OWNERSHIP of the MV *Doulos*, listed as the world's oldest ocean-going passenger ship, was officially transferred on 18 March to Christian businessman Eric Saw, Director and Chief Executive of BizNaz Resources Int in Singapore.

OM Ships Director of Marine Operations Mark Dimond said: 'When I first joined *Doulos* as a 3rd Engineer in January 1978 I had no idea that the vessel would end up serving for so many years. God used my time with the ship to teach me so much about Himself, and it has been a privilege to see how God has spoken to so many others who have visited or served on board over the years. I wish Eric Saw God's richest blessings on his future plans.'

Following the signing of official paperwork, a handover event celebrating the ship's 32 years of service and giving thanks to God for His faithfulness took place on board the vessel at a shipyard in Jurong, hosted by the remaining crew, including Captain Dirk Geuze. On Friday 19 March, Eric Saw will in turn host a thanksgiving dinner aboard his *Stewords Riverboat*.

**New Life For The Old Girl**

After renovations, Eric Saw plans to have the ship accessible to the public, but from a fixed berth. Even though the ship has avoided the scrap yard once again, it does now seem that her sailing days are over. The plans include an exhibit on board telling the story of the ship's remarkable history and roles as an onion carrier, coastguard vessel, migrant ship, first-class cruise liner and most recently, floating book fair and home to an all-volunteer international Christian community of over 300 people from around 50 countries.

Eric Saw also hopes to host a small Bible School for lay persons. It will essentially have non-certification courses that busy lay persons can attend to grow in their Christian walk. 'One thing we will strive to achieve,' he said, 'is to continue with the wonderful culture that has been so evident whenever someone comes on board the *Doulos* – a culture of love, friendship, and fellowship.'

A change of name is also in Eric Saw’s mind. Having felt clearly led to Isaiah 49.6, he says: 'Our plans are to rename her *Doulos Phos* where she will, in her new role, be both a servant and a light.' ('Doulos' means 'slave' or 'servant' in Greek, while ‘phos’ means ‘light’.)

**A Mighty Ministry In The Past**

Over the last 32 years, *Doulos* has welcomed over 21 million people on board, during 603 ports of call in over 104 countries. During that time, the vessel has covered more than 350,000 nautical miles – equivalent to sailing around the world 16 times! Operated by OM Ships International since 1978, the ship has served well, ‘bringing knowledge, help and hope’ to millions of people in and around the world’s port cities.

**A Brand New Ministry For The Future**

OM Ships International’s CEO Peter Nicoll, who was unable to be present at the handover, said: ‘The process of decommissioning *Doulos* and selling the vessel has proved to be complex and challenging. Our hope from the beginning was that a way could be found for the ship to be preserved, and I am delighted that agreement has been reached with Eric Saw. We are thrilled that *Doulos* will continue to be of service to Christians and the wider community in Singapore, and are thankful to God for opening this door.’

Peter Nicoll added: ‘We recognise God’s faithfulness through these 32 years of wonderful service of the ‘servant’ ship *Doulos*. Many lives have been transformed, both of visitors and those who have served on board.’

OM Ships International continues to operate *Logos Hope*, launched into service in 2009 and presently serving the island communities of the Caribbean. For latest news and further information, visit www.omships.org
HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE WITH THE WILSONS

People In The News ...

Rev Dr Theodore Williams
WORD has been received of Rev Williams’ passing on 29 December 2009. He was the Founder and first General Secretary of the Indian Evangelical Mission. He was a great administrator and served the Lord faithfully. The leadership is now with Dr R. Theodore Srinivasagam.

Welcome To Sudanese Minister
THE Rev Chuol Yat, the first minister received by the Presbyterian Church of Australia from the Presbyterian Church of Sudan, will be received into the Ministry of Word and Sacraments at a service in Melbourne in St Cuthbert’s Presbyterian Church, Brighton, at 2pm on Saturday 17 April by the Presbytery of Flinders. A warm invitation is extended to any wishing to attend the service and afternoon tea following, to facilitate the strengthening of Christian fellowship and celebrate with our Sudanese brothers and sisters.

New Avenues For Ministry
CMS reports that Geoff and Robun Cuchieri are now in Malta; Andre and Paulina Cox are reviving a partnership in Bolivia after a 40-year hiatus; Kylie and Ralph Whitten with two other families are breaking new ground in Spain while Paul Barker covers much of Asia. Pray for much fruit.

Focus On Indigenous Ministry
ANDREW and Cindy Hadfield have recently arrived in Kununurra and Wyndham as the Assistant Minister focussing on Aboriginal Ministry in the East Kimberley with the Anglican Diocese of the North-West.

Phil and Wendy Brewer
THIS is their 27th year in the Kimberley area where they have been involved in a wide range of ministry. They will be sharing in the Easter Convention near Fitzroy Crossing and then at One Arm Point in July.

