

The Life & Legacy of

Mr. *Eternity*



"Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17)

When the word **Eternity**, was electronically emblazoned across the bridge of our Olympic city after a spectacular display of more than twenty tons of fireworks that were let off from fifteen different points (at a cost of a cool \$5.8 million), it was welcoming and ushering in not just a new year of A.D.2000 but a new decade, century, and millenium.

As the Sydney siders celebrated the biggest party in town and the best in the world, the show was not only witnessed by more than a million people who crammed around the Harbour, but was also beamed around the world to more than two billion viewers.

However long before the giant single word **Eternity** was mechanically sparkled on the Harbour Bridge of our Olympic city of Sydney; it was first written, over 500.000 times, manually and by a small hand of one solitary man, on the pavements of its streets, and the footpaths of its suburbs & beyond.

This one-word sermon appeared, in perfect elegant copperplate style, all over the place... from the Cross to Campbelltown..... from Woolloomooloo to Woolongong..... from Newtown to Newcastle and from Marrickville to Melbourne.

Wherever this word appeared it mystified some and fascinated others. The mystery was," who wrote it?" When the mystery writer was finally discovered the Sydney press nicknamed him Mr. **Eternity** but his real name was **Arthur STACE**.

Where did Arthur Stace come from?

How was he raised?

What was so special about him?.....

And why did God use him?.....

Let's trace the life & pay tribute to the legacy of Mr. **Eternity** in the light of his personal & dynamic relationship with Christ the Lord of **Eternity**. We'll take his surname, **STACE** & tell his story of *sin, salvation, surrender & sweet victory*.

SINFUL PAST - *his condition before Christ.*

Arthur Malcolm STACE entered this world in 1884 to a drunken, dysfunctional and desperate couple in the Balmain slums of Sydney. As a direct result of his parent's addiction, young Arthur and his two sisters and two



brothers, were brought up neglected and needy in a hopeless and shameful atmosphere of poverty. Judging by just the first quarter of his 83 earthly years, and according to his very own words, he seemed destined for failure by all accounts and the very lowest of standards.

As a very young child, a day in his wretched and miserable existence consisted of:

- ◆ stealing loaves of bread & milk bottles *in the morning*,
- ◆ searching for scrap food out of garbage bins during *the day*, and
- ◆ sleeping on hasian bags under the house *at night*.

His pre-teen's troubles shot thru the roof, with schooling almost non-existent, young Arthur had become a state ward by *the age of 12*.

By the time he entered the turbulent teenage years he was such a heavy drinker, he often said, "*I drank metho not milk*". His first pay was spent and wasted in the pub and year later *by the tender age of 15* he was sent to jail.

In his adolescence he became a cockatoo and worked as "a look out" for police for those who ran two-up schools and illegal gambling joints. Later in his twenties, he was employed as a scout for his sisters' brothels in the seedy inner Surry hills.

In his thirties there seemed to be a temporary relief in his criminal activities when he enlisted and served as a stretcher-bearer between 1914 and 1918 in the First World War.

However as soon as he returned to Sydney and his hands and feet rejoined his heart, he resumed his wretched lifestyle of crime and returned to his usual old bad habits of gambling and drinking.

Few years later Arthur described in his own words what he had become " a petty criminal, a bum and a metho drinker." He deteriorated so bad and so low that he went from beer to wine to plonk (i.e. bad wine) to plink (i.e. bad plonk).

Question? How on earth did Arthur Stace survive *all that* and was also spared the inevitable early grave and the horrible eternal loss that awaited his father, mother, brothers & sisters before him?

Answer - It was the **power of GOD** from heaven that saved, strengthened and sustained his needy soul, which we'll see next as we continue with this marvelous demonstration of God's grace and mercy in The Life & Legacy of Mr. **Eternity**.

TURNING POINT- *his conversion to Christ*

The new birth, of turning from sin to trusting the Saviour, took place on the night of the August 6th, 1930.



The conception commenced when the Holy **Spirit of God** used, the seed and truth of the **word of God** preached by Rev.R.D.S. Hammond the **servant of God**, and the sweet testimony of the **men of God** present in the **house of God** at the St Barnabas church in Broadway on that magnificent and memorable evening.

