



CITY BIBLE FORUM

Ask the bigger questions

SUMMER 2022

Reaching the world through workers with the good news about Jesus

A New Era for the Ministry

A message from Board Chair
Greg Clarke

Dear friends,

I am writing to let you know of a major change in the leadership of City Bible Forum. After more than 20 years with the organisation, Peter Kaldor has resigned as Managing Director. Peter's contribution to the development of this ministry has been enormous, and we are grateful that God provided him with the energy, dedication and vision to grow it from humble origins to a national endeavour today.

I am also delighted to announce that the City Bible Forum Board has appointed David Pitt as our new General Manager, leading the team and delivering on our strategy to reach workers with the good news of Jesus Christ.

David has been with City Bible Forum for around five years, as director of our Brisbane work and then as part of the national executive team. He brings leadership drive and evangelistic zeal to pick up where Peter has left off. The Board is looking forward to working with David as we enter a new phase for the ministry.

Thank you for supporting us on the journey!

Greg Clarke

A note from Peter Kaldor

To all my friends in the City Bible Forum community,

It has been a privilege to work in this Christian ministry for such a long period of time. My connection to the ministry began

in 1988, when as a young banker I was introduced to Craig Josling. Craig led a Bible study group called the City Ministry Team and our lofty goal was to reach the Sydney CBD with the good news of Jesus. Three years later he began Ecom, the forerunner to City Bible Forum, while I supported him financially from Zurich. In 2000, I joined him as the second full time employee.

It has been a joy to meet so many different people across the country, at all different stages of their faith journey. I took the decision early on in my role to learn from each person I met and God has richly blessed me with many deep friendships.

God has also prepared the organisation for its next stage, having expanded across the country and diversified our many approaches to our mission. Our way of working now is unrecognisable from four years ago, and we are grateful for the financial and prayer support provided by many of you to make this possible.

I am sad to be resigning, but it is the right thing. I will miss the regular interaction with my colleagues and the challenge of continually reinventing the ministry. I am particularly grateful to Craig for taking a punt on me; he has been a wonderful friend and ministry partner. I am also very thankful for the long-term support of my wife, Bettina.

I pray that our Heavenly Father will have mercy on us and on the many workers we seek to reach, as we point each other to the person of Jesus.

Your brother, Peter

Strategy Update

By David Pitt



For several years, we've had the goal of seeing 1,000 non-Christians actively investigating Jesus in the pages of the Bible with a Christian friend or colleague. Our ultimate goal under God is that many would be saved. I'm often asked how we are tracking against this goal.

Every day at City Bible Forum we are encouraged by stories of people starting this investigation, and year after year more people are becoming Christians! But whilst the total number is going up, we've recently faced the reality that the number of people exploring *at any given moment* has plateaued.

So, we're sharpening our focus! We've set a target to see 400 people in Bible reading relationships by December 2023, and we've focused our ministry teams to each set a goal that they believe will make the greatest possible contribution to achieving this overall target.

We are carving off 20% of our time to focus on this specific goal, stepping away from the busyness of the everyday whirlwind to make it happen. We are implementing processes to track progress and keep each other accountable for achieving the target.

We are more determined than ever, under God, to break through the 200 barrier! Please pray for His mercy and guidance as we refine our focus, seek to be more targeted in our efforts, and ultimately, see more people actively investigating Jesus in the pages of the Bible.

We are so grateful for your continued support and value your prayers as we ask God to be at work in the workplaces of Australia.

National Mission

By Janelle Muller

In September, we launched our first ever 'Dive Deeper' mission seeking to encourage Christians to have five new spiritual conversations with unbelieving friends and colleagues. The mission sought to foster 3,000 new spiritual conversations by 600 Christians and encouraged people to complete a quiz to determine their evangelism type.

As a new initiative, 2022 was considered a learning year, or 'year zero' for the mission to trial the concept and test the willingness of people to attempt such conversations. Our big goal as an organisation is to see 1,000 people in Bible reading relationships at any one time. We have recognised that if people aren't having simple spiritual conversations, they are unlikely to ever ask someone to read the Bible with them. It's an important first step.

Feedback on the concept was overwhelmingly positive, with one network member commenting, "Congratulations on such a well thought through and prepared campaign - it's impressively positioned."

After two months of promotions via our networks, on social media, via email and through Christian radio partners, almost 2,000 people viewed the materials, 761 people completed the evangelism quiz and over 446 spiritual conversations were logged.

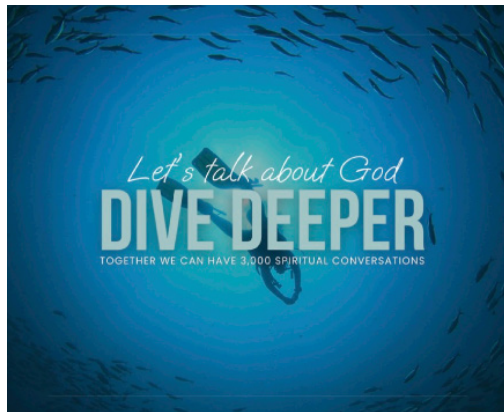
While the numbers were lower than we had hoped, many people shared that the mission inspired them to be actively looking for opportunities to talk to their friends about God.

