

Faith AND Life.

Gathering

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Editorial



... let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another...

Hebrews 10:24-25 (TNIV)

The writer of Hebrews was convinced of the importance of God's people gathering together. It was one of the factors involved in persevering in the faith. In a time of suffering, Jews who had met Jesus as Messiah were now contemplating returning to their former faith and they were being exhorted to hold onto Christianity as a superior way.

Gatherings of Christians have been taking place at micro and macro level since the Day of Pentecost. Small groups have met in homes, large groups have met in cathedrals, leaders have gathered to debate church doctrine, and huge numbers of youth have converged in international settings. Australia has witnessed the huge numbers at the Billy Graham Crusades and the thousands at Hillsong Conferences, to name just two.

Once again the eyes of the world will be upon South Africa in 2010. This time, however, it will not be for the World Cup but for Lausanne III where 4,000 delegates from around the world will gather. Evangelicals worldwide will be watching and waiting to hear what emerges from this gathering. As Christianity wanes in the West and flourishes in the non-Western world we will doubtless see leadership in evangelism coming from new and exciting sources.

This issue of *Faith and Life* focuses on Lausanne III. David Parker, offers a thoughtful analysis of past gatherings and what we might expect from the Cape Town event. David Turnbull offers a perspective from one of the 60 Australian delegates as they prepare. The plight of Christians in non-Western countries is highlighted in an article on Funmi, a Nigerian woman and Christian activist. In this issue we also offer a response to last issue's article on Aboriginal disadvantage – Chris Marshall and Mark Brett are eminently qualified to comment on the deficiencies in Kulikovski's argument.

This will be my last issue of *Faith and Life* as editor and National Director of EA. As I move on I leave this magazine in the capable hands of others. I have enjoyed editing Faith and Life and trust you will continue to enjoy reading it.

Cheryl Catford

EA's Vision

- **Local churches and ministries** understanding and exercising their God-given mission: global, national and local
- **Christians** thinking and living as disciples of Jesus in every part of their lives
- **Australian society** characterised by greater truth, justice, love, respect and a better life for the poor and marginalised, especially the indigenous people of Australia
- **Evangelicals** working together locally, nationally, and globally

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An evangelical is someone who passionately believes the central claims of the Bible and traditional Christian faith: such as that Jesus is both God and man; that he announced the arrival of God's kingdom, that he died for our sins; that he was raised from the dead. Evangelicals emphasise personal commitment to Jesus Christ and a desire to live out that faith together and in the community in words and works of justice and love, anticipating God's promised future.



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Faith & Life is the official journal of EA Australia. Its purpose is to promote Alliance concerns, inform and encourage readers about evangelical initiatives at home and abroad and inspire thinking and action concerning communication of the Gospel in Australia today.

EA does not necessarily endorse all views printed in *Faith & Life*. Instead articles are included to encourage discernment and debate on key issues for Australian Christians.

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Aussies Heading to Lausanne III

By David Turnbull

A delegation of Aussies, including some from Australian Evangelical Alliance and its commissions, is heading to Cape Town for the Lausanne III Congress as part of 140 delegates from Oceania and the South Pacific. This global gathering will involve over 4,000 evangelical Christians from 200 countries (mainly from the majority world), and is being sponsored by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and the World Evangelical Alliance.

After being nominated and accepting the invitation, the journey for the estimated 60 Aussie delegates really began at a 24-hour gathering in early May in Sydney. They came from around the country, a spread of denominations and ages from 25 upwards. The opportunity to be part of this new team gave rise to anticipation and excitement as to what God would do with participation in this international gathering. Inspiration for me came from the various members of the delegation as they shared their passion for evangelism through creative initiatives promoting the Gospel in a variety of contexts including church, Christian tertiary education, politics, television, community development, welfare, secular schools, university campuses and sport.

The reasons for committing to this journey vary greatly depending on ministry context. They centre on listening to God, learning from and with the nations, networking and how to express the Christian faith in Australian culture. My personal motivation is to be refreshed by hearing what God is doing around the world, to ensure relevance in my teaching and training in the area of cross-cultural ministry in this challenging contemporary context as Australia moves into being a post-traditional society, and to use these experiences to inspire and stimulate

my various Christian communities in South Australia and beyond, including Missions Interlink.


The Congress program over the 10 days (October 16-25) is oriented around the theme of *God in Christ, Reconciling the World to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19)*. It will provide the context for the achievement of these purposes through bible studies on Ephesians, plenaries on the church taking the whole Gospel to the whole world followed by interactive small groups, 24 multiplexes throughout on significant theological and strategic themes and trends (such as *Scripture for All and Preparing your Workplace for a Faith Journey*), 168 dialogue sessions and evening plenaries focusing on the regions of the world.

The event is significant for a number of reasons. It continues the history of Christians gathering together with impact. In 1974, under the leadership of Billy Graham and John Stott, the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and the Lausanne Covenant were formed. In 1989 the Manila Manifesto was produced at Lausanne II in Manila. This Congress is timely at this point in world history where Christianity is being confronted by a number of forces including secular humanism, atheism, globalisation, technology (and its impact on communication and the nature of life), dominant world religions and anti-Christian sentiment as seen in the increase in the persecution of Christian believers. The Congress will help God's people answer tough questions and address these challenges, by understanding the times, being motivated and focused on evangelism globally, empowering people with vision, developing new partnerships and working relationships, calling God's people to obedience and exploring new options for the next two decades of ministry.

The partnership between the World Evangelical Alliance and the Lausanne

Committee for World Evangelization in the centenary year of the first major global conference in 1910 in Edinburgh sets a special example in an era of competition and individuality. There are many challenges to achieving this within the diversity of God's community throughout the western and majority world, and Paul's encouragement to God's people around Ephesus to make every effort to build unity cannot be overlooked.

