

Community of Hope Newsletter

June 2025



Mind, Body Spirit Festival

We had another fruitful weekend at the Melbourne MBS Festival in June. As a team, we distributed numerous New Testaments along with Bible Project links - for people to work through Luke's Gospel. We welcomed a couple of new volunteers, and there were plenty of engaging conversations.

We are thankful for so many involved over the weekend, whether it be in praying for the team, financial support and of course our presenters who give of their time and heart to share the amazing Truth! Each year we have two long weekend opportunities (June and November) to be involved in this Festival, and God continues to equip and open doors for the lost to have a one-on-one conversation about a spiritual journey that is the only Way, among many - and it's on our doorstep! If you would like to be involved or find out more, email us at communityofhope101@gmail.com.

Please find below a number of reports from some of the presenters over the weekend.

Ben

Both of my sessions in the Mind Body Spirit Festival were very good. I had opportunities to share with people who had little knowledge or understanding of Jesus, as well as great opportunities to share with, and encourage, some people who had faith in Jesus, but were early on in their journey.

One conversation was with a lady who started asking me lots of questions about the Community of Hope and my church, while she was sorting the Love Language cards for the exercise into order. She told me she has had interest and some belief in a number of faiths. But very recently she had visited a Christian church and completed the Alpha course. She said that she enjoyed the course and loved the Holy Spirit retreat at the end of it. We had a good chat and agreed she seemed to be moving in a great direction toward God. Eventually we laughed and said we had better look at her Love Language exercise results.

She keenly took a Bible, and I showed her some good areas to start reading from. She was also keen to know about some churches she could visit in her area, and I provided information on some possible churches to follow up with. I also prayed for her sister who is going through a very difficult time. She was very appreciative of our time together.

Abbey

I chatted with D out the front of the stall, he had just had tarot and psychic readings that told him he needed to find a set of 13 Gemstones which would give him a message towards his 'higher path'. He had seen one of our presentations which uses gemstones as a visual aid to discuss different elements of the gospel and wanted to know what message they held. I told him that we don't use the stones to channel anything - but encouraged him to engage with the presentation and see if he could find some wisdom there. Please pray that the gospel message he heard today would stick with him, and that he would indeed follow Jesus on this 'higher path' out of the occult.

I had a good chat with two women - D & W - about the relationship between the physical and the spiritual life. D shared how she has put her spiritual life 'on the back burner' while she was facing exhaustion raising her daughter but kept herself protected with bracelets and charms. W said she finds similar peace in tai chi and yoga practices. They were interested to hear about how Jesus connects with every part of life and has made himself a constant connection point for us to God. They were happy to take a copy of the New Testament, so please pray that they would read it and experience the rest and union with God that only Jesus can offer.

R described herself as being on a 'spiritual journey'. She was raised as a Hindu in India but attended a Catholic school. She is very attracted to Jesus and has even attended a church near her home a few times. She spoke about how much she loves God's forgiveness and grace, characteristics she doesn't see within the Hindu system. But at the same time, she says she loves the peaceful way of life Hindus adhere to, and that their rules are very good and lead to a good life. I asked if she had ever received the Holy Spirit, she said no, but that she would like to one day when she's progressed more in her spiritual journey. I invited her to consider some of Jesus' teachings about being the way, the truth, the life and the only way to the Father. I offered to pray for her, and she shared some personal circumstances she was struggling with. She was very grateful to receive prayer and said she felt moved that Jesus caused us to meet today. Please pray that Jesus continues to draw her to Himself, and that she would indeed be filled with the Holy Spirit soon and have eyes to see the emptiness of other gods.



Barry

We had a great MBS this year, numbers seemed to be down (although this may have been just an impression due to the wider aisles and reduced stall holders). I was there on three occasions and each time we were steadily presenting the gospel. There seems to be less convicted New Agers these days and more of the Festival goers are just generally interested in health and wellbeing.

A good example of this were Jani and Michael. They are an inner-city couple who are documentary film producers. I don't believe that in my fifteen years of working with Community of Hope that I have ever had such a long discussion (approx 1.5 hours) covering so much ground with genuinely interested and sincere people.

Both of them went through the Love Languages together (they had similar love languages) and then we took this into the spiritual.

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Michael said that the bible is just stories handed down over time that have evolved but give us good guidelines about how to live. I pointed out that we have portions and full gospels of the New Testament going back to 100-200 AD. This is as good as it gets in terms of historical evidence. I also mentioned that other historians had written about Jesus, and I talked about Lee Strobel's story and the movie he had made (this interested them as they were in a similar line of work).

They both seemed to accept the evidence but commented that the miracles were not true of course as they are too fanciful. I pointed out that this would be the case if Jesus was just a human being, however if he was divine (as he claimed to be) and he actually created us then those miracles would be easy for him. The discussion then went to whether I believed the biblical account of creation and what the view of Christian scientists is regarding a literal six days. I referred them to scientists like John Lennox and Dr Hugh Ross who do not see a conflict between science and faith.

Michael then asked what belief means for me and how it translates into my life. He was very specific about this and wouldn't allow me to just give him a general answer, so a great deal of discussion ensued around this. I told him about how it has changed the direction of my life and told them about how Ash Wednesday, the loss of our home in those fires and how that impacted on my faith journey. I told them that biblical prophecy gives me peace as I do not believe that the world is falling apart as many do, rather that it is falling into place. Much discussion followed, and I referred them to prophecies from centuries ago that are playing out in modern times.

