

Katoomba Baptist Church Bulletin

41 Waratah Street, Katoomba NSW 2780.

September 2019.

Sunday service 10am.

Prayer meeting: Each Saturday, 9am.

Bible study: Second and fourth Wednesday of each month, 10-11am.

LIFT (Ladies In Fellowship Together): First Thursday of the month, 10am, in the church hall.

Prayer for Israel: Third Friday of each month, 1.30pm.

Church lunch: Fourth Sunday of each month after the service.

From the editor

“What comes into our minds when we think of God is the most important thing about us.” (A.W. Tozer)

What do people think of God? A divine version of Santa Claus? A killjoy? A tyrant? The universe itself? These are some common opinions. People who have a more favorable view of God would say that He expresses love, grace, kindness and mercy. That He embodies justice and goodness. But these positive attributes are traits that can also be found in varying degrees in humanity. Luther, in a letter to Erasmus, wrote: “Your thoughts of God are too human.” People can make God a projection of themselves instead of trying to know Him as He is.

Perhaps the biggest barrier to knowing God is His holiness. We may be created in the image of God but holiness is not an inherent part of our nature. Try this for yourself. Ask your unbelieving friends and relatives “What do you think of God?” and you would probably never hear holiness mentioned. You may not hear it from some Christians either!

Without the concept of a holy God then any understanding of the importance of saving faith unravels. Without a deep reverence for God’s holiness then there is no awareness of sin and the need for salvation. If we have no regard for the standards of a morally perfect God then people will live according to their own standards or the standards imposed by the societies in which they live.

Compared to the majesty and perfection of God even the most moral man who ever existed would stand before Him in the “filthy rags” of his good works (Isaiah 64:6). If this seems harsh it is only because even that seemingly good person would have committed sins throughout his life. Our fallen nature makes it impossible for us not to. If he refused the salvation God offers through His Son he would have been guilty of committing the most damning sin of all no matter how moral a person he may have been.

As we grow in our faith, the Spirit convicts us of sin and reveals to us how we fall far short of God’s standards. That daily we struggle with thoughts, words and deeds that dishonour Him. It is of great comfort that the Apostle Paul also had this struggle and expressed his anguish so passionately in Romans 7:24: “Oh wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” What Christian hasn’t prayed this?

Praise God that we have the Lord Jesus as our Saviour. The Lamb of God who has accomplished what no man has ever accomplished: to live a completely sin-free life. Only in the Lord Jesus do we “become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). We can never achieve holiness through our own human efforts. It’s impossible for sinners to be reconciled to God by their works. But through the perfect sacrifice of Christ we can be holy: “For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified” (Hebrews 10:14). We are works in progress and God sees us as we will become in glory because He sees His Son in us today. Let this truth strengthen you whenever you feel you are faltering in your walk of faith.

In Heaven, around God’s throne, there is the endless praise of the angels: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty” (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8). Can you honestly say that this is what you think of God?

To Almighty God be the glory. May our Saviour’s name be exalted.

Your brother in Christ, Bill.

KBC news

- This month’s preaching roster is: Daniel Thomas (1st, 8th, 15th), John Buckle (22nd), Barry May (29th).
- All KBC services are available on CD or MP3 if you miss any or wish to hear them again.
- The KBC prayer meetings are held on Saturday mornings at 9am. Please join the “thawing remnant”!

Please pray

- with thankful hearts for all the Lord’s blessings.
- for the Lord to guide us as we seek His will for a new pastor at Katoomba Baptist Church.
- that the Lord will minister to those in our fellowship who are undergoing trials and suffering.
- for Israel, for the “Peace of Jerusalem” (Ps 122:6) and for the Gospel there “To the Jew first.” (Rom 1:16).
- for our persecuted brothers and sisters in nations rich and poor and for those who persecute them.
- for revival in our community, state, nation, and throughout the world, and for our faith to increase.
- for the Lord to have mercy and send rain to where it is needed: for Australia to repent and turn to Him.
- for the power of the Spirit in our lives, for discernment and wisdom as we live through these last days.
- that the Lord will help us to use our gifts for His glory and to share the Gospel with others.
- for missions, especially those we support as a church.
- for our community and nation, that many will turn to Christ, that our leaders will be led by Him.
- that we continue to grow in Christian love as a church, serving the Lord and each other.
- Maranatha! (“Come, O Lord!”)

**“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks:
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)**

September birthdays

Nancy F 13th, Michael W 14th, Joshua T 15th, Peter C 17th, Loren H 22nd.