The benefit of this gathering, being in the technological era, means that it is not confined to those attending. It is open to the whole church through online opportunities. Anyone interested in evangelism can be part of it in a number of ways: by praying for God's wisdom for the delegates by joining one of the associated prayer initiatives, by being a participant in the lead up to the congress through the Global Conversation, with access to advanced papers on significant themes, by being a participant at a Globalink site: Adelaide (Tabor Adelaide and Adelaide College of Ministries), Sydney (Morling College), Melbourne (Ridley College) and Brisbane (Bible College of Queensland), and by hosting a post-congress function where delegates can share and inspire, ensuring that the benefits of the congress are filtered through to contribute to our faith and mission into the future.

We look forward to what God will be doing in Australia and around the world through the lead up, the event and the aftermath. Are we open to God and available for His priorities? 



David Turnbull is Senior Lecturer in Intercultural Studies at Tabor Adelaide & Deputy Chair of Missions Interlink. More information <www.lausanne.org>

The Cape Town Gathering – Lausanne III

By David Parker

A great deal of effort and many innovative ideas are being marshalled in preparation for the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization to be held at Cape Town in October 2010. It is being sponsored by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation (LCWE) which emerged out of an important congress held in the Swiss city of Lausanne in 1974. The World Evangelical Alliance is partnering with LCWE for the event. The stated goal is to “re-stimulate the spirit of Lausanne represented in the Lausanne Covenant: to promote unity, humbleness in service, and a call to action for global evangelization.” We can only hope and pray that this congress will be successful in becoming a “catalytic event in the life of the church” (to use the words of one of their statements).

For many, the unspoken question is whether Lausanne III will have the impact that its predecessor did. The 1974 congress, attended by 2700 people from 150 nations, was quickly recognized as a landmark event for evangelization around the world. Of course there were the well-known names associated with it, with Billy Graham and John Stott at the head of big list, although many others contributed as well. Not the least of these were the group who fought hard for social responsibility to have its place along with evangelism as a vital part of Christian witness and mission. In this group were several from Latin America, including Samuel Escobar and Rene Padilla; some Australians also made their mark on this point.

Certainly, Clause 5 of the Lausanne Covenant on social responsibility

was a major achievement, but other sections were no less important, including Clause 10 on cultural relevance. But the document as a whole, while not exempt from criticism, has become a worthy benchmark for evangelical faith and witness.

In the background of the Lausanne congress was the equally famous Berlin Congress on Evangelism, 1966, and other related gatherings—even perhaps going back as far as the 1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference.

...to promote unity, humbleness in service, and a call to action for global evangelization.

Although not advertised as part of the original plan, it was inevitable that a continuing organisation would emerge from Lausanne to perpetuate its gains and extend its influence. So LCWE organisation appeared on the scene, thus making a second world body for evangelicals, alongside the World Evangelical Fellowship (as WEA was then known); the WEA goes back to 1845 but was re-established in 1951. Neither group has enjoyed a uniformly steady growth in the succeeding years. The relationship between the two has been complex—sometimes the same people are involved in both simultaneously or serially, while in other cases, there have been different constituencies.

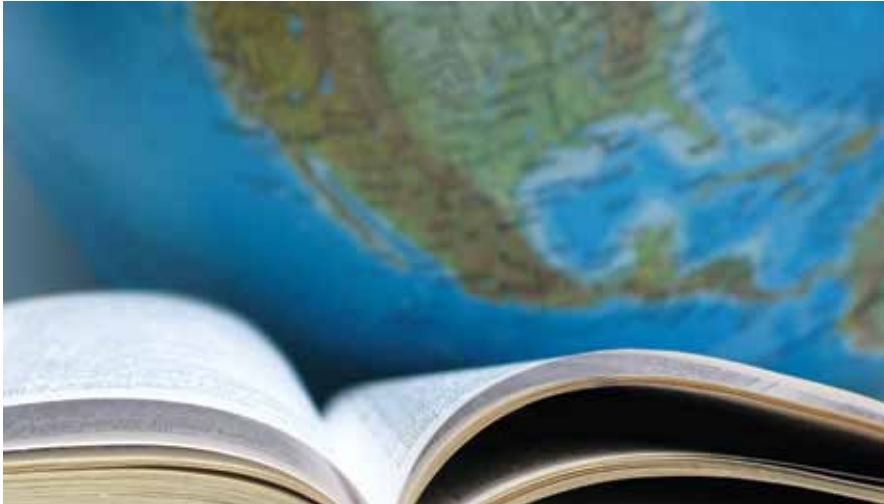
By birth, LCWE is a movement for world evangelization, while WEA/F has been an organisation with a much wider mandate; they are sodality

and modality, to use a familiar expression. But the fact remains that, even with the best will in the world, there has often been a perceived (or perhaps real) competition between the two with conflicting demands on time, funds, prayer, energy and prominence. Lausanne III itself is a major investment, seeking to attract 4500 people from 200 nations, requiring large amounts of spiritual, financial and personal capital. In addition there are many associated activities, including on-line networks and resources.

The situation is by no means static, so it was a wise and welcome move when new leaders took over both organisations a few years ago (Dr Geoff Tunnicliffe, WEA and Doug Birdsall, LCWE) and they pledged themselves to cooperation for the future, especially in terms of Lausanne III. However, LCWE has noticeably broadened its interests, which is not surprising given developments in mission theology towards a definite holistic stance. So the Lausanne movement has grown in its organisational size and is now a body that aims to cover a wide field.

There have been many developments since 1974 at regional and local level, and also along certain themes or particular areas of ministry; the tally of conferences is now in excess of sixty, including some global events (two of them held at Pattaya, Thailand in 1980 and 2004). However, the Second International Congress on World Evangelization held at Manila, Philippines in 1989 and its Manifesto did not reach expectations. Some of the most useful work of the Lausanne movement, or at least those who place themselves under its umbrella, has been in ancillary networks and their gatherings; one of these is the devoted to Jewish evangelism, while the effort to mobilise “younger leaders” has been quite productive. Similarly worthwhile material can be found in the dozens of Lausanne Occasional Papers making available a wide range of theological, strategic and practical insight from the movement (<http://www.lausanne.org/documents.html>).