The conviction continued for Arthur Stace who is, like his first parent Adam, created in the **image of God** & as in Adam his federal head he is now dead in sin and **separated from God**. As he listened to the gospel of Jesus Christ the **Son of God**, he *realized* that he was a **sinner before God** and *recognized* that the saving grace is the **gift of God**.

The conversion concluded, shortly after, as he left the meeting in St Barnabas, (*following a cup of tea and a rock cake*) walked across the road to University Park, and under an old big Morton Bay fig tree he *repented* of **sin towards God**, **received** Christ Jesus, as his *sin bearer*, who is the only **way to God** and became a **child of God**. At last he has experienced **peace with God**, and now can exercise the **peace of God**. Arthur used to often testify: "*I went in to get a cup of tea and a rock cake but I met the rock of ages*".

The reality of this great and gracious salvation brings with it automatically and always an exchange of heart and a change from *death to life*, from *darkness to light* and from the *dominion of Satan to the liberty in Christ*, to all that call upon the saving name of the Lord in sincerity and truth.

This significant and spiritual turn around of a monumental proportion altered Stace's present and sinful desires by 180 degrees and affected his future destiny for time and **Eternity**

Now the old man of sin is dead and his last will was read. The new man in Christ is delivered from the power of darkness, dressed with the robe of God's righteousness and destined for real life and great liberty.

The words of the following song perhaps may help us see into the thankful heart and sense the gratitude that this trophy of God's grace experienced.

"OH THE POWER OF THE CHRIST OF CALVARY"*

YOU CLEANSED ME FROM SIN, GAVE ME PEACE WITHIN, SEALED MY DESTINY, SECURED ETERNITY
FROM THE PRISON OF SHAME, RELEASED WITH NEW NAME, MY SOUL YOU SET FREE, WITH GREAT LIBERTY

*ON THE CROSS OF CALVARY, YOU WERE BOUND THAT I MIGHT GO FREE
HOW YOU CRIED "FATHER FORGIVE, THEN YOU DIED THAT I MIGHT LIVE
FOR THREE DAYS THE GRAVE WAS YOUR BED, THEN YOU ROSE FROM THE DEAD
TO ALL YOU DECLARED, YOUR POWER, MIGHT AND GLORY*

MY LORD AND MY KING, I OWE YOU EVERYTHING, THE DEBT YOU FORGAVE AND THE NEW LIFE YOU GAVE
ALL SELF AND PRIDE WERE CRUCIFIED, MY NEW LIFE YOU BUILT WITHOUT ANGER OR GUILT

IN GOD I'M HID, BECAUSE OF WHAT YOU DID, MAN IN SIN IS DEAD, HIS LAST WILL WAS READ
MY MIND AND ATTITUDE YOU ALSO RENEWED, IN SUFFERING AND PAIN THERE IS NOW JOY & GAIN

ANointed MESSAGE - *his conviction by Christ*

By the grace of God and to His glory, Arthur Stace grew in his relationship with the living God as he daily read the scriptures, relied on the strength of Christ in prayer and related his salvation experience to others.

In obedience to God he had become an active member in a body of believers at the Burton St Baptist Tabernacle, Darlinghurst, which is, located just a few kilometers down the road from the Harbour Bridge and the fireworks of the millenium celebration.



On a Sunday night of November 14th 1942, there was a special series of meetings at that church where another fiery event of the cleansing and life changing kind was in progress.

The same Eternal Spirit of God, that earlier convicted the soul of Arthur Stace of the choices and consequences of sin and converted his spirit to Christ the Saviour, employed and empowered one of His choicest servants, the late John G Ridley M.C. This prince among preachers delivered an anointed and an appointed message entitled "*The echoes of eternity*"** that caught the heart of one man, changed the lives of many, and challenged the mindset of a multitude.

The gem of a text is found in the prophet Isaiah chapter 57 vs. 15: " **For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.**" (Audio available**)

Evangelist, John Gotch Ridley M.C., was himself saved in 1915 from a dead religion of man to a dynamic relationship with the living God, in the very same church building under Rev. William Lamb's powerful premillennial preaching of the second coming of Christ.

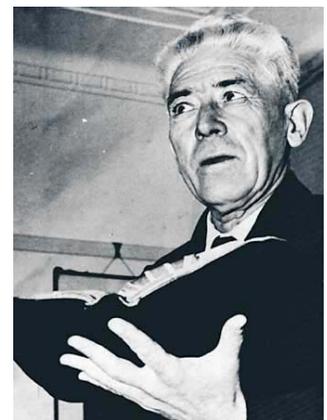
He was a purpose- driven communicator and a painter of word -pictures whose pen was mighty because of the sword of the spirit. He sowed faithfulness to the message of salvation here on earth and reaped fruitfulness in the ministry and service for time and eternity.

