



# CITY BIBLE FORUM

Ask the bigger questions

WINTER 2023

Reaching the world through workers with the good news about Jesus

## Courage in Community

By John Board & Janelle Muller

When it comes to sharing the gospel, Geoff and Eunice know they are not alone. Geoff said, "We're really glad we don't do mission alone. We do it in a gospel community... We can be on mission together and know that we've got each other's backs. Sometimes it's difficult, and sometimes you don't really know where conversations are going, or sometimes they're uncomfortable, but you just feel courageous knowing that there are other brothers and sisters in Christ who are also spreading the gospel."

We asked Eunice how she came to start reading the Bible with husband Geoff's work colleague Anita\*. Eunice had attended a Word One-to-One training session and felt challenged to read with someone. She said, "I was praying and asking God to provide someone I could read this with, and this colleague of Geoff's came to mind."

Geoff explained that he'd been open about his faith with Anita at work, dropping 'appetisers' of what it is like to read the Bible. He got to a point where he felt prompted by God to draw upon those earlier interactions and have the courage to say to Anita, "Eunice is looking to read the Bible with someone and we had you in mind". To his delight, she said yes!

Eunice and Anita have met six times working their way through the gospel of John. The Bible isn't at all what Anita expected. She expected it to be a book of rules but instead found it to be the story of a person. She is starting to understand who Jesus is.

Eunice said, "It's so encouraging for me to see the Bible approached from fresh eyes... by the second episode... (Anita) said to me, 'I wonder how it would have felt for Jesus to come to this world just to die', and

it was amazing to see her engage not just intellectually and logically, but emotionally with Jesus coming to this world."

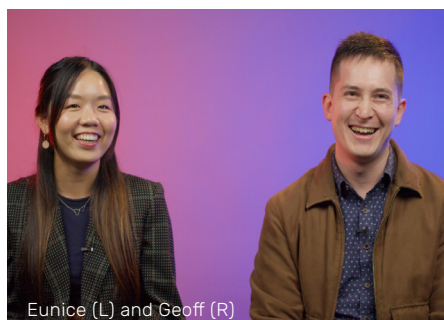
Eunice said, "For me it's been really encouraging to know that I don't need to have the perfect explanations or answers to her questions. It's God's word that speaks. I've felt tempted to be scared of the kinds of questions she might ask but it isn't about my confidence."

Their prayer for Anita is that she won't just read and know about God but actually believe what Jesus says. They have welcomed her into their church community and hope that she can be surrounded by Christians so it isn't just them sharing the gospel, but the church community who can help bring her to Christ.

Geoff shared his hope that there would be many other workplace evangelism stories like theirs. He said, "Helping workers to see their workplace as a missionfield is so important because we do spend most of our time at work whether we like it or not. Training workers how to evangelise, to be praying, to be on mission is just such great work."

To watch the full interview go to [citybibleforum.org/appeal](https://citybibleforum.org/appeal)

*\*Name changed for privacy*



Eunice (L) and Geoff (R)

## Strategy Update



By David Pitt

City Bible Forum does many things: nine professional or demographic affinity groups (e.g. graduates, women, lawyers), events and conferences, evangelistic missions and mentoring, podcasts and more. From our humble beginnings 32 years ago, our aim has always been for workers to hear the gospel through the natural connections formed through daily work.

Many find living for and speaking about Jesus at work difficult. There is unrelenting busyness coupled with fear (perceived and real) of identifying with the way of Jesus. Yet we have the privilege of seeing people patiently serving their colleagues and respectfully having deeper conversations. Sometimes these conversations lead to reading the Bible. Sometimes these conversations lead people to a saving faith in Christ Jesus.

Six months ago, we committed to focusing more intentionally on growing the number of people involved in evangelistic Bible reading. We started the year with 170 people. Since then, 77 new people have started (and some have stopped) this journey, and we currently have 221 enquirers investigating Jesus in the Bible. Our prayer is that this number will grow to 1,000 at any given moment. Even more, we trust that many of these people will be saved as God's Spirit uses His word to bring repentance and faith.

We are delighted to share this winter update with you and we deeply appreciate your prayers and financial support for this part of God's mission, to reconcile the world to Himself through the workplaces of Australia.

# An Extra Scoop of Ice Cream

By Mark Leong

Having served workers for over 30 years, it is common for Christian workers to ask City Bible Forum team members; "But what about the next generation? How are we investing in the next wave of Christian workers?".

This year saw two young workers - Madelaine and Natalie - graduate from the Ministry Training Strategy (MTS). We first met Madelaine and Natalie through the City Bible Forum ministry - Madelaine worked as an engineering consultant and Natalie was in the performing arts industry. After a few years being involved, both wanted to explore full-time paid Christian ministry and wanted to be trained by the City Bible Forum team in workplace evangelism.

Focusing their time on our young worker ministry, Headstart, Madelaine and Natalie prayed with, supported and read the Bible with young workers - workers who were in the same stage they'd been in a few years

prior. They also continued to read the Bible with former colleagues, modelling to young workers what this looks like, and showing them how to share Jesus in workplaces today. We were delighted to recently support them at their graduation ceremony, Madelaine attending in person and Natalie joining online from abroad.