So we look forward with considerable anticipation to see whether Lausanne III will be another great milestone



like Lausanne I, as its sponsors hope. However, the world and world Christianity are vastly different now compared with 1974. Furthermore, the recent Copenhagen conference on climate change is a stark reminder that merely gathering large numbers of people together with a big budget does not necessarily produce the desired outcomes.

Australians have a good record in contributing to world Christian movements, Lausanne and WEA included. It is hard to judge at this time what interest or involvement we have in Lausanne III, and harder still to predict what impact it might have on us here. So questions can be raised about the continued relevance and importance of Lausanne and its Covenant for this country and the time in which we live. People who are familiar with the story still recognize the significance of the original event, but by now it may be no more than part of the tradition. One indicator that this is the case may be seen in the recent widespread interest in 'integral mission' as a focus of contemporary emphasis.

On the surface, definitions of 'integral mission', such as that found in the Micah Declaration of 2001 which stresses the mutual relationships of evangelism and social involvement seem to be no more than a restatement of the famous clause 5 of the Lausanne Covenant:

"[We] affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and man, our love

for our neighbour and our obedience to Jesus Christ."

So, is the new generation simply rediscovering what its forebears hammered out thirty years earlier? Is it the case that the earlier insights have been forgotten (or more likely, never realised) by a younger group of Christians who have not lived through the situation when evangelism and social responsibility were seen as bitter rivals? Or is it merely that the old formula needs to be reapplied in a different modern context and therefore requires considerable reworking? Or can we hope that there is a genuine development—that the current band of Christians are truly building on the shoulders of their parents and seeing fresh visions to liberate and empower them for the huge challenges that lie ahead?

Perspectives for analysing this issue vary strongly from group to group and place to place. Certainly, some western Christians needed the insights of Lausanne 1974, and in some cases, apparently still do. But for Christians in other parts of the world, mission and witness are necessarily holistic—it is other issues that plague them instead.

A startling expression of this difference in perspective is found in an article by a young Latin American Christian leader, Daniel Salinas of Paraguay, published in the April 2009 *Evangelical Review of Theology* (the journal of the WEA Theological Commission). His title reveals his concern: "Will Lausanne III Listen?" He was asking whether the event would be an opportunity for authentic engagement

with the realities of the world and cause 'evangelicals around the world to incarnate the Kingdom's values with compassion and Christian love to people in need.' As far as he could see, "Even after more than three decades, the issues Padilla and Escobar raised at Lausanne I remain current. At least in Latin America the situation is worse than in 1974. Poverty has expanded, violence is rampant, and corruption is endemic, while the evangelical church, in general, has not assumed the challenge of involvement in these issues."

Salinas' challenge was simple:

"The hope is that this Congress will move from the trend of previous gatherings... We pray for the wind of the Spirit to take us to new dimensions of incarnation and commitment... The challenge for Cape Town 2010 is to move from meetings and publications to a solid plan of action so that the 'Whole Church' lives out the 'Whole Gospel' in the 'Whole World'."

He is obviously fearful that LCWE is, like many other world bodies (secular and religious), might still be dominated by the finances, personnel and agendas of the West, while today the shape of the Christian world is vastly different.

Amongst all the promotion, fund raising, and strategizing, one section at least of the Lausanne movement has been working at providing some solid foundations to tackle these issue at Cape Town. Following the 2004 Pattaya Forum, the Theology Working Group (LTWG) was re-established under the leadership of Dr Chris Wright. He was a good choice, being a well-recognised scholar with extensive experience in the Majority World. Most importantly, he is International Director of the Langham Partnership, the ministry created by John Stott for training Majority World scholars, distributing theological literature and more recently developing biblical preaching, especially in the non-western world. Sharing the mantle of John Stott gave him many advantages in calling together a new group of theologians to provide material that could be fed into Lausanne III.

His instincts were good, as he reported to LCWE in 2007,

"My big concern is not just that the world church should become more evangelical, but that world evangelicals should become more biblical. To be biblical is also to be prophetic." He added, "Indeed, my hope for Cape Town 2010 is that it would launch and foster nothing less than a 21st Century Reformation among evangelicals, who need it as much as any other Christian bloc."

So he planned a series of consultations for the LTWG, the last of which was held in Beirut, February 2010. These conferences were supported by the WEA Theological Commission, and covered an exceptionally wide range of issues from biblical and theological perspectives using the three themes

from the traditional Lausanne slogan, 'The *Whole Church* taking the *Whole Gospel* to the *Whole World*.' Each conference issued a summary statement. These, together with plenary papers and case studies, have been published in *Evangelical Review of Theology*, with extra run-on copies being distributed widely around the world. A condensed version of the conference statements, amounting to 5500 words, will be in the hands of all participants at Lausanne III and the full set of papers will be available on the Lausanne web site and in other formats. Altogether, these papers represent a remarkable body of material which, if taken seriously, will be more than enough to achieve the hopes of someone like Daniel Salinas.

However, the concern is that even with such first rate material available, the

agenda for Cape Town has become so comprehensive as to be almost unmanageable in such a context and too idealistic to be practical. In this case, a simplistic Western pragmatism may once again prevail. **ea**



David Parker, a Baptist theologian based in Brisbane Qld, recently concluded as Executive Director of the World Evangelical

Alliance Theological Commission and is now serving as Executive Editor of its journal, Evangelical Review of Theology.