WEC Thailand
WEC teams are focussed on evangelism, church planting and nurture in the north-west. They also relate to two churches in Bangkok in partnership with a group of 40 churches they planted.

Fined For Hosting Worship In Kazakhstan
FORUM 38 reports that a Christian was holding a worship service for women and children in her own home on 17 January when police apprehended her and fined her the equivalent of 100 times the minimum monthly wage. She will face criminal charges if she does not pay it. She was appealing.

God Moves In A Mysterious Way
HCJB India reports that Christopher and Dolly Kirubakaran received letters from two different listeners in the same household, neither of whom knew the other was listening to the broadcasts or that they had written. Pray for their nurture and for their safety. Pray for this provision.

Clean Bill Of Health For MAF In NT
MAF praise God for the evaluation CASA gave them recently when all safety standards were met. Pray for their ongoing ministry there.

BCV Chinese Department
BCV’s Chinese Department has moved in with Hays International College at 11 Hay St, Box Hill South, Vic. Dr Y.C. Liong, Dean, says the move has given them more space with everything under one roof with a carpark, nearby transport and a hostel nearby. Pray for a good year for the students and the faculty.

Scripture In Schools
THE Bible Society is the only supplier of Government-recommended Bibles for schools in Kenya. As many as 270,000 are needed this year!

Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship
THERE is much rejoicing over the large number of teenagers and young adults who were at the Port Augusta Convention earlier this year. This is the group who will take AEF into the next 40 years of ministry.

Farsi Study Bible
VOM reports that Iran is seeing an explosion of church growth. Many are hungry for the good news of a Saviour. Protesters are demanding the release of those in prison who were arrested during those years.

Listeners Respond
A TYPICAL response: ‘The FEBC radio station became our true friend. No matter what problems we encountered, that radio was always beside us, helping us, guiding us, teaching us.’

Camping Activities
MANY camps are scheduled for men, women and young people in the next months. Contact the following groups for details: ESA, PO Box 34, Marysville Vic 3779; Child Evangelism Fellowship Training Camp in April, contact 02 9646 5639; Tahlee Minis-tries, contact 02 4997 3003 or www.tahlee.org – check out their new TESOL Course in July!

CMI Aid
MEETINGS are planned with Sergey Siderenko. Contact 02 9651 6477 for details.

Barnabas Aid In Burma (Myanmar)
CHRISTIANS are suffering much persecution, but Barnabas Aid has been able to provide five grants totalling $123,800 for rice supplies, repairing or building wells or homes.

SIM Aid In Africa
EMPPOWERING others to care for themselves is a priority where the largest share of HIV/AIDS infections now occurs among older heterosexual couples. Pray for skill in helping them, and for the protection of volunteers.

OAC Ministries
OAC is available to help with holiday programs, camps, training seminars, family services etc. Contact them at nsw@oac.org.au.

Celebrating 20 Years Of Bus Service
PRISON Fellowship Vic has carried 39,500 passengers with no accidents so families can visit relatives in prison during those years.

Did You Know?
OF the 13 districts in East Timor, Dili has the fifth highest incidence of leprosy.

Voice Of The Martyrs
THIS year VOM are pursuing a new ministry in Tibet. Pray as they develop partners.

And Here’s A Thought:
‘IT’S easy to fight about the Church when we should be fighting for the Church...’
WORLD Vision is suspending its operations in Pakistan after militants attacked its office in the country’s northwestern Mansehra district on Wednesday, 10 March, killing six people.

The BBC is reporting that police and the agency have said that the victims, including two women, were all Pakistani nationals working for World Vision in the area.

No group has admitted carrying out the attack but Islamist militants and specifically the Taliban will be suspected, a BBC correspondent says.

Earlier in the week, following a bombing in Lahore, the Taliban said they would carry out more attacks across the country as long as US air strikes and Pakistani army operations against them continued in the tribal areas, the BBC’s Aleem Maqbool in Islamabad says.

World Vision said that it had not received any threatening letters ahead of the attack.

The BBC said that gunmen burst into the building in the village of Oghi, some 80km north of Islamabad, early on Wednesday morning.

‘About ten men came, they were all wearing masks. They kicked the doors down, took everyone out of their offices, put them in one place and started shooting,’ an office administrator told the AFP news agency.

He added that a bomb had been thrown as the gunmen left the building after the attack, leaving a large crater by the door.

World Vision confirmed that seven members of staff had been injured during the attack.

Attacks on aid workers and other non-governmental organizations are not uncommon in Pakistan. In February 2008, British aid agency Plan International suspended its operations there after three of its workers were killed in an attack on its office in Mansehra.

Correspondents say Mansehra, in North West Frontier Province, had served as a base for militants operating in Afghanistan and Kashmir.

