

BMI News

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Xmas 2010

DIARY DATES

FEB 12

New South Wales
State Gathering

APRIL 9

Tasmania State
Gathering

JUNE 6–10

National Leaders
Gathering

JUNE 6–11

International
Leaders Gather-
ing

JULY 23

Victoria State
Gathering

OCTOBER 15

South Australia
State Gathering

SCRIPTURE

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior... for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

Luke 1:46–47, 49

Looking ahead to 2011

I recently heard someone refer to 2010 as the year that wasn't.

I suppose in that person's mind there were all sorts of expectations that did not eventuate or dreams that were not fulfilled.

I am sure ALL of us have a list of things we hoped for and are we are still waiting for them to happen.

Remember that it's not over until the Father says it's over.

As we celebrate the close of one year and the entering into a completely new year let me remind you that the BEST is yet to be. The best in your marriage, the best in your relationship with the Father, the best ministry years and the best adventures yet.

In December 2007, divers in shallow waters off the Dominican Republic found the wreckage of a pirate ship abandoned by Captain Kidd in the 17th century. It was remarkable that this remained undiscovered for some 300 years, just 21 metres off the coast of Catalina Island in less than 3 metres of water, crystal clear, pristine water. For

300 years people have been searching for the Quedagh Merchant and it was there all the time. How many times have searchers travelled over this ship?

The ship is amazingly intact and it is apparent that looters have not found her either. Remember the ship was located 21 metres from shore in less than 3 metres of water. It was like it was hidden until the time for it to be revealed. It could be the time for new things to be revealed to you that the Father has kept hidden.

Often it seems that we do the same things as we have always done, looking for things in the same place and not getting what we were hoping for.

2011 could just be the year of significant growth and change if you will open up to new possibilities. Try asking the Father to reveal new things to you this New Year and to reveal those things he has hidden FOR you.

Have a blessed Christmas and a wonderful time with family and friends.

Mark Crawford

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain; O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, and be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

G.F. Handel, "Messiah" (Isaiah 40:9, 60:1)

Winterfest 2010

The vacant Retravision store in Bowral's main street was the site of Winterfest '10, our winter holidays community event. We dedicated it to the glory of God, for the benefit of our community.

This year's Winterfest featured a real ice rink set up for three weeks over the school holiday period. The extra effort we made this year to get REAL ICE was met with excitement from our Southern Highlands community.

Why an ice rink? Because the love God has placed within our hearts compels us to give in tangible ways to the community that he has planted us in. We live in an area that doesn't have a great deal of things for young people to do and we see this as a unique experience for families. The thinking around the Winterfest concept is to *"creatively connect our community"*. We have asked ourselves *"how can we expect to influence a community that we haven't engaged in relationship with?"* All that might sound a bit grand, but if people just want to come and have a skate—then that's just great!

This year was a significant step up from last year—the location, the atmosphere of the café and kids corner, and of course the costs. There were some serious hurdles that the team had to overcome to even open the doors on Winterfest '10.

More than 50 volunteers cooperated to create the



Winterfest experience. People from churches, teenagers from local schools and community members assisted with all aspects of the event including skate hire, café, face painting, cleaning and administration.

Overall the event was a great success and we received an overwhelming response from locals—even the council vowed to help next year! Over 5000 people skated through the 3 weeks of operation. It was financially made possible by the donations of individuals, businesses and Highlands Christian Church.

The team did an amazing job—it made me proud to look around and see people from our church serving and giving into their community; expressing the heart of grace—with no strings attached.

Darren Hessenberger,
Highlands Christian Church



Vale Kareema Abdelmesieh

An Ode to Obscurity

Scripture tells us that we are “God’s workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Eph 2:8).

If we compare ourselves with one another it might seem that God has considerably more “prepared beforehand” for some of us. Certain people seem to be in a group which is used mightily in prayer, preaching, music, soul winning or administration; while others appear to pass through life untouched by the limelight, swathed in obscurity and seemingly of little repute. Yet the same Christ has blessed and ordained the walk of both groups. Perhaps it is for this reason that Paul urges that “whatever you do, work at it heartily as to the Lord” (Col 3:23).

On Sunday 21st November the members of Open Door arrived at church to the news that one of our own had passed away during the previous night. The death of Kareema Abdelmesieh, aged 68, was a very unexpected loss. By almost any reckoning Kareema would be at the quiet end of the prominence/obscurity scale. In her 25 years with us, she never held office in the church. She never lead worship. She never headed up any group. Even when fellowship lunches brought forth the wonders of her Arabic cuisine, her contribution sat unobtrusively amongst all the other food. In fact the only time you would hear from her was when she would rise from her back-most seat in the room to testify how God had answered prayer. This she did often and joyously.

Yet for all of her self-effacing obscurity she was much loved. We all wept that morning when we learned of her passing; the ladies, the men but especially the children. The comfort of the Resurrection reassured us, but just for that morning we were all torn. How is it that one so humble could have such an impact? Kareema was quiet on the outside but she was huge on the inside. Like Narnia’s wardrobe there was a lion heart within and a capacity for faith and compassion which reached beyond the bounds of outward appearance.

If it is true that Christ is building a kingdom, then it is also true that He is developing a citizenry. For her part Kareema Abdelmesieh’s contribution to the kingdom was not just in prayer and in the quiet possession of her soul, but in parenting as well. Almost single-handedly she has raised three god-fearing children who themselves are raising up a godly seed as a generational legacy to a mum who never did anything famous. Kareema’s achievements will not be written of in books. They will not be offered for display. Although unsung and unheralded, she has by her character brought honour to the kingdom and in the fruitfulness of the ordinary function of mother, she by that grace which was before ordained that she should inhabit, has furnished the kingdom with acclaim.

Chris Whiting, Open Door Christian Church

The ‘X’ in Christmas

Where does that ‘X’ come from? Is it just a convenient abbreviation to put on signs? A sly attempt to “take Christ out of Christmas”? Mere tradition?

It turns out that the ‘X’ is an initial. The Greek word which we translate as ‘Christ’ is written **Χριστός**. The first letter, ‘chi’, was used as an abbreviation for ‘Christ’ in early Christian art. In English, it is transliterated as ‘X’ and has been used for a thousand years or more as an abbreviation for ‘Christ’ and in words beginning with ‘Christ’ (Christian, Christianity), although ‘Xmas’ itself may date back only to the mid-1700s.

BMI office closure

The BMI office will be closed from Wednesday 22 December and will re-open Monday 10 January, 2011.

Merry Christmas and a happy and blessed new year from everyone at the BMI office!