Events Calendar



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August 25: *Finishing Well Seminar 3: Grieving Well*
Melbourne
info@ea.org.au

September 17: *Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali Public Forum*
Melbourne
< <http://www.fava.org.au/content/58/73/?cal=2010-09-17> >



November 20: *Groaning Creation: Biodiversity & the Bible Conference*
Melbourne
<www.ethos.org.au>



September 9: *Melbourne Business Breakfast*
www.cma.net.au/events

September: *Board Training Days – dates tbc*
Brisbane / Melbourne / Sydney / Perth
<www.cma.net.au/events>

November 18: *Melbourne Business Breakfast*
Melbourne Pastors Training Day
<www.cma.net.au/events>

November: *Pastors Training Days dates tbc*
Brisbane / Sydney
<www.cma.net.au/events>



13-15 August: *ReachOut – "Lost & Found"*
KCC, Katoomba (NSW)
<www.reachoutmissions.com.au>

20-22 August: *MIST*
(Missions Interlink Short Term Training)
Woodville Gardens Uniting Church,
Woodville (SA)
barryandann@thelocks.net or 08 8370 5434

27 & 28 August: *MIQ Mission Focus*
Ashgrove Baptist Church (Qld)
wrbc@bigpond.net.au or 07 3368 2822

9-12 September: *MIST*
(Missions Interlink Short Term Training)
Castlereagh (NSW)
jkay2x2@optusnet.com.au or 02 9498 5268

15 September: *Quiet Day*
St Joseph's Centre for Reflective Living (NSW)
gnewmarch@cms.org.au or 02 9284 6759

12-14 October: *2010 International Conference on Computers & Missions*
Melbourne (Vic)
davidmiller@globalrecordings.net
or 0416 183 349

12-21 October: *MILL*
(Missions Interlink Language Learning)
St Andrew's Hall, Parkville (Vic)
cathy@mill.org.au or (03) 9486 0898

14-17 October: *MIST*
(Missions Interlink Short Term Training)
Kangaroo Ground (Vic)
suzanne@aussend.org.au
or 03 9729 9611

15-17 October: *MIST*
(Missions Interlink Short Term Training)
Moorooka (Qld)
smcgeown@cms.org.au
or 07 3831 6130

14-17 October: *Missionary Transition & Re-entry Retreat*
Wonga Park Conference Centre,
Wonga Park (Vic)
HelenMacn@gmail.com
or 03 5407 2101

Wrestling with Aboriginal Disadvantage – A Response

By Mark Brett & Chris Marshall

The May issue of EA's *Faith and Life* magazine included among its feature articles Andrew Kulikovsky's opinions on the subject of *Wrestling with Aboriginal Disadvantage*. As Christians with a keen interest in and some knowledge of these issues, we are profoundly disturbed by some of Andrew's comments – comments that we believe reflect not only an inadequate reading of the Bible, but a serious distortion of the facts that underlie any analysis of the struggle of Aboriginal people to take their rightful place in the Australian nation state.

We appreciate that Andrew has offered his views in good faith and with a genuine intention to assist with Christian understanding of important matters, but we must nevertheless correct the record for two main reasons – to contribute, hopefully, to a more informed discussion, and to protect the dignity of the many fine Indigenous people upon whom his comments would negatively reflect, if allowed to stand unchallenged. For the truth is that Andrew's "hard facts" are not facts at all.

We commend him for his expectation that the Bible has much to teach us about disadvantage and injustice. Indeed it does. But we are dismayed by his hermeneutics when he insists, for instance, that "Aboriginal people who have suffered at the hands of non-aboriginals must learn to forgive", or suffer God's wrath, and cites Matthew 18:32-34 as warrant for such insistence. While space does not allow us to elaborate on a proper exegesis here, we think that any fair-minded reading of the Matthew 18 parable would suggest that it is simply not applicable to Aboriginal society in the way that Andrew would have it.

In our experience, Aboriginal people generally – and Aboriginal Christians in particular – are extraordinarily

forgiving, given the historic reality of their dispossession, though it is also the case that many have struggled to find a freedom from resentment without ignoring legitimate justice issues. But for the people of Christ to berate them about the need to practice forgiveness is at best insensitive and at worst offensive.

But it gets worse when Andrew dismisses significant developments such as Kevin Rudd's 2008 Apology to the stolen generations as merely "symbolic gestures ... designed to make us feel good" and states that the Apology "has achieved nothing of any consequence with respect to the health and well-being of Aboriginal people". The fact is that for many Aboriginal people in this country the Prime Minister's Apology was a profoundly healing event, when they felt for the first time that their experience was truly acknowledged and understood. In other words, it contributed directly to their sense of well-being.

In our experience, Aboriginal people generally – and Aboriginal Christians in particular – are extraordinarily forgiving, given the historic reality of their dispossession

He goes on to state that "the greatest crime Australia ever committed against Aboriginals was the policy of separatism based on self-determination, which began in the 1970s". We hesitate to dignify this outrageous piece of hyperbole with a response, but we must note that, while the implementation of policy has often lacked balance and

sound application, the policies that led, for example, to the recognition of Aboriginal land rights and to support for the so-called outstation or homelands movement (we assume that these are the policies to which Andrew objects) in fact represented a very important step forward by creating space for Aboriginal people to evaluate the extent and pace of their participation in the institutions and practices of the dominant society. Such policies were thus an advance from the blatant paternalism and ethnocentrism of earlier times.

Which brings us to questions of a biblical understanding of issues such as land ownership and Aboriginal communal title. Here again, Andrew's ignorance of the facts is compounded by both culturally narrow assumptions and poor theology. He proposes that Aboriginal people need to accept the redemptive biblical vision of private property – citing in this regard the commandment: 'You shall not steal'!

But the Old Testament does not teach the virtue of private property. Instead, it consistently proposes that where families have lost their *traditional* land (for whatever reason), the property should be restored to them either through redemption payments or through the declaration of a jubilee. The covenant laws provided fundamental protections for people who become poor, and the wrongful acquisition of traditional land is subject to divine judgment.

Naboth's vineyard is exemplary on this point, as Rev. Dr Peter Adam has recently stressed in his paper 'Australia: Whose Land?' The emphasis in the text is not on any need for Naboth to forgive the king, who wrongly imagines that land can be readily privatized by the Crown. Rather, the text highlights the fundamental injustice of such land seizure and suggests God's judgment on the dispossessors.