May the Lord bless you abundantly on your special day and in the year ahead in your walk with Him.

(If you would like your birthday to be listed then please contact the editor Bill Fewer: hillbillyfewer@gmail.com)

“When led of the Spirit, the child of God must be as ready to wait as to go, as prepared to be silent as to speak.”

[Lewis Sperry Chafer]

From WEC Australia website (<https://wec.com.au/stories/digital-discipleship>)

Digital Discipleship

If you blinked you might have missed it. The world has changed dramatically in the years since 2010, the year WEC launched Mobile Advance, an initiative connecting the lost with the Church using the mobile devices we all have in our pockets. In 2010 only 14% of the world was checking in to Facebook, WhatsApp or any other social media platform; today 42% of us are! Amazing - nearly 30% of the world joined a social media account in just seven years! Likewise, approximately 20% of the world's population began using the internet or a mobile phone for the first time in these past seven years.

These new digital connections provide amazing opportunities – and we're taking them - to connect with seekers in some of the most closed countries. Connections made over social media turn to private discussions which lead to face-to-face meetings and even the establishment of new fellowships. Thousands in some of the most restricted countries have been enabled to download a copy of the Bible in their language, after coming across digital “billboards” in the midst of their online activities. Missionaries in some countries are regularly meeting with isolated believers to fellowship, pray and study the word together via WhatsApp chats.

On-the-ground outreaches are enriched by the media our workers now carry with them. Missionaries with a Bible app on their phone have God's word with them whenever they are out. They are also enabled to not just speak of Jesus, but also introduce and see people fall in love with him as they see him portrayed via the JESUS Film and other media on their phone's screen.

There is a saying: “One hand does not clap alone”. WEC is excited to be partnering with the wider Church, helping to lead the way forward via the leadership role we have in the Mobile Ministry Forum, a network with over 1200 participants representing over 125 agencies. To learn more about digital outreach check us out at www.mobmin.org.

Spurgeon on praying for evangelism

May the Lord push men out, thrust them out, drive them out, and compel them to preach the Gospel. For unless they preach by a divine compulsion, there will be no spiritual compulsion in their ministry upon the hearts of others. “Pray you therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would thrust out labourers into his harvest.” And notice, beloved that our Lord said, “into His harvest.” ... Jesus puts it before us that it is God's harvest which is perishing for want of reaping.

Suppose an angel should take you upon his wing, and poise you in mid-space some hundreds of miles above the earth, where you could look down on the globe with strengthened eyesight? Suppose you rested there and the world revolved before you in twenty-four hours, the sun light gradually coming upon all portions of it, and suppose that with the sunlight there should be rendered visible certain colours which would mark where there was grace, where there was idolatry, where there was atheism, where there was popery? You would grieve to see only here and there upon our globe, like little drops of dew, bright marks of the grace of God, but various shades of darkness would show you that the whole world lies in the wicked one still.

And if the vision changed, and you saw the two hemispheres spread out like a map, and transformed into a corn field with corn all white for the harvest, how sad would you be to see here and there men reaping their little patches, doing the best they can, but the great mass of the corn untouched by the sickle. You would see leagues of land where never an ear was reaped, that we know of, from the foundations of the world. You would be grieved to think that God's corn is spoiling, men whom He has made in His own image, and made for immortality, perishing for lack of the Gospel. “Pray you,” that is the stress of the whole text—“Pray you therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would thrust forth labourers into his harvest,” that these fields may not rot before our eyes.

[Charles Spurgeon, from the sermon “Harvest Men Wanted” Matt.9:37-38, Matt.10:1.]

Friday September 20th, 1.30pm — Prayer for Israel at Katoomba Baptist Church

For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns. [Isaiah 62:1]

Contributions welcome: Our church bulletin is available on the first Sunday service of the month. Contributions of a missionary and devotional nature can be made to the editor, Bill Fewer (email: hillbillyfewer@gmail.com). Please email Bill if you would prefer to receive the bulletin electronically.

And Jesus said to them,

**“But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit:
some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”**

[Mark 4:20]

Katoomba Baptist Church Bulletin Online Extra

“Omnipotent”

a poem by Jemima Woolley

What is more beautiful
Than unstinted love?
Can image be painted
Or sung in a song?

Decreeing the future
From mind out of time,
Perfection of knowledge
And mercy combined.

Invisible manifest,
The Glory of God,
To reconcile sinners
At grievous cost.