Eion had a spiritual conversation on a flight. He shared, "I was planning on reading my book on a flight from Perth to Port Hedland, but prayed that I would be able to chat to the lady sitting next to me about Jesus. We chatted for the whole flight and I gave her the book I was reading, *Bullies and Saints* by John Dickson as we'd talked quite a bit about the church in history and where Jesus fits in."

Ian shared his conversation, "A workmate... raised the question of whether we are genetically predisposed to believe in religion... I was able to share that I have investigated the truth claims of Christianity and found the evidence compelling."

It is our prayer that many more people will take the opportunity to have spiritual conversations during the 2023 National Mission, or even better, that they make it a regular habit all year round!

You can share your feedback and register to participate in the 2023 National Mission by going to divedeeper.org.au



Culture Crossroads

By Janelle Muller

On Thursday 27th October, the final Edge event was streamed to a national audience of over 200 registered guests.

Dr Sarah Irving-Stonebreaker opened with a compelling question around why we now start our search for meaning by taking ourselves as the starting point, rather than considering stories from our past. She noted, "We know less than ever about history and we are losing the ability to grapple with the ethical complexities of the past."

Stephen McAlpine began with the story of his father suffering Lewy Body Dementia. He made the case that we are at risk of suffering 'cultural amnesia', losing our historical identity, having no signposts, no direction, no meaning or purpose and no warnings.

An excellent set of talks and Q&A that are available for you to watch anytime at thirdspace.org.au/theedge



Dr. Sarah Irving-Stonebreaker

Library Resources

For Christians

For you:

- The Interactive Word 121 Church Course
- Episode 2: Never More Hostile, Never More Open - Interview with Stephen McAlpine
- How to have Spiritual Conversations: Interview with Sam Chan
- HOGO and the Workplace: Andrew Laird



For Enquirers

For a friend:

- God in 60 Seconds: Coffee Snob with Sam Chan
- Selective Memory Loss: Stephen McAlpine
- Why we need to get serious about having fun: Caroline Spencer
- WFH? How to make it work (from home): Caroline Spencer



Be the Light

By Hannah

I'm Hannah. I work as a Speech Pathologist in a private allied health practice that services Victoria and Queensland. With most of my managers, supervisors, and colleagues based in Melbourne, I have quickly become accustomed to working from home with virtual meetings and offering telehealth appointments.

One of the greatest blessings I have ever had in any workplace has been the collegial nature of working alongside others. It was interesting then, in this new context, for me to think through how to build meaningful relationships with colleagues virtually, which provided an opportunity to do real life together and genuinely share the gospel. An opportunity arose early while I had a relatively small caseload.

Each week, I scheduled a "virtual cuppa" with individual colleagues to introduce myself and listen to their stories.

These were short fifteen-minute morning tea breaks or thirty-minute lunch breaks that did not interfere with work productivity. By God's grace, after getting to know my fellow team members better, I realised that there were other Christians in my workplace.

As allied health professionals (Occupational Therapists, Speech Pathologists, Physiotherapists, Psychologists, etc.) we are often seen as the 'helping' professionals. This challenged me to think, "What's different about being a Christian helping professional"? This question sparked the idea of having regular meetings with likeminded Christians at work.

Thankfully everyone was eager to start meeting together, and our group has now grown to seven. This has been a great blessing. Our group, called "Be the Light" meets online monthly to read God's word and pray together. We have been working through the book of Philippians, particularly focusing on the concept of being God's light in the world. We reflect on what this looks like in our own lives and our shared workplace. These meetings are a great



Hannah

opportunity for us to share the joys and the difficulties we face personally and professionally and to sit with others and pray together.

We hope the group grows in depth and maturity in Jesus. We want to see our colleagues come to know the love and grace of Jesus and we want to ever know that more and more ourselves.

If you'd like help joining or starting an Evangelistic Prayer Team (EPT) in your workplace go to citybibleforum.org/ept



Respect and Boldness

By Craig Josling

The past few years in workplace ministry have been a challenge. Our ministry model has been disrupted and many workplace Christian groups have shrunk. But there have been some 'green shoots' to lift your spirits and give you some hope.

I've been helping out with one of the Christian InHouse groups at one of the big four banks. We'd been averaging around six people to our online meetings, which was a bit discouraging considering around 30,000 people work for this bank. Lynda, who coordinates the group, was discouraged and looking for help. Josh had been wanting to start a group in the bank before he found our group, so he approached the Inclusion and Diversity team. He was prepared for the discussion, having understood the inclusion and diversity policy, he also evidenced that there were other faith-based posts on their intranet platform. The Human Resources representative said it was ok for him to post so long as he didn't flood the channel, that responses

would be monitored and anything of concern reported to them. The message went to the whole company and received 17,000+ views, 102 reactions, 50+ positive comments, and 150 new people asking to be added to the virtual prayer group! 42 people attended the next online prayer meeting, including people from far flung regions.