The hope of redemption in the Old Testament is focused on the restoration of land and family. This kind of hope makes a lot of sense to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. And as Christopher Wright makes clear in his book *God's People in God's Land*, the New Testament does not depart from a fundamentally communal vision of shared resources. At one point, the apostle Paul even raises the prospect of 'equality', rather than emphasizing private property as a Christian concept (2 Corinthians 8:14).

...the compassionate God whom we worship in Christ calls us to a far better way of viewing these matters.

Mr Kulikovsky's discussion of the legal issues relating to Aboriginal land ownership is similarly misinformed. His reliance on the legal wisdom of *Milirrpum v Nabalco* (1972-73) is perplexing and his statement that the finding in that case "was effectively confirmed by the famous Mabo ruling" is not correct. Unlike *Milirrpum*, the *Mabo* decision found that Aboriginal communal title did in fact exist in the common law.

That is to say, the legal ground shifted decisively in the *Mabo* case, despite the fact that subsequent native title legislation and jurisprudence has fallen considerably short of genuine justice. The point here, however, is that Andrew's statement that "the Aboriginal notion of 'communal property' is a major contributor to many social problems" opens up a debate that runs the risk of pandering to that reactionary element in the Australian community that would still argue that Aboriginal rights in land should never have been recognized at all.

Noel Pearson, whom Andrew approvingly refers to, has outlined some of his disappointments with the way the native title system has treated Aboriginal property rights in his paper 'Land is susceptible of Ownership', where he argued that the common law conception of native title does not distinguish 'possessory' title from

some lesser notion of a 'bundle of rights'. Australian law since *Mabo* has tended to foster such a distinction, so that even where native title is recognized, full possessory title is not. And hence, injustice continues.

More recently, legal scholars have begun to investigate the so-called 'doctrine of discovery', the nineteenth century version of which has recently been exposed in alarming detail by Lindsay G. Robertson in his book *Conquest by Law* (2005). The application of this doctrine in the *Mabo* decision resulted in any notion of Indigenous sovereignty being removed entirely, with native title rights remaining simply a 'burden' on the Crown wherever they could be demonstrated to exist.

The *Native Title Act* (1993) suggests that where the Crown has inappropriately over-ridden native title rights then compensation should be payable – at very least in accordance with the 'just terms' required by the Australian Constitution of 1901 where land is compulsorily acquired by the Crown. Three of the seven High Court judges in *Mabo* contemplated native title compensation being payable from 1901, but the majority judgment was that it should be payable from the time of the passing of the *Racial Discrimination Act* in 1975. Nonetheless, to date – 17 years after the passage of the *Native Title Act* – no such compensation has been awarded by the courts anywhere in Australia.

Whether we consider the dispossession from traditional land, the forced removal of Aboriginal children, or the withholding of wages, the outcomes are roughly the same: racial discrimination before 1975 was endemic, and was legally sanctioned. We suggest that it is these factors that warrant focus in any discussion of the causation of Indigenous disadvantage.

But if "disadvantage" is used to measure the extent to which Aboriginal people fail to live like us, embracing our values and lifestyles, then it becomes merely a cloak for the assimilationist expectations that have been imposed on the first peoples ever since white settlers arrived in the land. And that is the flipside of Andrew Kulikovsky's statement that "there are many elements of Aboriginal culture

that have directly contributed to their disadvantage".

From the story of Indigenous experience in Australia come inter-generational trauma, ongoing dispossession, discrimination and poverty. Poor health outcomes, alcoholism and domestic violence are common human experiences when such social determinants are present, regardless of racial factors. Numerous studies have demonstrated this, yet Andrew wants to describe Indigenous disadvantage as culturally determined.

He wants us all to forgive and forget, and to enjoy the blessings that private property can bring. But, if prophetic cries for justice, for the sharing of resources, and for putting vulnerable people before powerful interests are alleged to be unbiblical, then something has gone badly wrong with biblical hermeneutics.

We submit that the compassionate God whom we worship in Christ calls us to a far better way of viewing these matters. [ea](#)



Mark Brett is Professor of Hebrew Bible at Whitley College and was for three years Policy Officer at Native Title Services Victoria.



Chris Marshall is CEO of Native Title Services Victoria.



By Jim Reiher

The Nigerian Woman

The customs officer was abrupt and rude. He even admitted that he pulled Funmi Para-Mallam out of the line simply because she was Nigerian.

“Because some of the Nigerians who travel around the world are drug dealers, do you think we all are? Some Americans and Australians deal drugs too: do you pull all Americans and Australians out and search them and grill them?” Despite the time delays and the rude officials that she dealt with, Funmi could be gracious as well. She commented later, “Of course nations have to be vigilant and fight the drug trade. But it was the worst customs experience I have ever had, and I have visited sixteen different nations”.

What causes a mother of five to fly from Nigeria to Melbourne, to spend a week at a conference on gender equality in the church and society? Why do this to yourself? Endure jet lag at both ends, and have a full schedule during her time here? What makes her endure the indignity of rude customs officers and delays at the airport in the middle of the night? What would make her do it all again if the opportunity arose? *Passion for the empowerment of women.*

Funmi Para-Mallam is a part of a large family, an incredibly busy working mum, and a devout Christian. She is passionately committed to improving women’s lives, especially in her home nation of Nigeria. When she was in high school, she dreamed of being

They seek to grow godly values and integrity in themselves and in those they work with.

the President of Nigeria. (“My father taught us that I could even be the President of Nigeria, but then my mother had to be at his beck and call.”) After a while she changed her focus and considered becoming a doctor. Then a lawyer. And then a diplomat (she speaks English, French and Portuguese). Eventually she has settled into the role of working for the Nigerian government in Policy Research and Development. This includes gender development policy.