John G. Ridley M.C was not only a prolific and terrific writer but also a persistent and tireless worker.

He Co- founded the prophetic and premillennial voice of the **Herald of Hope**, and also established the teaching and training vehicle of the Australian Institute of Evangelism, which later become the **Ambassadors for Christ**.

This prayer warrior and soldier of the faith, who at one time nearly lost his own life in battle, undertook faithfully to herald and understood first hand how important and imperative it is, to prepare for **Eternity** The helpless sound, the hopeless sight and the horrible smell of the sting of death, surrounded him like a constant companion, in *the war* as a soldier of WWI and in *the work* as a chaplain of WWII.

John G. Ridley received a military cross for his acts of bravery and action in battle at Bellicourt 1918 for risking his own life by bringing ammunition and ration to the front line and also for rescuing the wounded. The veteran evangelist was not one to shy away from confronting his hearers with the truth of their eternal life and challenging their hearts to trust his everlasting Lord.



On that night he stood plain and unadorned in his black suit and a tie, but with the power of scripture in his hand and the passion for souls in his heart, and stressed the word **Eternity** according to his preaching mandate and in his usual passionate manner. He pointed out how the echoes of **Eternity** are heard not only in *creation* and in the *Christian*, but also in the *cross*. Then suddenly, laying his prepared notes aside and seemingly in an impromptu fashion, the highly disciplined soldier-like preacher, raised his loud voice and cried: *"**Eternity Eternity, I wish that I could sound or shout that word to everyone in the streets of Sydney. You've got to meet it, where will you spend Eternity**"**

CALL TO WRITE -- *his consecration for Christ.*

Arthur Stace was one of many in the large congregation that God-ordained night. This faithful, available, and teachable servant has been obedient and active since his conversion *from* an old life in crime and sin *to* the new life in Christ and service.

As he sat listening to the eternal word of God, preached faithfully, and proclaimed forthrightly, from the heart and lips of Australia's beloved evangelist, he was yet again, confronted with sin and its eternal punishing consequences. Oh he was not worried about his own eternal safety because his sins are under the blood and forgiven since that blessed night, where he knelt under a Morton bay fig tree and called on the name of the Lord, CRYING " *Lord be merciful to me a sinner*".

His burden and concern, however, was for the sake and the sins of others, so once more his sensitive heart responded to God, this time "*here am I Lord send me*".



*" Eternity went ringing through my brain" was Stace's own statement" and suddenly I begun crying & felt a powerful call from the Lord to write Eternity. I had a piece of chalk in my pocket and outside the church I bent down right there and wrote it.... The funny thing is that before I wrote it I could hardly write my own name. I had no schooling and I couldn't have spelt Eternity for a hundred quid. But it came out smoothly, in a beautiful copperplate script. I couldn't understand it, and I still can't."** (The passing of Mr. Eternity JG Ridley p.9)

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| We commenced with.... | The SINFUL PAST -i.e. <i>his condition before Christ</i> |
| We closely looked at... | The TURNING POINT -i.e. <i>his conversion to Christ</i> |
| We continued with.... | The ANNOUNCED MESSAGE -i.e. <i>his conviction by Christ</i> |
| We considered.... | The CALL TO WRITE -i.e. <i>his consecration for Christ</i> |
| Let's now conclude with: | ETERNITY - <i>your choice to receive Christ</i> |



ETERNITY - *your choice to receive Christ?*

God has personally written to you to prepare you for **Eternity**. This most important two-fold message must be read and received by all from *his creation in Adam* to *his children in Christ*.

The first part of God's message is aimed at *his creation in Adam*:

1. YE MUST B

"Jesus.. said,.....Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." (John 3:3a, 7)

To be born again, you need to:

A. Repent of sin - *This scriptural & spiritual exercise is as simple as A.B.C*

- **A**cknowledge - "I **acknowledged** my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah." (Psalm 32:5)
- **B**e sorry - "For I will declare mine iniquity; I will **be sorry** for my sin." (Psalm 38: 18) and
- **C**onfess- ..." I said, I will **confess** my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah." (Psalm.32: 5b)

B. Receive the Saviour - *this step of faith requires only 3 simple statements of belief.*

I am sorry....Please forgive me..... &Thankyou for saving me.....,

What the Eternal Almighty God did *to, in and through* Arthur Stace, He is willing to do for you, but first you must answer the question of "Where will you spend **Eternity**?"