We shared parts of our family history and Jani said that her family is Catholic, coming from Argentina and that her grandfather was a Jew who was forced to convert to Catholicism. They talked about parts of Catholicism that didn't seem right to them. I responded that institutionalised religion can often stray from the original meaning and that sometimes we have to get back to the source. I explained that my current interest is in the cultural context of what happened in the bible and how those around Jesus actually understood what he was saying and doing. I gave examples of how these things can be missed or sometimes misinterpreted. We also talked at length about the problems of translation.

As time went by, I was waiting for signs that this young couple was growing tired of the conversation, however they seemed to be keen to continue the discussion. I often say that our job is to encourage people to move up the Engels Scale to the point of faith, and that is usually one run of the ladder at a time. In Yani and Michael's case we seemed to have moved up several runs of the ladder in one session.

What a privilege it is to be able to share faith in this awesome ministry!



George

I had a wide variety of interesting and engaging conversations during the Festival. Again and again, people try and avoid attributing personhood to God. God is a force, an energy, something that is looking out for you, but not a Being you are accountable to. Yet, you don't thank wind for opening doors, or heat for warming your food or think the force of water is looking out for you as it washes your clothes. I challenged people on their inconsistency here and pointed them to Jesus. Who is Jesus, Lord, liar, lunatic or legend? Most could not answer this and it led them to questioning. I shared of my own personal experience from scepticism to faith and how God has given me a newfound joy and meaning through the Holy Spirit.

I had an extended conversation with a Hindu lady who receives guidance from a goddess every night. She held to a monistic worldview whereby everything is of ultimately the same nature. I challenged her on the inconsistencies of such a worldview – is a difference between good and evil illusory? Did she invent a purpose and plan for her own life before time? Is the illusion that keeps us from the divine also divine? She responded warmly and openly, took a Bible and allowed me to pray for her.

Prayer is critical in these mission events. We must ask God to open hearts and reveal Himself. I felt urgently drawn to prayer multiple times during my conversations. Please pray God would be at work in the hearts of those we witnessed to. Glory to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Malcolm

During the June Festival, I spotted a young man looking intently at our stall. He remained there for a little while before beginning to walk forward, so I waved to motion him over. He came and sat down, saying "I noticed that your stall is free". I confirmed that and introduced myself and off we went.

Part way through the presentation Jesus came up. At which point he pulled out a small bible containing the gospels, Psalms and Proverbs. Needless to say, I was intrigued and asked some questions to find out how much he knew. I soon found out that he had been given this by a Christian friend at a skatepark around two weeks back and he was still trying to figure it all out. We continued talking about the things he'd learned and questions he had, until it came up that he had just recently become homeless. Thankfully, the friend who first introduced him to the gospel had also offered him a room.

I offered to buy him a meal and we walked around chatting and eating together. I had the privilege of learning more about his life and offering what help I could. Praise God for bringing this man to that skatepark and guiding him to us at the Festival!



Doug

I had been fighting a cold over the previous week to the Festival and although I was no longer coughing or sneezing I was not feeling up to talking with people. However, meditating on the Bible App verse of the day, Mark 8:34-35, showed me that yielding to my feelings of wanting to take it easy would result in loss; I decided to use my energy for the gospel.

Friday morning was quiet to begin with but soon there were people interested in the 'Love Languages' and opportunities to go on to share the gospel with a few. One man followed intently and said God had told him he would meet someone today to encourage him - he was being bullied at work. He indicated that he had put his trust in God years ago but was glad for me to pray with him. He took a New Testament and gladly put down his email address for me to contact him, which I will.

There were a handful of others who after the presentation and talking about God's love took a New Testament. I always fold over the page of John 8:32 'and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.'

Another, a mental health worker, followed the presentation right through and agreed but then declared she believed in the vibrations that came to her from the universe. 'Do they help your mental health clients?' I asked. 'No' she said but she wasn't going to change.

A catholic woman earnestly requested prayer for her mother and daughter, and the list goes on. One confident young man told me he already knew what his love languages were. I asked if he knew the love languages of his friends. "Why would I want to know that?" he asked. "So you can understand them and better connect with them, I said." This seemed to be a brand-new thought to him. He refused a New Testament on the basis of his religion. I hadn't picked him as a Muslim, but I said the Q'ran commands you to read this book. The Injil. So, he took a copy.

After 6.5 hours of hard discussion (we are labourers) I finished more energised than when I began.

Rita & Rod

We made a very positive connection at the Festival, with a nearby stall holder who was interested to have a go at the Love Languages presentation. In the process I was able to share about Christ being able to express all the Love Languages and the gift of giving His life for us. She was very open and interested. I was also able to share some of my personal testimony to which she replied, "that's amazing".

She gratefully gave us her name so that we could pray for her and said she will start reading the New Testament! We praise God for this opportunity. Please pray for "V".

Each year there are opportunities to serve and outreach to those genuinely seeking. Here are ways you can get involved:

- Become a 'presenter' and you will be trained on how best to use your gifts.
- Pray for all those over the years past (and future) that have heard the Truth - that they will continue to query and seek a relationship with God.
- Contribute financially for our stand hire and bible giveaways. We are amazingly supported by CCCVat each year, but there is often a small shortfall

<http://www.communityofhope.org.au/>