The Alpha, Omega,
Beginning and End,
Decrees a bright future
From forever, Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria

“The Rich Man and Lazarus”

by Costa Karagounas

Luke 16:19-31, The Rich Man and Lazarus, is an account containing noteworthy insights. Many maintain the account is parabolic, but for these purposes I will assume it is historical, since all known parables omit the names of the characters. That begs the question: why isn't the rich man named? The grave answer is that his name was omitted from the Book of Life.

We're informed that the following are consequences upon the death of the unsaved:

1. consciousness is retained (*...when he lifted up his eyes..*) v 23,
2. emotions, feelings and senses are retained (*..because I am suffering in this flame.*) v 24,
3. memory is retained (*...for I have five brothers...*) v 28,
4. speech is retained (*Then when he called out..*) v24,
5. cognition is retained (*...so that he could warn them, so that they would not come into this place of torture'*) v 28,
6. the soul is found in torment immediately after death (*And in Hades, as he was in torment..*) v23,
7. those in torment could observe those in Paradise and vice versa (v23), and
8. the chasm between the two states cannot be vaulted (v26).

The account is a contrast between the tormenting parched state of the rich man, thirsting for the merest drop of water upon his tongue, and the Water of Life going out from the throne of God and the Lamb in heaven (Rev 22:1).

The rich man doesn't question his torment. He accepts it as the just reward for his earthly deeds and omissions. He even assumes a genuine concern for kith and kin, asking Lazarus be sent back to warn those coming after. New Covenant believers know from Hebrews 9:28 that it is appointed for man to live once and then the judgement. Abraham doesn't mention this to the rich man, but the implication is the rich man knows that only saved souls can be resurrected. Christians know of the Resurrection unto Life.

The rich man had certainly heard Scripture. He recognised father Abraham. We can assume he knew some Scripture, having at least heard the weekly scroll readings sitting in one of the prominent synagogue seats for the wealthy Jesus was apt to criticise the Pharisees about.

Pleading for mercy was always available to the rich man in earthly life; pleading it to God on account of sinfulness. But in torment, the rich man continues in error, scriptural and spiritual, pleading mercy unto Abraham (v24).

He demonstrates further error. The rich man expects the earthly servant Lazarus to fetch water to allay his thirst, as though the station of earthly servant continues perpetually, as though even in torment the rich man somehow retains social status. If the rich man had read his Torah scroll (he was wealthy enough to have commissioned one from the Scribes) he would have read that Adonai pulls down rulers and raises up the lowly.

There is plain view from where the rich man is in torment across the chasm to where Abraham is with Lazarus in front (v23). Thus it's very interesting that in Paradise there is fellowship but in torment no mention is made of any other soul, nearby or afar to the rich man. What a ghastly implication, that the rich man will be in perpetual lone torment! Extrapolating from this suggests even Satan will not be visible to tormented souls. All such will be in eternal separation from God and from one another.

An interesting observation to end upon is that Abraham knew Moses and the prophets who lived around 500 years and more after Abraham died!

"World Gone Crazy"

by Michael Woolley

(If the links doesn't open, click on them while holding down the Control key on a PC or the Command key on a Mac)

Firstly, things Financial/Economic:

Trade wars are merely a symptom of what has been occurring "behind-the-curtain" for decades: for decades each country has been striving to have a lower currency (exchange-rate) in order that their exports would be more competitive. As we approach the "End-game" of globalism ([impoverishing populaces](#) and destroying all of the Middle-class in the process), the battle becomes heated beyond that of name-calling. Each one attempting to [out-manipulate](#) the other, Countries borrowing to [absurd levels](#) to buy their country's debt (forcing rates to go negative) and debase their currency (which will lead eventually to **all** falling into a Venezuela/Zimbabwe-like collapse) and so eliminating any chance of "[Return to Normal](#)".

Typically, interest paid should reflect the "level of risk" to your capital. Share dividends pay a higher rate than do lending to companies (often secured against assets), which pay higher than Term Deposits. This is how it should be, and makes perfect sense. But what happens when rates are zero – or negative? This communicates that there is **no** risk to your capital, it penalises those with funds to invest and distorts the true amount or risk. It deceives. In China the government has "taken-over" (or passed-on) the debts of several insolvent corporations recently, who were not able to repay their borrowings. In the west the investors would have received cents-on-the-dollar and the company gone into receivership – the reward for their risk-taking - but not in China!