The icing on the cake for us was being in the position to offer both women positions to continue the great work they had started. We praise God for how He has worked! From meeting Madelaine and Natalie as young workers to honing their skills as trainees to them now joining as permanent members of our team has been wonderful.

And because our God is so generous, there is not just cake but an extra scoop of ice cream as well! This year, we welcomed two more young workers - John and Louisa - who want to be trained in workplace evangelism and have started their training with us. Perhaps we need a bigger bowl?

For more information and to participate, go to [citybibleforum.org/headstart](https://citybibleforum.org/headstart)

# Asking Deeper Questions

By Aaron Johnstone

Some of you may have noticed a distinct lack of Bigger Questions being asked at City Bible Forum. And no, I'm not referring to our strategic direction or evangelistic outlook, but to our former colleague Robert Martin and his show Bigger Questions which started in 2015 as a series of live events, and morphed into a radio show/podcast through to early 2022. Every week he would interview an interesting guest and ask them to make the case for Christianity in response to a thought-provoking question.

Well, we've been working out what comes next, and are pleased to announce a companion podcast we're calling Deeper Questions. It will borrow many of the elements that made Bigger Questions great, while also adding some new angles to the conversation. These will be shareable resources to pass on. You can listen to Deeper Questions wherever you get your podcasts.



MTS Apprentice Madelaine with Trainer Mark Leong



MTS Apprentice Natalie



## Library Resources

### For Christians

For you:

- Evangelism in crisis - with Glen Scrivener
- Let's talk about the voice - Andrew Laird
- Stories of us: Leo - Ricky Njoto
- The curse of being a high achiever - Sam Chan

### For Enquirers

For your friend:

- Deeper Questions - What has Christianity ever done for us?
- The Watchlist - The death of the rom-com
- God in 60 Seconds - Did you lock the front door?
- Reframe - Enough time





# Sharing the Gospel with EvQ

By Tim Chen

You may be talking to your friend at the office water cooler about the weekend sport and the topic of non-binary sexuality comes up. How do you respond as a Christian? You may be someone in the public realm who leads a team or organisation that supports progressive ideas of diversity and inclusion. How do you speak to them about this? How can you better share the truth of the gospel in this context?

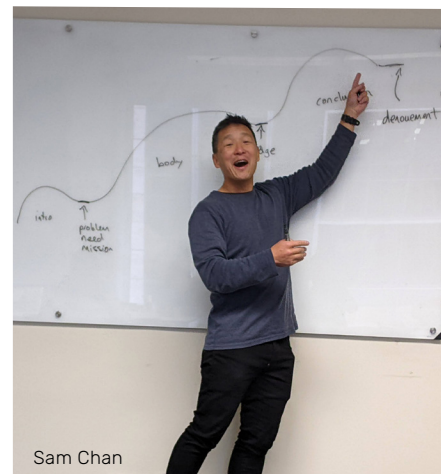
Currently in our second year, the EvQ School of Evangelism is supporting Christians across the spectrum of evangelistic gifts: from the 'everyday Christian' to the personal evangelist to the public speaker. We are helping people be more equipped, empowered and excited in showing that the Gospel is more beautiful, more believable, more livable than anyone dared imagine.

With over 30 evangelists already participating, EvQ is building an evangelistic-focused community that helps people better

reach the lost in their workplaces, across social communities, even at family functions.

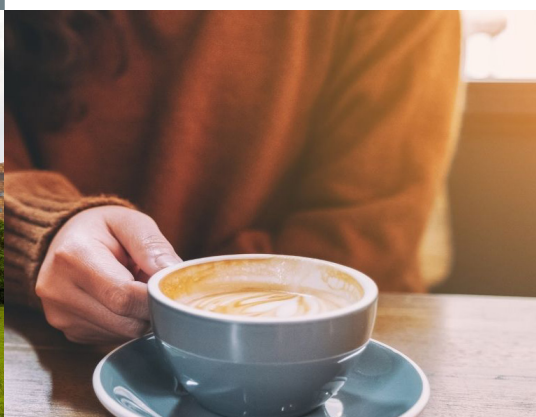
Dr. Erwin enrolled in our *Natural Evangelist* program. He shared his experiences, "It began with informal chats in between busy rotations at the hospital. Having lunches, conversations, getting to know people. One lady had Hindu beliefs. Being curious about her beliefs opened the opportunity to share my own faith. I shared the Gospel with her and normally that's where my evangelism stops. My EvQ mentor Mark really helped me to take the next step which has been a struggle for me. He gave me the nudge saying, 'Why not try this? Why not try that?'; which, as an answer to prayer, now means I'm reading the Bible with her".

If you don't consider yourself a natural evangelist but want to improve your skills in this area, consider joining one of our new monthly guided cohorts as part of the *Everyday Christian* programme. If you are time poor, EvQ offers a range of versatile programmes to fit in with your busy lifestyle. We look forward to supporting you to grow your 'Evangelism Quotient' wherever you are at on your evangelism journey!