‘Last month,’ said the BBC, ‘two simultaneous suicide attacks on police targets in Mansehra left one police officer dead and several other people injured. Militant groups and religious parties in Pakistan have often accused NGOs of spreading ‘vulgarity’ in society. This is because NGOs mostly employ women workers and organize mixed social gatherings in line with their professed policy of gender equality,’ observers say.

– Dan Wooding

**Rich Streams, World Vision US President, Writes:**

IT IS with a sad heart that I write to you about a terrible loss to the World Vision family. Six staff members were killed in a brutal and senseless attack on our offices in the Mansehra District of Pakistan. Additionally, eight employees are hospitalized with injuries after the unprovoked assault by gunmen. Four of the staff have been released from hospital.

Our work in Pakistan is conducted by local citizens. We remember those staff who died as dedicated workers seeking to improve the lives of people affected by poverty and disasters.

World Vision has temporarily suspended our operations in Pakistan, but we remain committed to helping children, families, and communities in this country.

As World Vision mourns our colleagues, we ask you to join us in praying for the families of our staff members and the people they serve in Pakistan, including those who respond to kindness with violence.

World Vision mourns the loss of its staff and asks for prayers following this tragic situation.
CURRENT COMMENTS – CLIFFORD WILSON

Is The Celibacy Rule At Fault?

THE Vatican has issued a statement denying that the celibacy requirement for priests was the cause of the growing clerical sex abuse scandal in Europe. ‘There have been claims that the celibacy rule was in fact responsible for abuse scandals, especially in Germany and Italy. There was considerable furor caused by a comment from a leading adviser to the Pope – Vienna Archbishop Cardinal Christoph Schoenborn who called for an honest examination of issues such as celibacy and priestly education.

The Vatican’s newspaper L’Osservatore Romano, strongly denied that the celibacy rule had anything to do with sex abuse.

A couple of points from well known Scriptures are relevant. At Genesis 2.18 is clearly stated that ‘It is not good for a man to be alone. I will make him a helper suitable for him’ – a clear statement right in the middle of the record of creation as ordained by God.

Let’s go to the New Testament at Matthew 8.4 where we read that Peters’ wife’s mother was sick with a fever and the Lord healed her. The point is, Rome claims Peter as the first Pope, yet he was a married man, mother-in-law and all. Not all Christian workers are married, but the basic rule is for a man and a woman to come together for a lifetime relationship – physically, emotionally and spiritually.

No Merger With Australia

It is reported that New Zealand’s Prime Minister John Key, has said that merging with Australia is not the answer to his country’s problems. In fact, 71% of New Zealanders were opposed, with 45% strongly opposed. Australians were not so clear in their opposition, but 52% did oppose the idea and 26% strongly opposed it. New Zealand friends have told me that New Zealand is the best country in the world, but for me, Australia is still the best country in the world, though I am quite happy to admit that New Zealand takes second place.

No More Death Penalty for Australia

No Australian State or Territory has the death penalty at present but the law has now gone further in that Federal Parliament has passed laws to ensure that it can never be reinstated in any jurisdiction. Perhaps the point could be made that when the death penalty was applied in the days of Moses, it had to be established with certainty that the judgement was correct. Today it is not quite like that and unfortunately there have been a number of cases where it has later been established that an innocent person has been executed.

Abortion Keeps On Raising Its Ugly Head

Family World News, edited by Fred Nile, CTA leader in the NSW Parliament, has an article showing that the Obama administration is quite strongly endorsing abortion. Hilary Clinton is deeply involved, and when she was First Lady she was the co-founder of Vital Voices Global Leadership which is a group dedicated to promoting abortions in Third World countries. The report in Family News tells how some people who are in favour of abortion are ‘committing an indirect act of violence against women because they are not recognising nor enabling women’s sexual autonomy.’ It is very relevant to read part of a report by Patrick Buckley of the United Kingdom’s Society for the Protection of Unborn Children. He called the report ‘an extreme pro-abortion anti-family report.’ He told the UN Human Rights Council that irrespective of what the report says, there is not and never can be a human right to abortion. The idea of trying to create a right to terminate the life of the most vulnerable human beings by tearing them from their mothers’ wombs is in fact the very essence of violence against women and their babies.

Still Beware Of Those Sharks

Researchers at James Cook University have found that sharks regularly get together in large numbers at reef ‘salons’ for a spruce up. The researchers set up cameras at a number of reefs and they showed evidence that sharks came along for regular grooming sessions that were carried out by smaller fish who in turn grazed on the parasites that were on the shark’s body. The sharks did not attack the cleaner fish in those circumstances, but they would have done if it had been a normal encounter. They are not the first to make this discovery. In our own book, The Way God Works In Nature we quote an atheistic book The Way Nature Works, which describes the very process we are now reading about sharks. The big fish obediently open their mouths when they recognise the cleaning fish by their colouration and invitation dance. Dr Gary Parker reports the same process in his book What Is Creation Science?