All Governments are busy juggling a façade that "All is well" – a façade that will eventually collapse in a steaming pile of unpayable personal and corporate debt – with deeply-indebted Governments keen to indenture their populace.

Australia will not escape Negative Interest Rates either; it is just a matter of when – not if. To someone in the finance/investment industry, it is shocking that within a space of only three years that the rates on 10-year Government bonds dropped from 3% to below 1% - [lower than the RBA cash rate](#) - for the Government to "mind" your money – for TEN YEARS! It's no wonder that the Age Pension Deeming Rates at 1.75% are considered unjust!

As the amount of [negative-yielding](#) debt globally has soared this week to an astounding **\$16 Trillion**, the one asset that has kept pace with this financial travesty-come-train-wreck is gold, leading [several institutional funds managers](#) to declare it the only safe-haven. The price rising as it has over this last year would say the Truly wealthy are rushing to it as the last financial safe-haven. Maybe this is the peak prior to the crash in its price - God alone knows. All currency /financial systems have their "day in the sun". All [eventually fade into history/collapse](#). Gold has been a monetary metal since the earliest of civilisations, but one day it, too, will be considered of little value...

The alternatives to trusting Governments (mankind) is trusting in either the market place (mankind) – or God, alone.

70 years of [modern "Investing Consensus"](#) is coming to an end. Negative interest rates were considered an absurdity when Modern Portfolio Theory originated, now all investment theory – and outcomes, as a result – are about to be turned on its head over the next several years, as the banquet of unintended consequences is about to be served!

Change the Subject: Geopolitics. Societal changes.

2.5 million Chinese have been prevented from travelling by train. The [Communist Party celebrates](#) the effectiveness of its social Credit System (caution: profane video attached!). The bad news for us is that it's [already](#) being used – in those [ports leased by the Chinese](#) – in Australia! Which explains why there are increasingly vocal calls to [militarise Northern Australia](#). Generals are always “fighting the last war”, so will this be our version of [the Maginot Line](#)? It's more likely that the ground-zero for the next war will be Artificial Intelligence, which is a war [America can win](#) – if it takes the coming war “seriously”.

The trusting of Governments has its downside – residents of one of America's most Left-leaning states (as [the exodus](#) from the state suggests) [are about to find out](#). It's sometimes those small things that “matter”... And whatever you do, don't go trusting [the Global Governance crowd](#)...

Remember how there was no need to worry about fluoride in the water? Well, it's mostly, OK – [except if you're in the womb](#)... There's a common theme here, too, with recently proposed legislation. I guess they're under voting age, so they must not matter...

Not to belittle the modern diseases of mental health, but I cannot but help thinking [these two are related](#)... not that I'd discuss these things in public, let alone on Social Media where just about [anybody with a conservative viewpoint](#) is banned/deleted. [Here's looking at you, Facebook](#). A mention goes to those [happy 'Palestinians'](#) out there, too.

“The Bride” a Bible Study by Jack Kelley (Grace Thru Faith Ministries)

[From the Grace Thru Faith website, <https://gracethrufaith.com/topical-studies/prophecy/the-bride/>]

This is an update of an article originally published in March 2004. While it's based on the Bible, it also includes Jewish wedding traditions from Biblical times. Some of these traditions go all the way back to Abraham's time and are described in Genesis 24. Others come from various books and commentaries I've read.

Birth of a Tradition

We'll begin with a summary of the story of Isaac and Rebekah from Genesis 24. Abraham was getting old and Sarah had died, so he sent his chief servant to the land of his brother to get a wife for Isaac. The servant loaded up 10 camels with gifts and set off. After some time he arrived in the village of Abraham's brother Nahor. Approaching a young woman near a well, he asked for a drink, in accordance with a plan he had devised with the Lord. When the young woman offered to draw water for his camels as well, she was giving him the confirming sign he had asked the Lord to provide. He then accompanied her to her family's home.

That evening he asked her family for permission to take the young woman, whose name was Rebekah, back home to be the bride of his master's son Isaac. Using the gifts to reward her and to compensate her family for the loss of their daughter, he said he wanted to leave immediately. When Rebekah's father turned to her for final approval, she agreed and they set off the next morning. After several days of travel during which the servant told her all about her betrothed, they arrived at Isaac's home where she met him for the first time. That very evening Isaac and Rebekah were married.

That's The Way It Goes

Members of royalty often followed a procedure very similar to this in obtaining brides for their sons, sometimes arranging them years in advance of the actual event. Common people also adopted this method, but of course, with them, the prospective groom acted on his own behalf rather than sending someone in his stead.

