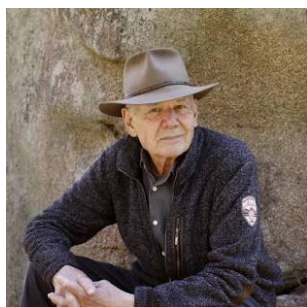
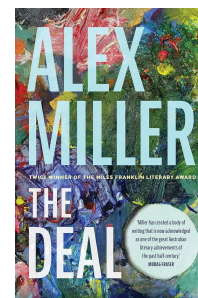


Alex Miller: *The Deal*: p/b, Melbourne, Allen & Unwin, 2024.



Alex Miller's fourteenth novel does not disappoint his avid fans. His story begins simply enough with a frustrated would be writer Andy McPherson living an unfulfilled life as a part-time teacher. He meets his wife to be on a bus trip to Sydney and their relationship, happy marriage and new born child bring them much happiness. At the same time as all this is happening, Andy develops a school staff room friend and Art teacher, Lang Tau, who, like Andy would prefer to be exploring art finds than teaching children.



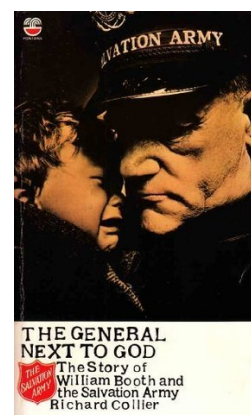
Eventually Lang Tau persuades Andy to assist him in the purchase of a significant work of art which involved a degree of sleight of hand. This challenge draws the reader into a complex range of emotions and uncertainty as the two sort of friends proceed with their plan. Miller succeeds in keeping his readers in absolute tension between his well established family situation and his on again off again uncertain relationship with Lang Tau

Like all Miller's novels this one is impossible to put down and, as with all Miller's novels, the reader is left wishing the story could last longer. Miller is now 87 but I am hoping there will be many more good stories before he hangs up his pencil. 5 stars!

Review of John Collier: *The General Next to God: The Story of William Booth and the Salvation Army*, 1985 (1968), Glasgow, Fontana/Collins.



William Booth was an English Methodist minister who became outraged at the poverty of the English poor and their addiction to gin and alcohol of all sorts and their resultant poverty and ill health.



Marrying the remarkable Catherine Mumford was Booth's best decision. Catherine could match Booth's stamina, preaching skill and determination and between them they began to dream about creating an army of Believing Christians who would commit their lives to the salvation of the poor and needy not just in England but throughout the world.

From this troubled beginning when Booth battled enemies of every sort from pub owners to the church, Booth simply forged ahead working long hours every day on the brink of poverty, preaching, converting, planning and creating a movement which still exists today in many countries.

William Booth's extraordinary stamina from early morning to late at night and travelling to all parts of the globe defies imagination as amazing ideas are hatched and exceptional victories are won against consistent opposition from powerful forces determined to destroy Booth but unsuccessful in their efforts.

Booth's most famous statement became "The chief danger that confronts the coming century will be religion without the Holy Ghost, Christianity without Christ, forgiveness without repentance, salvation without regeneration, politics without God, heaven without hell." A second common theme is "The greatness of the man's power is the measure of his surrender."

Catherine Booth died on 2 October 1890 but William Booth soldiered on working himself harder than ever and the Salvation Army gathering more and more supporters but always in need of more money. William Booth died on the 21st August in 1912 and his son Bramwell took over the leadership but as Bramwell himself began to weaken it was time to set up a Salvation Army high Council to govern such a vast organisation.

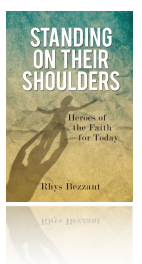
Collier's impressive history is aided by a detailed analysis of facts of the Salvation Army, an extremely large and detailed list of newspaper, periodical, printed and manuscript sources and a very useful index. Published in 1965 readers looking for an up to date history of the Salvation Army will need to look elsewhere nevertheless the amazing story of William Booth is for me certainly amongst one of the most moving books I have ever read. 5 stars.

Rhys Bezzant: *Standing on Their Shoulders: Heroes of the Faith Today*, p/b, Adelaide, Openbook Howden Print, 2017



Rhys Bezzant, Principal of Ridley College, has produced a remarkable collection of heroes of the Christian faith from the third century BCE until the current century. His heroes include Athanasius, Augustine, Luther,

Calvin, Cranmer, Edwards, Newton, Wilberforce, Newton, Spurgeon, Ramabai, Bonhoeffer, and Billy Graham.



Along the way Bezzant introduces his readers to key Christian issues including suffering endured by Christian leaders, the key contributions from leaders that helped to form the Christian faith as well as outstanding contributions. The passages include brief and helpful biographies, key events in the life of the chosen leaders and an introduction to the impact their lives have made on the future of Christianity and the Gospel.

A selected bibliography directs readers to sources of more detailed information and Bezzant issues his own commentary on the importance of the particular leaders to the Christian faith in our world today.

In 100 pages Bezzant has packed in a remarkable and encouraging analysis of key figures and events in the Christian story. They are all indeed “heroes of the faith”.

This collection would make an excellent study group for Christians seeking more information about some of the key leaders that have influenced the growth and formation of the Gospel story over two thousand years.