One worker commented, "I don't normally pay much attention to company-wide posts but when I saw this, to say I was delighted is an understatement!". Another said, "This is just WOW! I didn't realise we had a prayer group. God Bless".

An ongoing chat group has also taken off with over 140 members asking for prayer daily and praising God for all that He is doing in their lives. This is a great story of using diversity and inclusion policies for the benefit of the gospel, of preparing a strong case and presenting it with respect and boldness. Other Inhouse groups have been emboldened to approach their Human Resource Departments. I hope you have been encouraged too!

For more information about InHouse go to citybibleforum.org/inhouse

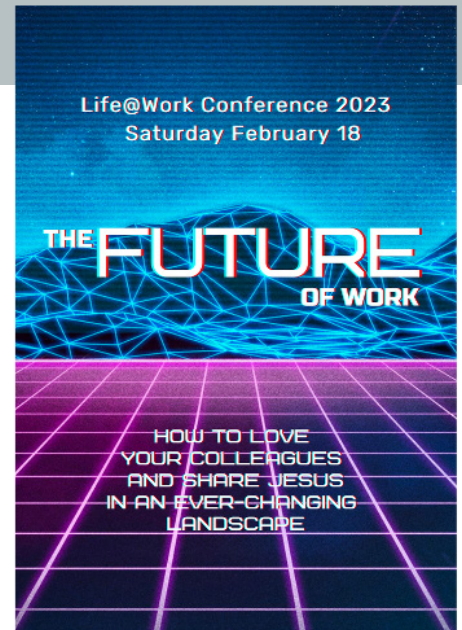
Life@Work Conference 2023

By Andrew Laird

The Life@Work Conference is City Bible Forum's annual conference to encourage Christians in the workplace. Since 2013, the conference has been equipping and empowering Christians from around Australia, and the world, for their life and witness in the workplace. Join us for the next Life@Work Conference on Saturday 18th February 2023, *The Future of Work: How to love your colleagues and share Jesus in an ever-changing landscape*.

In 2023, we're excited to be joined by keynote presenters Daniel Sih, Geoff Brailey, Sam Chan, Kara Martin and more, with Bible teaching from Andrew Laird. Plus we'll be joined by other workers throughout the day to help us explore how we can be confident in the face of a changing working world.

Purchase your Early Bird Ticket before November 30 for just \$25 at citybibleforum.org/lifeatworkconference



First City Legal Conference

By Peter Wrench

The inaugural City Legal National Conference was held in Canberra on 22-23 September this year, with 50 people attending at least one session. Lawyers from Melbourne, Sydney CBD, Newcastle, the Central Coast, the Blue Mountains and Parramatta joined local Canberra-based lawyers at the Nation's capital for a jam-packed 24 hours. The delegates were encouraged by insightful Bible teaching and CPD seminars from great speakers such as David Robertson, John Bales, Dan Anderson, Adrian Barwick and John Steenhof. At the centre of the time together was vision-setting and advanced training on how to run 'Hope Groups'. About 20 of these small groups have been launched by lawyers since Covid, with individual lawyers being helped to hold out the hope and light Jesus offers in this dark time. Some of the conference feedback included: "We were both encouraged and challenged. Does not get better than that"; "Thought provoking conference - thank you!"; "I'd love to read the Bible with a non-Christian friend and (am) keen to bring more Christians in (the) legal sector to City Legal". Plans are already afoot for another conference in 2023, so stay tuned!

For more information about City Legal, go to thirdspace.org.au/citylegal

EvQ: A New Approach for a Skeptical World

By Tim Chen

You don't have to look too far these days to see, feel, or read that our Christian faith is being challenged in places that have previously been considered "safe". Take for instance the most recent Thorburn/Essendon incident. So, how then do we continue to evangelise effectively in a country that continues to 'darken'?

In its first year, EvQ - City Bible Forum's new school of evangelism - is supporting natural evangelists to grow their *evangelism quotient*, to be more equipped, empowered and excited to show that the gospel is more beautiful, more believable, more liveable than anyone dared imagine. EvQ offers a practical opportunity to grow one's evangelism quotient. Deep discipleship is needed to bear fruit when under pressure, whenever and wherever the situation arises. EvQ offers a combination of mentors willing to share their knowledge, wisdom, and experience. It offers training such as "In Tune" with Max Jeganathan and "EPIC" with Sam Chan. EvQ is growing an evangelistic-focused community of disciple-makers to meet today's challenges and prepare us for our rapidly changing future.

Applications for the 2023 Natural and Public Evangelist groups are currently open, and close on 9th December 2022. You can join the Everyday Christian program at any time for 12 months.

We look forward to supporting you to grow your evangelism quotient!

For more information about EvQ, go to EvQ.org.au



citybibleforum.org | thirdspace.org.au