One last quote is relevant. ‘It is no good if a little fish gets the idea to go into the big fish’s mouth before the big fish inherits the final round of mutational change to let it back out again! What are the odds of getting all the random mutations required for advantageous behavioural responses at the same time? In other words, if that little cleaner fish goes in the big fish mouth ahead of the programmed time, it will never come out alive. What amazing programmed co-operation there is between individual fish that have never had a formal introduction!

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Do you want to understand the Bible more?
Do you want to grow in your faith?
Drs Clifford and Barbara Wilson and New Life offer a series of monographs to help you.

THIS ISSUE:

Jesus The Master Counsellor and Jesus The Master Preacher.
Available online at: www.nlife.com.au for $7 each or in
Hard copy from: New Life, PO Box 457, Mitcham, Vic 3132
office@nlife.com.au for $12 each inc GST, plus $3 p&p.

NEW LIFE – 1 April 2010 – Page Four
Jesus Bids Us Shine – All The More

THE Age newspaper of 16-03-10 carried a brief report that the bodies of four people had been recovered in North Yemen. Three had been recovered earlier. Six people are still missing. The Age reported that the adults had been ‘members of a humanitarian organisation’. Let the reader understand! (See NL 2010-02-04 for an account of their kidnapping.)

The greatest ‘humanitarian organisation’ known to man is the Church of Jesus Christ, in all its branches and in all the world. So how do we react when something like this occurs to some of its choice servants?

Our human nature would have us recoil in horror and seek revenge. But by God’s grace, ‘the love of Christ constrains us’. Those of us who remember the martyrdom of Jim Elliott and his fellow missionaries at the hands of the Auca Indians remember also the glorious victory won by their families’ going back to the Auca’s and winning them for Christ. And we know that such a series of events has occurred over and over again throughout the history of His great ‘humanitarian organisation’.

Brother Andrew, ‘God’s Smuggler’, taught us that there are no ‘closed countries’ to the Gospel, but that where members of the ‘humanitarian organisation’ have a will, its Head can always find a way. And Tertullian, bless his soul, would still remind us that ‘the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church’.

We may be sure that innumerable ‘humanitarian workers’ will be raised up to take the places of those who have been kidnapped and killed.

What a sad, sin-sick world is this. There are people in it who are so given over to evil that they will kidnap and kill those who go to them in the love of Christ to improve their lot in this world and to offer them the hope of life eternal in the world to come.

For God’s glory and for their sake we must allow nothing to shake us or dim our vision. Only light can conquer darkness, and our Lord still commands us: ‘Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father who is in Heaven.’

‘In this world is darkness, so we must shine
– you in your small corner, and I in mine.’

– Bob Thomas
WITH ample references to the Word of God, Luciano Jaramillo declared the unique qualities, power and personality of the Bible as 150 pastors listened intently during a recent conference at HCJB Global in Quito, Ecuador.

Jaramillo, the Latin America Vice President for Biblica (formerly known as International Bible Society—Send the Light), challenged the pastors to ‘live the Word.’

In a message that evidenced Jaramillo’s four decades of ministry, he showcased the Bible. He spoke of it as eternal yet always current, permanent yet relevant today, unchanging, confirmed by God, revealing Jesus Christ both in His humanity and His divinity.

‘The Word of God is powerful, it is effective, it is current,’ the Florida-based minister emphasized. Referencing the Gospel of John, he said the Bible communicates a message from Someone to someone. He deemed John’s Gospel ‘the Gospel of I’ in an apparent reference to Jesus’ many references to Himself.

Jaramillo told of his own calling at a young age to study and proclaim the message of the Bible. ‘From the time I was a child, I haven’t lost my vocation,’ he said, calling upon his listeners to dedicate themselves anew to the study of God’s Word.

At Radio Station HCJB’s Larson Centre in Quito, Ecuadorian pastors quietly moved to the front, knelt and prayed, dedicating themselves again to the study and exposition of the Bible in their churches.

Former HCJB Global President Ron Cline Honoured
He’s known for the resonance of his voice and his visionary leadership. But he’s also known for his humble spirit and servant leadership. So it came as no surprise to those who know him when a special recognition came to Ron Cline in early March.

The former president of HCJB Global was presented with the Bob Neff Award ‘for distinguished spiritual excellence in religious broadcasting.’ Cline, also former chairman of the mission’s board of trustees, received the award at a reception sponsored by Moody Broadcasting at the National Religious Broadcasters convention in Nashville, Tennessee.