Funmi and others have formed a society in their home country: Christian Women for Excellence and Empowerment in Nigerian Society

(or CWEENES for short). It is a rather unique group: their emphasis is on both prayer and social action. While some Christian groups like to focus on ‘just’ prayer, and other Christian groups spend all their energy on ‘just’ social action, not so with this group. They are deeply committed to both planks. They seek to grow godly values and integrity in themselves and in those they work with. They aim to see women grow in excellence, and they work towards social transformation coming from that base.

Nigeria is a fascinating country. Even though it is not the largest African nation in size, it has the largest population for any country in Africa with 140 million people (1 in 4 Africans is Nigerian). The nation has the largest Anglican population of any nation in the world, and a Nigerian pastor in the Ukraine pastors the largest church in the world. About half the population of Nigeria are Islamic and the other half Christian (even though each group says it is more 60:40 in their favour). You might think such a mix is a recipe for constant trouble. While it is true that there are occasional moments of tension and violence, and sometimes that violence can be significant and tragic, overall such is not the general rule for most of the nation.



Despite this, Funmi left her home city of Jos after months of tension and some terrible violence in one section of that city earlier this year. It had been a terrible and unexpected explosion of violence. Muslims suddenly attacked a Christian area in the city and ruthlessly slaughtered many hundreds of men, women and children in gruesome and cruel ways. The Christian group targeted did not seek retaliation but other groups who called themselves Christian did. After 3 days the counter-attack took place and a Muslim area was savagely attacked. The world news media had arrived by then and showed the Christian attack on Muslims without mentioning the provocation 3 days earlier. It looked terrible for the so-called Christians. They appeared to be the ones initiating violence against defenceless Muslims. The different cultural groups who have various expressions of the Christian faith were not united in the counter-attack. The actual victims of the first wave of violence did not want to resort to revenge and violence, believing Christ would not want that of them. A different group with an alternative view of what it means to be Christian did not feel the same. It was all very ugly. And the tension has not died down completely even now, some months later. Funmi was concerned about leaving her youngest two children (5 year old twin girls) while visiting Australia in case more trouble erupted.

When comparing the lot of Muslim women and Christian women in her nation, Funmi was adamant that both have some advantages and both have needs. The Muslim women for example, have certain rights under Islamic law and practice that some Christian women are denied (eg. property rights). And while the Muslim writings do not make women fully equal (they get less property than men in the family), there are writings and traditions that guarantee them at least something. Muslim women,

“Religion including Christianity, has been an instrument of great injustice against women simply because of their gender”

also, do not have to change their family name when they marry. On the other hand, Christian women are more educated, more Westernised, have less restrictions on their movements, and more choice in marriage. Muslim women tend to be more conservative, Christian women more educated.

“Religion including Christianity, has been an instrument of great injustice against women simply because of their gender”, Funmi said. “Religion appears to be the last bastion of

resistance fighting the liberation of women in Nigeria.” One thing both Islam and Christianity in Nigeria agree on: women are subject under men. Both the Koran and the Bible are used to do this. Funmi herself has a high view of the Bible, but sees different ways of interpreting it as the problem. “There is an unthinking acceptance [in Nigeria] that biblical culture is indeed the right culture for all time and Nigerian pastors pride themselves on how the Nigerian culture is so similar to Biblical culture.” She concluded, “The greatest problem for women in the church in Nigeria is culturally-biased interpretation of sacred text”.

African women are becoming more aware of women’s equality issues and progress made towards it in other more advanced countries. Religion and spirituality is deeply embedded in the daily life of Nigerians. The Nigerian women are asking good questions of the men who want nothing to change: Why do we women till the land, if that was the punishment dished out to Adam for his sin? Why is my body fit to sleep with but my mind not fit to engage with? Why do women have to work longer hours and do harder physical work than men, if we are suppose to be the weaker sex?

The day must come when men as well as women face texts like Isaiah 58 and see that true religion is promoting justice, removing oppression and setting captives free. Such teaching has to affect the treatment of women.

When Funmi was asked what she would like to see five years from now, she replied, “A country where justice, equity and merit are the order of the day. A country where people fear God and that fear has a direct impact on how they live. A country where all people regardless of ethnicity, sex, or religion, are given equal opportunity and access to contribute whatever they can to the community”.

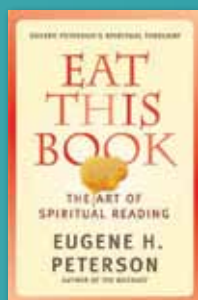
A worthy goal for all nations! 



Jim Reiher works at *Urban Neighbours of Hope* and was a member of the organising committee for the *Christians for Biblical Equality*

Conference 2010 held in June where Funmi was a keynote speaker.





Book Review

Eugene H Peterson, *Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading*, Book 2 in the Spiritual Theology series (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2006)

Peterson has a delightful way of elevating the craft of biblical leadership and its foundational skills – focusing our eyes on Jesus, celebrating everyday spirituality, listening to people in pastoral conversations, and listening to God in prayer and the Bible. In *Eat This Book* he invites us to digest thoroughly what God addresses to us in Scripture. His challenge is not just to mine the Scriptures for nuggets of inspiration or historical information, but also to read them on their own terms, and to live them as we read them. As an early rabbi suggested, we take in the Bible not with our ears but with our feet – we learn best by following. It is an invitation to enter into the story and make it our own, not just read it as another story disconnected from our lives. The process is not about knowing more as much about becoming more. With our identities grounded in Christ and our lives bathed in Bible-reading, we will live outlive our surrounding society – our hope will be “fresh against formidable odds” (p.19).

Peterson draws his readers towards a more attentive and awe-inspiring reading of this book. He quotes Kafka: “If the book we are reading does not wake us, as with a fist hammering on our skull, why then do we read it? ... A book must be like an ice-axe to break the frozen sea within us.” (p.8) Like a dog at a bone, or like St John was invited to “eat it, eat this book”

as described in Revelation, Peterson invites his readers to engage in ‘spiritual reading’ of the Bible; “reading that enters our souls as food enters the stomachs, spreads through our blood, and becomes holiness and love and wisdom” (p.4). This discipline has classically been known as *lectio divina*.

