the subject of my prayers. May you too share in such embarrassments for the glory of God.

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Heralding Jesus

Recently, I was reading an article with a quote about Jesus that has burdened me deeply. The person being quoted did not believe in Jesus as the New Testament teaches about our Savior. In fact, his use of our Savior's name was in such a casual, slang description that I felt my heart hurt for my Lord, my Redeemer. How the world looks at Jesus, the Name above all names must certainly grieve Him to be so misunderstood, so missed in relevancy. He created us – is ignored – and then His very name is used in a slang derogatory context. And even worse, His holy Name is used in cursing. Do you notice these things in our culture anymore: I pray we do! May we pray for those who misuse His priceless Name. It is sacred. His very Name carries power. If you can pray no other words, say JESUS with sincerity to Who He is, as the Son of God who offers eternal life. Please pray with me for the Name of JESUS to be heralded and to be revered in 2015.

Philippians 2:

vs. 8 "And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

vs. 9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and **gave him the name that is above every name,**

vs. 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

vs. 11 and **every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father...**"

Its all about Jesus!

Lisa Crump, Senior Director, National Day of Prayer

Daily Prayer Calendar for February - Pray for the Church

By Lilian Schmid, www.tendomains.org www.transformingsydney.org

The first and most important part of the church's structure is the Head Shepherd who is Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23, 4:15-16; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13). He is the one who joins and holds every part of the church's body together. Without Jesus as the head of the church, it would not be able to function or accomplish its mission. Underneath the Head Shepherd, there is a group of under shepherds, overseers, elders or pastors who are the spiritual leaders of the church. This group of spiritual leaders is composed of some individuals who draw their livelihood from ministry and others who do not and make a living elsewhere. Their primary focus is to oversee the spiritual aspects of the church.

In him all the faithful are made a holy and royal priesthood; they offer spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ, and they proclaim the perfections of him who has called them out of darkness into his marvellous light. Therefore, there is no member who does not have a part in the mission of the whole Body; but each one ought to hallow Jesus in his heart and in the spirit of prophecy bear witness to Jesus.

The Church is missionary by her very nature. Her mission is to proclaim the salvation of Christ to the ends of the earth. Each one of us in virtue of our baptism is called to live our faith and to bear witness to the Gospel in our families, friends, parish communities and society. To share in the Church's mission of Evangelization is to grow in our relationship with Jesus Christ. It is our prayer that our common witness to faith, hope and love will continue to transform the world in the love of Jesus Christ. Each one of you has responsibility to go and evangelize, through your baptism you were given authority by Jesus to go and make disciples and baptizing in the name of the Father, of the son and the Holy Spirit.

During the month of February 2015 we are praying for the Church, let us join together in prayer for unity.

Jesus walked on the earth in perfect unity with his Father's will. He did whatever he saw the Father doing and he destroyed the works of the enemy everywhere he ministered. He was God made flesh. Can it get any better than that? Yet, Jesus prayed a prayer at the end of his earthly life that has yet to be answered. At his last supper with his disciples he prayed a prayer for all who would believe in him: **"that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me."** (John 17:21)

Pray each day of February for the Church's unity (adapted from prayerscripture.com)

- 1 1 Pet 5:6 Heavenly Father, we humble ourselves before your throne of mercy.
- 2 1 Jn 1:9 Forgive us for our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- 3 Heb 10:22 Let us draw near to You with a pure heart.
- 4 Heb 10:22 having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience,
- 5 Heb 10:22 and our bodies washed with pure water.
- 6 Col 3:16 Let Your Word dwell in us richly.
- 7 Col 1:9 Fill us with the knowledge of Your will,
- 8 Col 1:9 in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,
- 9 Col 1:10 that we may live and conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of You,
- 10 Col 1:10 fully pleasing You, and being fruitful in every good work.
- 11 Eph 4:23 And, by being renewed in the spirit of our minds,
- 12 Col 3:12 that we put on tender mercies, kindness, humility,
- 13 Col 3:12 meekness, longsuffering; bearing with and forgiving one another.
- 14 Eph 4:13 That we dwell together in the unity of the faith,
- 15 1 Thes 5:12 recognizing those who labor among us,
- 16 1 Thes 5:13 esteeming them highly in love for their work's sake.
- 17 1 Cor 1:10 I pray we all speak the same thing, with no divisions among us,
- 18 Phil 1:27 standing fast in one spirit, striving together for the faith.
- 19 Heb 13:9 That we're not carried about with various and strange doctrines,
- 20 2 Tim 2:15 But we study, rightly dividing the word of truth.
- 21 Jude 1:16 That we're not complainers, walking after our own lusts,
- 22 1 Tim 6:18 but are rich in good works, ready to give and willing to share.
- 23 Eph 4:16 I pray that the whole body be knit and joined together,
- 24 Eph 4:16 and that every part does its share causing growth to the body.
- 25 1 Pet 4:10 As each one has received a gift, let him minister it,
- 26 Phil 2:4 looking out for the interests of others.
- 27 1 Pet 1:22 Let us all fervently love one another with a pure heart,
- 28 2 Jn 1:8 so that we do not lose the things we have worked for.