Applications for the 2024 *Natural and Public Evangelist* cohorts close on 8th December 2023.

For more information go to [EvQ.org.au](https://EvQ.org.au)



## Reframing Perspectives

By Caroline Spencer

Reframe is a safe community for women to share perspectives, re-think positions and change practice, in order to grow in work and life. Currently, there are six Reframe small discussion groups. The majority are in Sydney, with one in Melbourne. Each small group meets 8-10 times across the year, generally monthly, at a time and location convenient to the group. It would be easy to start a Reframe group in other locations.

Participant, facilitator, and content contributor YiQin said, "Reflecting on my values, examining how I make decisions, facing the truth about my priorities - these are just some of the conversations we've had in Reframe this year. I love the program because it offers a safe, welcoming and open dialogue where mature Christians, new Christians and not yet Christians alike are all able to look afresh at their lives." Her non-Christian work colleague Rebecca\* said, "I love Reframe discussions, because they help me reflect on questions I've not asked myself before."

YiQin has written a number of blogs and resources for Reframe. She knows where her hope comes from. She recently wrote, "I can safely say that trusting Jesus with my eternity has been the best decision I have ever made. Even though there are no less circumstances beyond my control, my hope is secure, and my life is full of purpose, meaning and peace. Even when results don't go my way, I can hold onto God's promise because I know he won't let me down."

I thank God for YiQin and the other eighteen faithful and committed Christian women who contribute to the groups. I thank God too for Rebecca and the other fifteen or so enquirers. It has been a joy to share our lives and build relationships. The hope is, that in time, these women find the life that is truly life as they engage with Jesus in the Bible. I'm currently reading the Bible with one enquirer I met through Reframe.

If Reframe sounds like something that could be of interest to your non-Christian friends or colleagues, if you would like to join a group or start one, go to [thirdspace.org/reframe](https://thirdspace.org/reframe)

# Growing Hope with City Legal

By Peter Wrench

I'm very thankful to God that City Legal has continued to grow over the last few years. At the beginning of 2020, the ministry was in just two cities – Sydney and Brisbane. Three years on, it is operating regular events in seven cities across Australia.

An important part of the strategy are our 'Hope Groups' which are small evangelistic Bible reading groups. Excitingly, over 20% of Hope Group members are reading the Bible with at least one enquirer! The plans under God, are to increase the number of cities, groups and non-Christians meeting Jesus.

Last year also saw the launch of our inaugural National Conference attended by 50 legal professionals. We look forward to hearing Max Jeganathan speak at this year's conference in late August. Contact us if you'd like to get involved! Go to [thirdspace.org.au/citylegal](https://thirdspace.org.au/citylegal)



# Life@Work Conference

By Andrew Laird

In February we held our annual *Life@Work Conference*, attended by over 700 Christians across Australia (with additional watch parties in New Zealand, Hong Kong, and even Washington DC!). It was again a time of great encouragement, as we considered *The Future of Work*, and how we can be confident as Christians in the workplace in spite of rapid change.

Two talks from the Bible encouraged us to take hold of three gifts God has given us which help us navigate the changes – the gift of place, the gift of friendship, and the gift of a God who is always with us. Productivity coach and author Daniel Sih challenged us on the potential idolatry of technology, and how we can use it as our servant, rather than have it master us.

We also enjoyed a wide-ranging panel discussion featuring Geoff Brailey from McCrindle Research, author Kara Martin, Lisa Bateup from Interserve, and Sam Chan. They explored current workplace trends and provided how to share one's faith in the new hybrid work environment.

A recurring highlight of these conferences are the stories from "ordinary" Christians in the workplace, who shared various examples of how they are embracing the post-COVID workplace for Gospel opportunities. One great example was the 'virtual cuppa' to meet new colleagues.

Planning is already underway for next year's conference on Saturday February 17 so be sure to save the date!

For more information go to [citybibleforum.org/lifeatwork](https://citybibleforum.org/lifeatwork)

# Engaging in Some Reel Dialogue

By Russ Matthews

At a recent dinner party, I had the opportunity to meet a friend of a friend. As we awkwardly sipped our drinks, nothing led to successful conversation until I mentioned that I write film reviews. He asked about the latest film I had reviewed, then it only took one question from me to fuel the fire of our dialogue, 'Mate, what's your favourite film?'. This led to barriers coming down, and the rest of the night was filled with great discussions about film, family, and life.

Reel Dialogue cuts through barriers and opens doors to discussions about faith and the Bible. Recently we had an engaging night in partnership with Kellyville Anglican Church. We screened *A Man Called Otto* and had an expert panel discuss the themes of the film. After the event, the church offered for attendees, many of whom were not Christians, to join a Bible study series.

We also have an exciting new podcast called 'The Watchlist'. In partnership with Hope 103.2's Laura Bennett, we talk about the latest offerings in cinemas and streaming, and how they help you explore bigger questions. Access it on your favourite podcasting app.

Check out all the great content, events and resources at [reeldialogue.com](https://reeldialogue.com)