One of the most challenging aspects of the book is his critique of self-referential authority where personal experience is elevated above the Bible as authority for living. New interest in everyday spirituality and spiritual formation is terrific, but if this is accompanied by disinterest in the Bible, we will lack balance and grounding: “An interest in souls divorced from an interest in Scripture leaves us without a text that shapes these souls. In the same way, an interest in Scripture divorced from an interest in souls leaves us without any material for the text to work on” (p.17). He challenges what he labels as a new highly personalised and individualised Trinity that many refer to for authority – my Holy wants, my Holy needs and my Holy feelings.

Peterson elevates exegesis, not just for preaching preparation but also for direction in following Jesus. Exegesis loves the speaker of the words enough to commit to get the meaning of the words right, “nothing more than a careful and loving reading of the text” (p.55). It is not just reading the text but entering into its world and letting it read us.

Peterson also elevates liturgy as part of our Bible reading. Liturgy is what pulls everything in our lives before God, and does so with a huge community of others throughout the world and throughout history. It draws us into a hermeneutics of adoration – seeing how splendid God is, and

sends us out into a life of worship – living out our obedience in the light of God as revealed in Scripture.

I was especially fascinated to read of Peterson’s reflection as the bible translator of the popular Message version. I love how he describes the translator’s task to engage people’s hearts and souls and not just their minds: “This is the intended end of true translation, to bring about the kind of understanding that involves the whole person in tears and laughter, heart and soul, in what is written, what is said” (p.125). Peterson translated the Bible as one of ‘God’s secretaries’ into a new accessible paraphrased Bible version. Yet translation is what he had already done for thirty-five years as a pastor – helping make the message neighbourhood-specific. The Word should never sound pompous or distant, and Peterson’s *The Message* was his attempt to show how the Bible can be spoken in the common speech we use with our friends and children and read imaginatively and prayerfully.

Darren Cronshaw

Another version of this review appeared in Witness, June 2010
<<http://www.buv.com.au/witnessweb>>

Successful Olsen Seminar

“I learned more from this seminar than the combined past five leadership seminars I have attended”.

This was the response of a senior leader after attending the recent seminar, *Culture by Design* presented by Andrew Olsen.

Within minutes of the seminar starting, Andrew had the thirty participants role-playing a board meeting that quickly demonstrated the motives and understanding that drive much of our interaction in teams. Working from a quite-rare view of the innate sinfulness of humanity, Andrew was able to elicit strong recognition and agreement of the default positions we adopt in our workplace settings.

Andrew’s training in psychology and experience in working in varied settings enabled him to offer some helpful stories everyone could relate to. The seminar was “hands on” – participants learned skills on how to facilitate meetings, how to make decisions, how to approach differences and how to develop healthy culture.

Although located in Florida working for a mission agency, Andrew returns to Australia each year to deliver a very-popular weeklong leadership and management course at Ridley College. EA hopes to be able to offer another Olsen seminar in June or July next year.



Mission Possible



Mission Possible is a grassroots, interdenominational fellowship of Central Coast NSW Christians who have a passion to see Christ’s name proclaimed and glorified through loving and effective witness, locally, regionally and globally (Acts 1:8).

Mission Possible was initiated to support and serve local churches on the Central Coast of NSW through the development and administration of regional resources such as <www.missionpossible.com.au> and mission events. It aims to encourage local Christians to become passionate supporters of mission-based goals and initiatives within their local church.

Under the auspices of Missions Interlink NSW, and supported by Missions Interlink members, Mission Possible recently held the *OneWorld Missions Expo* and *Detonate* Youth Concert.

The *One World Missions Expo* involved local pastors and ministers,

mission agency representatives, volunteers, speakers, and attracted about 1,500 visitors to Erina Fair shopping and community centre on 5 June 2010.

The goal was to explore, discover and celebrate God’s mission in our world. Visitor surveys suggest *quite strongly*, that the Expo achieved this. In fact, the venue, speakers, mission agencies, kids activities, theatrette, refreshments and other aspects of the day were all rated highly. Many visitors indicated that the event had opened (or re-opened) their eyes to God’s Mission, and several men and women are now seriously exploring the possibility of serving Him in the field.

The One World ‘Detonate’ Youth Concert proved to be a great night of worship, learning and celebration. One of the highlights of the night was the concert forum where audience members asked the speakers excellent questions about God’s Mission for the Church (in Australia and overseas) and how youth can play an active part in the Great Commission. It is anticipated that the concert will stimulate much prayer, thought and ‘missional’ conversations with church leaders in the days ahead.

Visit <<http://www.missionpossible.com.au>> for further information.





CMA Conference Report



In the first week of June, 300 church, ministry and business leaders gathered for the eighth annual CMA Conference, which was held this year on the Gold Coast. The theme of the conference was 'Balance', picking up the title of keynote speaker Richard Swenson's latest book., 'In Pursuit of Balance'. Richard highlighted the fact that the mathematical laws of limits impose some very abrupt realities for people who, in seeking to give their best for God, move into a state of perpetual overload. Many delegates responded that Richard's input has caused them to seriously evaluate the pace of their lives, and to create the time and space for the 'deep, consecutive thoughts' necessary to live life at its fullest, rather than just hyperskimming along the surface.

Other keynote addresses were given by Anne Robinson (chair of World Vision), and Mark McCrindle, of McCrindle Research in Sydney. Both of these addresses were very warmly received.

A few new features were introduced in the CMA conference this year, including a 'Young Leaders' stream, which was attended by over 40 leaders under the age of 40, and also some 'online-offline' networking tables. Delegates created discussion

topics online, gathered online around the topics, and then came together during a conference networking session, sitting with people who had identified with the topic, and began conversations that are continuing beyond the conference.