— Ralph Kurtenbach and John Adams

FOUR young women, Gospel for Asia-supported students, started their Bible college field internship with determination to teach a skill each of them used daily as the stepping stone to reaching many women in their assigned village.

The four women were helping with a Sunday school class, where they worked with a little boy named Amal. While getting to know little Amal, the women contacted his family and asked permission to start holding a class in their home. They wanted to teach women in the village something that would revolutionize their life: how to read.

Amal’s family agreed, and soon a gathering of eager village women started meeting in the home. The Bible college students’ desire was that as these women became literate, they would be able to read the Bible for themselves and even teach other illiterate women how to read.

As the Bible college students taught this basic skill that would mean such new opportunity, they opened the classes with Christian songs and ended in prayer. And the women started noticing changes.

‘Now, almost all of the women attending the class share their prayer concerns since God started to act in their lives,’ GFA's correspondent writes. ‘They are starting to have faith in Jesus.’

Learning to read is an opportunity many women in Asia never have. The woman in the picture is learning to read God’s Word for herself.

The students request prayer that the Lord will work in each class member's heart and draw her into a relationship with Him. — Gospel For Asia

DONATIONS TO ‘NEW LIFE’ ARE ALWAYS WELCOME AND HELP US TO CONTINUE AND EXTEND OUR MINISTRY

NEW LIFE – 1 April 2010 – Page Six
Ridley Celebrates Centenary

RIDLEY Melbourne celebrated its 100th birthday on 11 March 2010, and to commemorate the historic occasion, Ridley launched the book Proclaiming Christ: Ridley College Melbourne 1910-2010. Contributors to the book, faculty and guests joined in celebrating the past and the future of Ridley.

The book’s contributors and presenters were gathered on the stage, while behind them, the portraits of the past Principals of Ridley watched over the proceedings. The book was launched by Dr Ian Breward, a leading Australian church historian, who said: ‘It is a very moving story and I think we should thank God for the men and women whose vision and courage led to the foundation of this college, literally 100 years ago today.’

Dr Breward remarked on the significant cluster of contributions that the college has made. ‘The college has had a number of tasks. It has of course trained clergy, it has also prepared large numbers of people for service in the overseas mission field, and it also, more recently, educated men and women to be more effective leaders in their own parishes and congregations.’

He also briefly explained the hardships the college has faced, saying that ‘this college, unlike many other theological colleges in the Anglican Church of Australia, has survived. And it has not just survived, it has flourished. In the end, this pays tribute to the quality of the leadership, particularly in the council.’

Dr Breward’s remarks were followed by Claire Rogers, the Chair of the Ridley Board. Ms Rogers said: ‘As I read the book I was struck by how, through some enormously challenging times, God has sustained and preserved Ridley.’

She commended the book ‘whether for the political conflicts to explore, the insight into different leadership styles or even for the student residential activities.’

Lindsay Wilson then prayed, thanking God for the last 100 years of Ridley and asking that God would use the book. The book launch was followed by the launch of the Ridley Centenary Appeal, an initiative to ensure the continuation of the work of Ridley Melbourne.

Proclaiming Christ: Ridley College Melbourne 1920-2010 is available from the Ridley Bookshop, or can be ordered online from: http://bookshop.ridley.edu.au
MOUNTAIN climbing can help enhance the relationship between parents and teenagers as they experience the physical and emotional challenge of trekking together, according to Southern Cross Community Baptist Church minister, Lindsay Tunbridge.

Lindsay is preparing to lead 'Mount Everest Base Camp and Beyond', a trekking adventure holiday in Nepal on behalf of The Leprosy Mission Australia in September and is taking his 15-year-old son, Indiana, with him.

He wants Indiana to experience climbing 'to the top of the world', visiting a Third World country and taking part in activity that helps make a difference to the lives of people affected by leprosy as a special father-son opportunity.

Lindsay wants to encourage parents to take their teenage sons or daughters on 'Mount Everest Base Camp and Beyond' as a way of providing a shared family experience that can have a lifelong positive impact on their lives.

'I am saying to parents that if you give three weeks to this trek, this has the opportunity to mark your child and your own relationship with your children,' he said. 'To experience a Third World country, trekking and doing something physically demanding together, is an exceptional opportunity. It’s more than just a holiday, it’s a once-in-a-lifetime experience that could really mark a child at this age. Any overcoming experience that you share with somebody else brings you closer together, and the physical demands of climbing Island Peak are huge, so experiencing that together is incredible.'

'I think exposure to Nepal, being the third poorest country in the world, and The Leprosy Mission together, is a shared story that can last a lifetime.‘

Lindsay, who enjoys competition cycling with Indiana, said taking teenagers on 'Everest Base Camp and Beyond' would also help them form an appreciation towards their life in Australia and for the work of caring for disadvantaged people.