Even today in some Middle Eastern cultures arranged marriages are common, with the groom's mother selecting a bride for her son. The logic here is that a young man's mother knows her son and his temperament better than anyone and can most accurately predict what kind of woman would please him. On one of our trips to Israel and Jordan, our Jordanian guide told us that his marriage had been arranged in this way and he was very happy with his mother's selection.

Back To Biblical Times

In those days when a man took a liking to a young woman, he approached her father to ask for her hand in marriage. Due to the prevailing economic conditions back then, it took a long time for a man to become financially stable enough to think about starting a family. When he did, he looked for a bride who was still young enough to

bear him many children who could help him work the land when he got old. So while the man in these cases could be in his thirties, the potential bride would often still be a teenager.

Inviting the man into their home, the young woman's parents sat down with him around a table while she brought wine and four cups. After she had poured each of them (but not herself) a cup of wine, she listened while this man, who she was meeting for the very first time, described his assets, skills and other qualities that made him a desirable mate. A brief negotiation followed where the price he would have to pay as compensation for the family's loss of their daughter was determined. It was called the bride price.

If the two men reached an agreeable amount all eyes turned to the daughter who had been listening intently to the entire discussion. She now had to decide if she would take this man to be her husband. If she turned her empty cup upside down, the man went away never to return. But if she filled her cup and took a sip of the wine, she was agreeing to become his wife.

At that point, they signed a betrothal agreement, wherein the man promised on oath to return for the young woman when all the wedding preparations were complete. Now they were officially engaged and the relationship could only be terminated by a divorce. He went away to build a home for them on family property next to his father's house. This could take some time, and the couple rarely met again until the father of the groom pronounced the newly built home fit for habitation. Only then was the wedding date set, and the man was given permission by his father to go collect his bride for the wedding.

During this time the young woman was to watch and wait at her parents' home. She and her bridesmaids had to maintain a constant state of preparedness, since the wedding date would not be revealed to her until the bridegroom actually appeared at her door to take her to their new home.

Surprise, Surprise

For his part, the groom would try to show up unexpectedly to surprise her, carrying her off suddenly "like a thief in the night" when no one would see them. The only advance warning she would get was the sound of his voice shouting her name and the blast of a ram's horn.

When the bridesmaids discovered that the bride had been "spirited away" they would organize a great torch-lit procession, going throughout the whole town announcing that the wedding banquet was soon to begin. The banquet typically capped off a seven-day celebration during which the bride and groom were hidden away in their private rooms while the whole town made merry. Then they reappeared at the banquet to receive the congratulations of their friends and family, and their married life officially began. The father of the groom picked up the tab for all the festivities.

Maybe you're beginning to see the similarities. The Lord Jesus, being royalty, does not come directly seeking His bride. His Father sends an unnamed servant on His behalf, just like Abraham did. This servant, of course, is the Holy Spirit, our Comforter, who beckons us. Interestingly, the name of Abraham's servant was Eliezer, which translates "God is my Comforter." And even more so, in Genesis 24 Eliezer's name is never mentioned, as if he's serving as a model of the Holy Spirit, whose name is also withheld from us.

The role of the Holy Spirit is to extol the virtues of the Son of God, who when told that the Bride price was nothing less than His own shed blood, agreed to die for us, and for the joy set before Him endured the cross. (Heb. 12:2). His last word from the cross, recorded in John 19:30, was "tetelestai", a Greek word that's been translated "It is finished". In the Lord's time, it was a legal term that literally meant, "Paid in full", It was written across paid invoices and prison documents upon release of prisoners who had served their full terms, and had therefore paid their debt to society. With His death, Jesus paid the price in full for His bride.

Who Loves You?

At the Last Supper Jesus had hoisted His cup and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." (1 Cor. 11:25). When we first "take the cup" we're signifying that we're officially betrothed, and we're rewarded with gifts from the Holy Spirit, who is sealed within us as a guarantee of our inheritance (Eph. 1:13-14). We then begin our journey, the balance of our life on Earth, while the Holy Spirit continues to teach us about our betrothed and helps us develop behavioural standards that are pleasing to Him.