Once again there were over 40 electives offered, with a diverse range of presenters, covering many aspects of organisational leadership and management for Christian churches and ministries. Two electives picked up the emerging topic of fraud in non-profit organisations, and among the many other electives was one in which Murray Baird from Moores Legal led people through CMA's new publication on Essential Standards for Ministry Governance. Over 5000 of these booklets are now in circulation (available at no charge, in hard copy or electronic form CMA's governance micro-site at www.governance.org.au).

During the conference dinner, CMA board member Richard Menteith announced that CMA was formally bringing its founding period to a close, as CMA moves into its next phase of development. People were given a final chance to make a Founding Member donation, prior to the cutoff date of June 30, and the response was very positive. Over a dozen new

Founding Members responded, and CMA will recognise in perpetuity these people and organisations as those who helped get CMA started. Evangelical Alliance was the very first Founding Member, and CMA remains grateful for the environment EA provided which allowed CMA to develop.

Most of the conference sessions were recorded, and are available for download at www.cma.net.au/audio



EA Insurance – Moving Forward

Neil Bull, Manager

John 15 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener... every branch that bears fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful."

The past few years have been an interesting period in the life of EA Insurance with a period of change and then more recently the introduction of a fresh new perspective. The period of bedding in is drawing to a close, and with new foundations set, we are moving forward.

As a team, we are committed to particular values, which are also our commitments to clients. While our values are aspirational and very much a journey, they are things we are accountable to live up to. Our values are:

1. To honor God above all
2. To serve clients with professionalism
3. To be forward thinking and solution oriented

4. To genuinely care about what our clients do
5. To operate as a team, and with integrity

We are looking forward to the next few years where there is much anticipation amongst the Insurance team of a very fruitful future.

Governance Insurance – new product launched

EA Insurance is very supportive of the CMA drive for excellence in ministry governance. This has inspired us to work very closely with Ansvar to develop a special package available exclusively to EA Insurance from August 2010. The governance package covers Board & Directors Indemnity, Professional Indemnity, Employment Practices and Fidelity for mission organizations and churches. The package is extremely cost effective and provides excellent cover for boards and leaders, who often make great contributions at their own risk and expense.

Stay tuned for new product developments in the pipeline specially developed for the missions and church community.

Risk Management Seminars

We will shortly announce a series of risk management workshops to be conducted around Australia in 2010. These 2-hour workshops will be specifically designed to address the unique risks connected with Church and Christian ministries. They will be very practical in nature, and will provide a great framework for the effective stewardship of the resources God has placed under your care.

Please feel free to contact our office on (03) 9890 6851 if you would like to inquire about the workshop in your state, or if you have any questions regarding your general insurance needs.

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Groaning Creation Biodiversity & the Bible

Speakers include

Dr Mick Pope, meteorologist
Jessica Morthope, environmentalist
Amar Breckenridge, economist
Jonathon Cornford, aid & development

20 November

9:30am – 5:00pm

St Mark's Anglican Church
622 Melbourne Rd, Spotswood, VIC
(Only two blocks off the Westgate Freeway)

One day workshop on biodiversity in recognition of the International Year of Biodiversity.

Cost: \$40
(\$25 concession)

Morning & afternoon tea included

Registration on-line at www.ethos.org.au

Enquiries to Mick Pope 0412 002 977 or polymath@optusnet.com.au

→ **Micah Challenge
Voices of Justice
2010**

The organisers of the annual Micah Challenge Voices for Justice were pleased with the recent event. They reported that 320 Participants travelled to Canberra from all over the country and they held more than 140 appointments with MPs and Senators. The then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Opposition Leader Tony Abbott addressed participants at the special *Signature Event* and signed the giant Micah Call scroll. A motion in support of the Millennium Development Goals was moved and unanimously passed in the Senate, and multiple speeches have been made in support of the campaign since Voices for Justice. There was also more media coverage than ever before including 17 radio interviews, plus articles appearing in local papers.



→ **WEA Leadership
Institute welcomes
new director**

The World Evangelical Alliance Leadership Institute (WEA LI) recently announced the appointment of Dr. Rob Brynjolfson as its new director.

Dr. Brynjolfson was previously Academic Dean of the WEA LI and has been intimately involved with it from its inception, creating its website and co-developing many of its leadership courses.

The outgoing director Dr. Jonathan Lewis, is stepping down in order to focus more fully on his first calling, that of developing the missionary movement from Latin America. He will continue in his role as Associate Director of the International Missionary Training Network, which exists to strengthen missionary training programs around the globe. He will also continue to assist the WEA LI's work with national Evangelical Alliances in Latin America especially.

The WEA LI was founded in 2008 with a vision to consolidate the work of national Evangelical Alliances by providing them with effective leadership development programs and resources.

→ **National Marriage
Week: 12-18
September 2010**

Marriage Week was 'visioned' in 2007 and initiated in Sydney and elsewhere in September 2008.

The week, starting each year on the 2nd Sunday in September, promotes, celebrates and honours marriage in local communities and nationally.

Marriage Week is a fast-growing coalition of Christian churches, ministries, media and many others who:

- believe that marriage was foundational in Gods' plan of creation
- believe that marriage is between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others
- value marriage, as a binding public commitment, which becomes the foundation of healthy families, healthy children, and a healthy community
- seek to promote the value of marriage based on Judeo-Christian scripture

For Information: <<http://marriageweek.org.au>>



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 Concession 1 year \$44 3 years \$100
 Student 1 year \$25

CHURCH AFFILIATE

Attendance
 <100 1 year \$70 3 years \$155
 100-250 1 year \$100 3 years \$225
 250+ 1 year \$150 3 years \$330

ORGANISATION AFFILIATE

Annual Turnover
 <\$10k 1 year \$70 3 years \$155
 \$10k-\$100k 1 year \$100 3 years \$225
 \$100k-\$500k 1 year \$150 3 years \$330
 \$500k + 1 year \$250 3 years \$560

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I would like to contribute **monthly** to the work of EA:
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