‘They will be meeting Nepalese people who are amazing — very strong, courageous and gentle. They will be travelling through the Himalayas, the top of the world, so the scenery is fabulous and the physical challenge of getting there is huge.’

Lindsay is calling for people to register their interest in the trip, begin fitness training and raising $2,500 in sponsorship to support TLMA medical aid and rehabilitation projects in Nepal.

‘Everest Base Camp and Beyond’ is the second trek Lindsay has led for TLMA after gaining experience on the journey in 2008. This year, the adventure trek is catering for up to 18 participants and will be held in conjunction with Australian trekking company, Earth, Sea and Sky. Participants will attend a three-month compulsory fitness training course to be held at Olympic Park in Melbourne while interstate competitors will be given a similar detailed training guide to follow.

‘Everest Base Camp and Beyond’ will be held between 18 September and 10 October and will include an optional trek to Island Peak which is almost 1,000 metres higher than base camp. The cost is $6,700 plus $2,500 in sponsorship.

This trek is one of several Impact Adventures held by TLMA, visiting such places as Nepal, Thailand and India. For more information, contact Lindsay Tunbridge on 0433 911 596 or Graham Peck at TLMA, on 03 9890 0577.
ON Friday evening, 19 March, hundreds of members of the Coptic Orthodox Church and several other denominations including, Ethiopian Orthodox, Melkite, Catholic, Anglican, Evangelical and Assyrian Churches, gathered at Martin Place in Sydney for a Candlelight Prayer Vigil to honour and commemorate the Christian martyrs of Nagaa Hammadi, Egypt, and to pray for all those Christians who are suffering in Egypt and around the globe.

Undergirded By Prayer

The night began with an opening prayer by the Vicar of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Sydney, Father Tadros Simon, followed by an opening prayer from the Hon Rev Fred Nile, leader of the Christian Democratic Party. The Rev Tara Curlewis, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches Australia spoke, and the Australian National Anthem was sung. Mr Amir Chahine, General Secretary of the Assyrian Universal Alliance and one of the youth of the Australian Coptic Movement gave speeches.

At the conclusion of the introductory speeches, there was an extended period of hymns, sung by the Coptic and Ethiopian choirs, including the choirs of St Mary’s and St Mina’s Cathedral of Bexley, St Mark’s Cathedral of Arncliffe, St Abanoub Church of Blacktown and St Mary’s Ethiopian Orthodox of Kings Park.

Then came a brief segue speeches commemorating certain watershed incidents in the modern era, regarding Coptic martyrdom. Distinguished guests including non-Coptic clergymen and politicians all presented these speeches, highlighting these specific atrocities.

Following these speeches and hymns, a solo hymn was sung by a member of the youth, with the crowd following on. This was then accompanied by a 15 minute video presentation detailing not only the attacks at Nagaa Hammadi on 6 January 2010 but also the daily persecution of Christians in Egypt. The presentation was extremely moving and brought several members of the vigil to tears.

Then two powerful speeches were delivered, first by the Coptic Rev Father Shenouda Mansour and secondly by Dr David Clarke MLC. Both speeches further stirred emotion with their impassioned comments. The clear message of both speeches was that the atrocities being committed will no longer be tolerated and that action must be taken. The Rev Fred Nile also delivered a moving speech with the same undercurrent, presenting a strong, political and religious front to those watching the vigil. The closing prayers of the Rev Tara Curlewis were in the same vein.

Huge Success

The night was a huge success on many levels. There was a sizeable turnout of people, given the circumstances of the night and the short notice. The program was well laid out and adhered to. The presence of dignitaries and distinguished guests gave strength to the vigil, and finally, the presence of the people themselves drove this vigil to the success that it was. Those who had come from work, those who had to go to work the following day, pregnant women, women with children, the elderly and those with disabilities all came along and showed their support, not only displaying the passion these people have, but also their determination to support the Coptic Diocese of Sydney and the Australian Coptic Movement in bringing about justice for the oppressed.

The ACM and the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Sydney and its Affiliated Regions thank their distinguished guests, dignitaries, volunteers, organisers, the people and importantly the Lord, for affording them a successful night. Our prayer is for a holy Passion Week and Feast of the Cross, and just as Christ cried out to His Father during His time of need, so do we, in time of our persecuted brothers’ and sisters’ needs.

‘Pray For Us!’

Brothers and sisters, please pray for us, and may God accept our prayers that were on behalf of the oppressed Christians.

A ‘NEW LIFE’ Subscription Makes a Great Gift!
Call Alison on 03 9890 3377 for Details.
Email: alison@nlife.com.au
Second Wave of Attacks Near Jos, Nigeria, Leaves 13 Christians Dead

COMPASS Direct News reports that less than two weeks after a massive attack in Nigeria that killed 500 Christians, Muslim Fulani herdsman unleashed more horrific violence on two Christian villages in Plateau State, killing 13 persons, including a pregnant woman and children, on 17 March.

