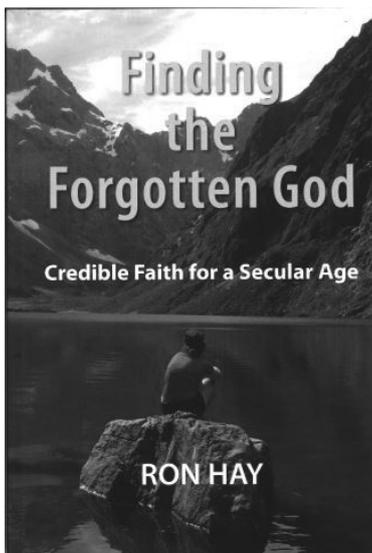




Rev. Dr. Bob Robinson

Gospel and Mission - Books by and for New Zealanders

Two distinctive features of evangelicalism are commitments to the truth of the gospel and to mission. These dimensions are central to some recent books by and for New Zealanders, and reviewed by Bob Robinson.



FINDING THE FORGOTTEN GOD

Ron Hay (Daystar Books, 2014, NZ\$27.99, 238pp, ISBN: 9780994103925)

Evangelism is never simple – but what could be easier than placing this pleasant-to-look-at, readable and ‘no-cringe’ outline of the Christian message into the hands of our non-Christian friends? Ron Hay is a longtime member of the Latimer Fellowship and took his title from a comment that New Zealand “seems not only to have forgotten God, but forgotten that it has forgotten.” Subtitled ‘Credible faith for a secular age,’ part one of the book is about ‘Exploring the reasons for faith’: ‘Is this world all there is?’, ‘What evidence is there for God?’ and chapters on the Bible, Jesus, the cross and resurrection. Part two is about ‘Clearing the roadblocks to faith’ and offers honest reflection on suffering, science, evolution, other religions, the ‘new atheism’ and the goodness of God. The third part offers practical guidance on ‘Entering the realities of faith’ and, most appealingly, includes testimonies of eight New Zealanders coming to faith in Christ. The tone of the distinctively *Kiwi*—from the lovely

cover to its many NZ allusions. I like its intellectual honesty (both the “calamity of creationism” soundly spanked and the new atheists neatly deconstructed) and there are none of the embarrassing dimensions found in much popular apologetics. The wide research behind the book is tellingly applied even as the style remains clear and appealing. Secular people are unlikely to buy (or even see) this book—so they need to receive it from someone who cares enough to offer it with ongoing prayer and an invitation to talk further. Buy, read, give and pray!

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OUR STORY: AOTEAROA

Sophia Sinclair, editor (heather@nzcms.org.nz for sales, 2014, NZ\$10, 84pp, ISBN: 9780473306618)

This very attractively produced book from NZCMS is a fine addition to the current burst of interest in the 200th anniversary of the arrival of the gospel in Aotearoa New Zealand. The 23 succinct chapters, from some twenty different writers, not only go over aspects of missionary arrivals here, but also outline the continuing impact on both Maori and wider society. This is history at its most appealing; it is well-edited, wears its undoubted scholarship lightly, and includes a set of contributions by or about Maori dimensions and perspectives as well. Latimer readers will realise, once again, how much our nation owes to its evangelical Anglican heritage. The book finishes with half a dozen reflective chapters before a concluding

challenge from Steve Maina about the changing nature of global mission. The rather fuzzy b&w photo stretching around the front and back covers is disappointing when the contents are far more dynamic and include some wonderfully appealing photographs and other artwork, often in colour. Don't judge this book by its cover! Instead, rejoice that it is available and for a very economical price—and with stimulating reading in each of its interesting chapters.

FROM EVERY TRIBE

Stewart Entwistle (swe@xtra.co.nz for sales, 2012, NZ\$20, 283pp, ISBN: 9780473204389)

This book tells an engaging story of a demanding challenge: the bringing of the gospel to the tribal peoples of one part of Pakistan (from 1942, after earlier beginnings in 1921, through to the present). As an overview of the growth of the church in Sindh, it also acts as a tribute to those who evangelised in this mainly rural area—both expatriate and Pakistani. Stewart Entwistle is well equipped to write such a volume, having worked—with his wife Patricia—for two periods in the region. Appendices add further engaging detail, as do numerous photos and the insert of a DVD of a film produced in 1978 that shows the work at first hand.

FILLED WITH COMPASSION

Stewart Entwistle (swe@xtra.co.nz for sales, 2014, NZ\$15, 186pp, ISBN: 9780473302535)

Subtitled 'The Story of Zenana Christian Hospital Sukkur, Upper Sindh, Pakistan' this nicely complements *From Every Tribe* by focusing on one example: the compassionate service of missionary and local Pakistani medical, nursing and other staff. The book is well researched, well written, and nicely illustrated with photos as well. This is an inspiring account summed up in part of the volume's conclusion: "The story of the Zenana Christian Hospital is one of incredible dedication by people, both expatriate and Pakistani, in circumstances that are challenging physically, emotionally and spiritually."