*As He does, we learn to our utter amazement that we have always been our Lord's consuming desire,
That He lived so that we might come into existence and be set apart,
That He has longed for us to know how much He loves us,
That His every word and action were designed to bring us honour and express His devotion to us,
That He has dedicated Himself to us and covered all of our imperfections with His love, and
That He gave His life for us.*

For His part, the Lord is even now building a house for us. "You trust in God; trust also in me," He said "In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me so that you also may be where I am." (John 14:1-3) He has sworn an oath to return for us when the wedding preparations are complete and take us to His Father's house, to the place He's been preparing for us.

Soon And Very Soon

One day when we least expect it, He'll come like a thief in the night and spirit us away to our new home. For the Lord Himself will come down from Heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so will we be with the Lord forever. (1 Thes. 4:16-17).

In Heaven, the King and His Bride will be hidden away in our rooms, while on Earth the last seven years of human history unfold (Isa. 26:19-20). At the end, following the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-9), we'll return together to rule and reign for 1000 years, and then it's off to our eternal life with Him. Praise the Lord.

[There is also a more comprehensive teaching on this topic by Jack Kelley in audio and transcript form at: <https://gracethrufaith.com/audio/the-bride/>

Jack Kelley, the founder of Grace Thru Faith Ministries, was an excellent Bible teacher who went to be with the Lord in 2015. I highly recommend him as a resource in your Bible study.]

From Christian Blind Ministry Australia (CBM) website

(<https://www.cbm.org.au/stories/transforming-lives-the-passion-driving-us-and-our-work/>)

CBM has a long and inspiring history of working to prevent blindness and support those with vision loss. From humble beginnings when a German Pastor, Ernst Christoffel, was moved by extreme poverty to create a global force for change and reach people in need on four continents, CBM has helped to bring hope and end poverty for millions of people over the past 110 years. Each year here in Australia we work to transform the lives of 10 million people around the world.

Twenty years ago the international community came together as part of a mission to eliminate the main causes of all preventable and treatable blindness by the year 2020. As a leading international eye care agency, CBM joined this global initiative and the call of "The Right to Sight".

*Through CBM's international work treating preventable blindness for children and adults, we realised that inclusion was key to achieving positive outcomes for people, their families and their communities. So we developed and implemented our **Inclusive Eye Health Initiative**.*

The initiative specifically addresses the goals set out in the Vision 2020 Global Declaration with a special focus on making eye health programs accessible and open to all members of the community, including people with a disability and those who are marginalised and socially excluded. CBM has been following Jesus' example of inclusion, hope and justice in our work. Our Christian faith is founded in love and justice. That's why each year we're determined to touch the lives of more people; the hardest to reach, the invisible and the forgotten. As a Christian organisation, we believe we are all equal and we aim to ensure no one is left behind.

While our priority is to treat or prevent blindness, for some individuals this isn't possible, and they face living with permanent vision impairment. It's essential to the CBM Inclusive Eye Health Initiative that these people can access the same opportunities in health care, education and employment as everyone else, with the aim to create social inclusion and empowerment throughout their lives. This approach shows our commitment to ending avoidable blindness and our compassion in ensuring that those who are unable to receive treatment are also supported.

CBM's Inclusive Eye Health Initiative prioritises three areas:

1) Strengthening national eye health systems

We guide partners and help them implement inclusive and comprehensive eye health services that are integrated into national health systems, so the services are sustainable, fully locally owned, and delivered to quality standards.

2) Improved access to inclusive, comprehensive eye care services

This includes interventions to prevent and treat avoidable blindness, plus improve the quality of life for people with permanent visual impairment. We especially target people that are socially excluded and lack access to

educational, economic and social opportunities. We work with partners who are fully committed to delivering inclusive and comprehensive services to communities most in need.

3) Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs)

We expand access to preventative and curative services to the poorest communities experiencing endemic diseases. This includes providing drugs to prevent and treat trachoma and river blindness (onchocerciasis). For those with trachoma, we develop referral networks for rehabilitation, counselling, education and employment opportunities; ensuring our approach is inclusive for people with a disability. NTD programmes are so important in eliminating preventable blindness, that's why we ensure our partners maintain activities even during times of instability or conflict.

Miracles happen through the Inclusive Eye Health Initiative

Nhung from Vietnam received the precious Miracle of cataract surgery to restore her sight last year. Her cataract was removed and Nhung was fitted with the right prescription glasses so she could see clearly. Today, Nhung has an even greater gift – to dream of a bright future for herself, her family and her community.