In attacks presumably over disputed property but with a level of violence characteristic of jihadist method and motive, men in military camouflage and others in customary clothing also burned 20 houses in Byei and Baten villages, in the Riyom Local Government Area of the state, about 45 kilometres from the state capital, Jos.

‘The ethnic Berom Christians, who live as farmers, have long faced off with Fulani nomads who graze their cattle on the Beroms’ land,’ said CDN. ‘State Governor Jonah Jang condemned the killings, alleging that some unnamed persons were fueling misunderstanding among communities in conflict. Because the style of killing is typical of jihadist fundamentalists, Christian leaders suspect Islamic extremists are encouraging the attacks, throwing religious gas on low-burning land and ethnic conflicts.’

Dalyop Nyango Mandung, a survivor of the attack whose 90-year-old mother, Ngo Hwo Dongo, was killed in her room, told newsmen that the villagers were awakened by gunshots from the Muslim herdsman who were barricading their houses. Mandung, however, distinguished the assailants in military fatigues from the Fulani herdsmen.

‘We saw them in military uniforms, about two of them were in military uniform and the Fulani were in their normal clothes,’ Mandun reportedly said. ‘My mother was the only one killed in the family.’

For more information, go to: www.compassdirect.org

Please pray for the persecuted church!

Morocco Clamps Down On Foreign Christians

CHRISTIANS around the world are puzzled by sudden recent anti-Christian activities in Morocco. Todd Nettleton with Voice of the Martyrs says two years ago Morocco would have been called a tolerant Muslim country, but not anymore. ‘So far this week, we’ve heard of six different foreign Christians who either have been expelled from the country or are in custody awaiting expulsion,’ he says. 21 foreigners with an orphan ministry will soon be deported. Nettleton says the new Minister of Justice, Mohamed Naciri, is responsible. ‘It’s unclear if simply this new Minister of Justice is a more devout or more radical Muslim and wants to come against the apostasy movement, encouraging Muslims to leave Islam and follow Jesus Christ.’

Christian Genocide In Myanmar Continues To Be Ignored

MILITARY violence against the Karen people in Burma has risen to genocide. Over 500,000 have died, and millions are living as refugees. Patrick Klein of Vision Beyond Borders says the military is wiping out Christians first and will likely follow with other minorities. ‘In the next couple of months or a year, we could see a huge genocide of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people slaughtered, because the government wants to present this image that everybody in Burma is supportive of the military government. But that is not true,’ he said. Despite the violence, the Gospel is still moving forward as Believers need to step in. ‘It’s surpassing what happened in Rwanda and Darfur, and yet nobody seems to notice,’ Klein added. More Than 1,000 Anti-Christian Acts Reported Since BJP Party Took Office In India

CONDITIONS for Christians in the Indian state of Karnataka continue to worsen. Voice of the Martyrs, USA, reported a brutal attack against Pastor Ravi Chandran on 8 March. This most recent event added to the more than 1,000 other anti-Christian incidents since the BJP Hindu party took office two years ago. Recent legislation has restricted Christian literature and witnessing, making it even more challenging for believers to share their faith. Pray that individuals will remain bold even in the face of violence.

Missionary Arrested, Accused of Maoist Connection

ROSHAN Kuma, a Gospel for Asia-supported missionary in Jharkhand, India, was arrested on 8 March and accused of being connected with the Maoist anti-government group in his home state.

In some parts of South Asia, the Maoists are a popular political party, but in India, the Maoists, who are also called Naxalites, are known insurgents who terrorize the people. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh calls them the ‘single biggest internal security challenge ever faced by our country.’

Roshan was arrested during a recent police sweep of his village. He is not accused of being a Maoist, but simply being linked to them somehow.
IN our last issue of New Life we wrote about our personal commitment to the Bible as the inspired, infallible Word of God. As I have thought about this over the last few days I felt that it would be appropriate to make some observations about my first archaeological dig in Israel.

**A Necessary Step**
I had recently been appointed as Director of the Australian Institute of Archaeology, and I and council members felt I should go to Israel for hands-on experience in the Holy Land. I had academic qualifications and had studied Biblical Archaeology with Dr John Thompson at Melbourne University and elsewhere. Field work in Israel seemed to be the required next step. So I applied to the American Schools of Oriental research, hoping to share in their forthcoming important dig at Gezer in Israel, as an ordinary labourer.

A surprising response soon came! I was invited to join the team – not as a labourer but as an Area Supervisor. I found it hard to believe. Here was the top body in the world inviting me to share as a junior leader in a very important dig! Not surprisingly, my answer was a very definite ‘Yes!’ It was even to be a double experience – for instead of participating in one dig there were to be two – following each other. I was even to receive a small salary for my involvement.