ETERNITY, ETERNITY, THE LIFETIME OF THE ALMIGHTY.

YOU'VE GOT TO MEET ETERNITY, WHERE WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY?

WHERE WILL IT BE WHERE WILL IT BE? WILL HEAVEN OR HELL BE YOUR DESTINY?

CALL ON GOD'S GRACE AND MERCY, IN THE LOVE OF CHRIST ON CALVARY

Your decision here and now on earth Will determine Your destiny there and then in Eternity

If you refuse and reject The Lord Jesus Christ you are choosing to spend **Eternity** in hell,

If you receive HIM you will spend **Eternity** in heaven and rejoice evermore.

The Bible clearly and consistently declares:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23)"**For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.**" (Romans 10: 13)

Let me encourage you to *bow* your heart before your Maker and creator right now, and *believe on* The Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Lord and Saviour and *become* his child for time & eternity. *It only requires 3 simple yet heart believed expressions*

(This is a suggested prayer)

Dear God:

I am sorry that I have sinned against you and I turn away from my sins.

Please forgive me and be merciful to me a sinner.

Thank you for saving me and giving me a new life. In Jesus Name, Amen

Whilst the first part of God's message **YE MUST B** 

is aimed at *his creation in Adam*, the second part of HIS message is aimed at *his children in Christ* and that is:

2. WE MUST

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad (2 Cor.5:10).

This is one appointment that will not be neither forgotten, nor postponed but will be kept and arrival will be on time as per God's schedule and diary. **So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God (Rom14:12)** You see the issue is not one of ability, but of availability and accountability, nor is it a question of fantastic results but of faithfulness.

God is not asking you, for what *you can or cannot* do for Him, but what **HE** can and will do *for you, in you, and through you*. Jesus said in **John 15:5**, "**I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.**"

When we, as God's children, *discover* here on earth what the Heavenly Father has entrusted us with in talents and time, then *decide* willingly and happily to give *that* back to HIM in dedication and with devotion, then God who is **able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,** (Eph 3:20) takes what we have in our hands and uses it as we trust HIM whether it is:

- **Made** by hand like David's sling and kills a giant,
- **Material** resources like Peter's boat and reach the lost,
- **Meal** of a little boy and feed a multitude, or a
- **Mind** like Apostle Paul and teach the Church..

"What is that in thine hand?" Don't limit your thinking to its physical entity; rather consider the possibility that is in your power to do. In the case of Arthur Stace, God took *his tool* of one piece of chalk, *his text* of one word **Eternity** and *his territory* of one pavement at a time in Sydney, and multiplied it abundantly.

By the time he was called *to exit* this world into **Eternity** on July 30,1967,this gray-haired man had left behind a legacy of an enormous value in the copperplate writing of one word - **Eternity** which was witnessed first by many thousands in Sydney, Woolongong and Newcastle then by millions all over the world on the eve of the new millenium celebration



So go ahead and give what is in your hand to God today, right now.

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:"(Mat 6:19-20)



With the love of Christ
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Website: www.innerwestbaptist.org.au *Oh the power of the Christ of Calvary -Words & Music by Peter Rahme. **The messenger &message behind Mr Eternity 60min Audio Tape is available; The life & legacy of Mr. Eternity- the story & the song is available on CD. The life & legacy of Mr. Eternity is also available in a glossy/colorful abridged gospel tract.For more copies or for the Gospel tract version or the 60 minutes audio tape, contact the writer.
Resources: The Crooked Made Straight- Rev Lisle M Thompson; The Passing of MrEternity- J G Ridley; The Story of Arthur Stace- Keith Dunstan **Photos** supplied by: Ramon Williams; A scene from the film "Mr Eternity" by Liz Hughes - RoninFilms; Eternity on the Sydney Harbour Bridge, -C. Kirton and W. Cardwell Eternity Production Design;Arthur Stace-Rex Beaver; St Barnabas' Church, - Rev R Forsyth