This wonderful Miracle was made possible by the compassion of our supporters and their commitment to positively changing the lives of others. There are many stories of change, inclusion and hope that come from CBMs work in inclusive eye health. For over 30 years, CBM Australia has helped millions of people benefit from real, lasting change through proven community based programs. Acts of love from our supporters can and do change lives forever. **Last year thousands of generous Aussies came together to give the gift of a sight-saving Miracle to 38,948 children and adults.**

This year, with your help, we aim to reach a record-breaking 40,000 Miracles. Donate today.

Dave Hunt on resurrection and the Christian faith

Being a Christian does not consist in following a set of rules or principles, or embracing a religious philosophy that “lives on” after the death of its founder. Nor is it appeasing a deity through ritual or tuning into some cosmic power through a patented meditation process. True Christianity is based upon faith in Jesus Christ and in His death, burial, and resurrection as historic events that actually took place upon this planet and were essential for our salvation in satisfying the claims of divine justice on account of our sin. It is Christ's victory over death that alone gives the assurance of eternal life to those who believe in Him. Moreover, the resurrection of Christ is the pledge that those who have received Him as Saviour and Lord will have their bodies raised from the dead also.

Herein lies another unique element of Christianity. Its heaven is not a disembodied spiritual existence beyond the grave, but the eternal abode of resurrected, immortal, glorified beings whose bodies have been reunited with soul and spirit to live eternally with God. The bodies of millions upon millions of Christians have been laid in graves all over the world to decay and disintegrate. The very atoms which once made up those bodies have been absorbed into the soil or have become part of earth's flora and fauna in the endless cycle of nature. How could such bodies be resurrected?

Of course, all through life the atoms in a person's body are constantly being replaced through the intake of food and the elimination of waste. There are no oxygen, hydrogen, or carbon atoms with individual names engraved upon them. Nevertheless, God will gather together the elements of each Christian's body as it was at death and bring it back to life. But that is not all. In the process of resurrection there will be a complete transformation to what the Bible calls a “spiritual body” (1 Corinthians 15:44). We will be recognizable for who we are, yet we will be new and glorious creations with bodies like our Lord's.

Heaven is thus not only a place but a state of being beyond anything earthlings can presently imagine (1 Corinthians 2:9). The resurrected body undoubtedly has a completely different composition of elements and capabilities unknown to modern science, which fit it for the new universe to come. There was, as Scripture tells us (“a spirit hath not flesh and bones [not blood], as ye see Me have” - Luke 24:39), no blood in Christ's resurrected body, for that “life of the flesh” (Leviticus 17:11) had been poured out in death for our sins. No longer the blood flowing through veins and bringing nourishment to cells, but the indwelling Spirit of God will provide the eternal source of life to those who, because of their faith in Christ as Saviour and Lord, are resurrected with bodies like His. He promised: “Because I live, ye shall live also” (John 14:19)

[Dave Hunt, ‘Whatever Happened to Heaven?’, Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Oregon, 1988, pp.24-5]

“Learn the Bible in 24 Hours” a teaching series by Chuck Missler

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLRj8AJuzejRwHdeFua3pzmwPB_JCS0mlq]

Got a 24 hours to spare? Now I must confess that I haven't watched all of these videos (yes, there's 24 of them) but I have read Chuck Missler's book of the same title. My initial misgivings were quickly swept away by the teaching by the late Mr Missler. Yet another man of God recently promoted to glory!

J.C. Ryle: “Why Were Our Reformers Burned?”

[http://archive.churchsociety.org/publications/documents/CAL006_RyleReformers.pdf]

An 1867 lecture by Ryle which is a powerful contending for the faith. It is too long to include in the KBC Bulletin but I pray that you may take the time to read through it. I found it to be very moving experience to learn of the testimonies of men martyred for their obedience to the Word of God. Men such as John Rogers, John Hooper, Rowland Taylor, Robert Farrar, John Bradford, Nicholas Ridley, Hugh Latimer, John Philpot, and Thomas Cranmer. It is inspiring to read of their desire to honour Christ and His perfect sacrifice on the cross even if it came at the cost of their own lives. J.C. Ryle shows how important it is that we celebrate the Lord's supper as we do.

The following is a brief extract which I hope will encourage you to go on and read the entire lecture by Ryle:

But I pass on to a point which I hold to be one of cardinal importance in the present day. The point I refer to is the special reason why our Reformers were burned. Great indeed would be your mistake if you supposed that they suffered for the vague charge of refusing submission to the Pope, or desiring to maintain the independence of the Church of England. Nothing of the kind! The principal reason why they were burned was because they refused one of the peculiar doctrines of the Romish Church. On that doctrine, in almost every case, hinged their life or death. If they admitted it they might live; if they refused it they must die.

The doctrine in question was the real presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the consecrated elements of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper. Did they or did they not believe that the body and blood of Christ were actually present under the forms of bread and wine after the words of consecration were pronounced? Did they or did they not believe that the real body of Christ, which was born of the Virgin Mary, was present on the so-called altar so soon as the mystical words had passed the lips of the priest? Did they or did they not? That was the simple question. If they did not believe and admit it they were burned.

There is a wonderful and striking unity in the stories of our martyrs on the subject. Some of them no doubt were attacked about the marriage of priests. Some of them were assaulted about the nature of the Catholic Church. Some of them were assailed on other points. But all, without an exception, were called to special account about the real presence, and in every case their refusal to admit the doctrine formed one principal cause of their condemnation.

Sermons to Watch

Two challenging sermons by Pastor Bill Randles, the second one has some excellent teaching on the current controversy over rugby player's Israel Folau's bold Christian witness and his persecution by the media:

- 1) "Clarity About Heaven and Hell"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbp-LtJGGbY>
- 2) "Zephaniah 2 - Gaza in Prophecy & Israel Folau"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gNa_MISju2Y

[Pastor Bill Randles, Believers in Grace Fellowship, website: <https://www.believersingrace.com>]

A.W Tozer on John 3:16 and what it means for you and me

Unbelief always hides behind three trees. Here they are, "somewhere else," "some other time," "somebody else." Somebody hears a sermon on John 3:16 and says, "Somewhere else it's true; on somebody else it's true; some other time it's true, but not now." That is a hideous lie of unbelief.

Faith rises up in belief in God and about oneself and says, "God sent His Son into the human race that He might redeem the human race. He cannot redeem the human race en masse. He has to redeem and save the human race as individuals. Believe about yourself and say to yourself, Not somewhere else, but here. Not some other time, but now. Not somebody else, but me."

Single yourself out, not somebody else, but you. Jesus Christ came not to condemn you but to save you, knowing your name, knowing all about you, knowing your weight right now, knowing your age, knowing what you do, knowing where you live, knowing what you ate for supper and what you will eat for breakfast, where you will sleep tonight, how much your clothing cost, who your parents were. He knows you individually as though there were not another person in the whole entire world. He died for you as certainly as if you had been the only lost one. He knows the worst about you and is the One who loves you the most.

If you are out of the fold and away from God, put your name in the words of John 3:16 and say, "Lord, it is I. I'm the reason and cause why Thou didst on earth come to die." That kind of positive, personal faith and a personal Redeemer is what saves you. If you will rush in there, you do not have to know all the theology and the right words. You can say, "I am the one He came to die for."

Write it down in your heart and say, "Jesus, this is me — Thee and me," as though there were no others. Have that kind of personalized belief in a personal Lord and Saviour. Once that kind of personalization takes place in the human breast they do not fool with that fellow anymore. The Lord God Almighty witnesses within that soul that something has happened there and he belongs to God, and God to him. He no longer needs to be fed like a baby with lukewarm, watered-down milk. He grows in grace because he has had that personalized, individual experience of knowing that John 3:16 means him.

[A.W. Tozer, 'And He Dwelt Among Us', Regal Books, Ventura, California, 2009, pp. 136-7.]

PSALM 117 (excerpts)

**Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good!
For His mercy endures forever.**

**Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness,
And for His wonderful works to the children of men!
For He satisfies the longing soul,
And fills the hungry soul with goodness.**

**Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness,
And for His wonderful works to the children of men!
Let them exalt Him also in the assembly of the people,
And praise Him in the company of the elders.**

**He turns rivers into a wilderness,
And the watersprings into dry ground;
A fruitful land into barrenness,
For the wickedness of those who dwell in it.
He turns a wilderness into pools of water,
And dry land into watersprings.
There He makes the hungry dwell,
That they may establish a city for a dwelling place,
And sow fields and plant vineyards,
That they may yield a fruitful harvest.
He also blesses them, and they multiply greatly;
And He does not let their cattle decrease.**

**When they are diminished and brought low
Through oppression, affliction, and sorrow,
He pours contempt on princes,
And causes them to wander in the wilderness where there is no way;
Yet He sets the poor on high, far from affliction,
And makes their families like a flock.
The righteous see it and rejoice,
And all iniquity stops its mouth.**

**Whoever is wise will observe these things,
And they will understand the lovingkindness of the Lord.**