**An Unexpected Privilege**
What a privilege! There was I, about to dig with Professor Bill Dever as leader of both excavations, Professor Nelson Glueck as Co-Leader of one excavation and Professor George Ernest Wright as Co-Leader of the other. With several others I even shared tents with them.

So – I was given my squares in Area 6 to supervise, and it proved exciting. For instance, my team dug up a statuette of the goddess Hathor suckling her infant son Horus. But it was not all plain sailing like that, and we soon found out the reality of having dirty hands!

The dig was proceeding as expected, with our excavated squares doing what they were supposed to do. They joined up nicely with adjoining squares and, together with them, finding Solomonic walls. That was relatively common, for there was good reason to believe we were working in the area of one of the cities that was under the control of Israel’s King Solomon.

That in itself was exciting – but what about that huge pit in the middle one of our squares? I told Professor Glueck about the sense of frustration in our team as we kept digging up great quantities of black ash! What could it be?

‘Sieve, Clifford, sieve!’ was the very friendly advice given by Professor Glueck. So we sieved with a huge implement that was just made for a find such as this. We dug out buckets of the stuff. Slimy, horrible black ash – and some of it was sent off for chemical analysis. What do you think it was?

I had the privilege of telling about it to the large team of leaders – mainly American professors – who regularly came together in the evenings to discuss the day’s findings. That night they were rightly excited!

It was CHAFF! Disappointing? No way! I stressed that we were in the Solomonic level, as the walls and even some structures kept screaming at us.

Chaff? We had excavated part of Solomon’s stables! (See 1 Kings 4.26 and 2 Chronicles 9.25 – and look for more in our next issue!)
(Continued from p.2)

Bhutan
GOSPEL For Asia reports that people all over Bhutan are seeing miracles in the Name of the living God. They find the best way to express God's love is through showing Christian films so they hike for miles through dense forests and high mountains carrying all the equipment with them.

Nurses Christian Fellowship Darwin
NCF had a marvellous reunion in Darwin last year as Bloss Lindsay reminisced over God opening doors back in 1963. A Professional Breakfast will be held in Sydney on 17 April. Contact Jane Cooper 02 9449 4868.

BWA Announces Lotz As Recipient Of Human Rights Award
The Baptist World Alliance has announced that Denton Lotz, former General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, will receive the BWA Human Rights Award during the Baptist World Congress in Honolulu, Hawaii, from 28 July to 1 August.

AFES At Work In Latrobe Uni
AFES worker Aaron Boyd reports on his work among new students at Latrobe Uni: ‘A large percentage of my week is spent meeting up with first year male students for a coffee and a chat. Some of these students are clear on the Gospel but many of them have some Christian background and are just trying to figure out if they want to be a Christian themselves. Please pray that I would have wisdom and discernment in all these catch ups and that I’d be able to explain the gospel in a clear and engaging way. Especially pray for Dave, Tom and Michael who are hearing for the first time that they can be confident of their salvation through trusting in Jesus.’

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Open Doors Provides Relief In Nigeria

NIGERIA’S acting president’s decision to dissolve the government comes at a tense time following deadly Muslim-Christian violence in Jos. Even as he tries to bring new order, some people can’t wait. Carl Moeller with Open Doors says: ‘Our relief projects are to cover three basic areas: first is immediate survival. Second, we need to get some of these people into safe houses. And then finally, since many of the children have been orphaned, we’re providing orphan care, spiritual support and education.’ Many surviving Christians are still shell-shocked. The danger comes when grief turns to anger. ‘Our biggest prayer right now is that Christians would be filled with the Spirit of Christ and be an example of forgiveness and not engage with retribution killing,’ he added.

PLEASANT SUNDAY AFTERNOON AUTUMN SONGS OF PRAISE

Sunday 18 April 2010, 1.30pm – 4.45pm
Special Guests: Carter & Carter, Golden Guitar Winners
Welcome Back To: Delightful Soprano Hannah Johnstone
Plus Regular Soloists: Dale Philip & Ron Ellis
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- **LIVE** by God’s Word 1 Peter 1: 22 - 2:3
- **COMMIT** to God’s Work Romans 12:1-2
- **IMPACT** God’s World Matthew 28:18-30

Services 10:00AM
Rev. Dr. Jeff Pugh, Director - Nash Institute
Jeff concludes his Mark series with our Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday Services - April 2nd & 4th
11 April - Ian Waller - New Testament Studies - BCV
- ‘Encouragement, Endurance & Eternity’ 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12
18 April - Rev Dr Edward J Woods, O.T. lecturer BCV
- ‘He Who Meets My Need’ Exodus 3:1-15
25 April - Rev Dr Edward J Woods
- ‘What’s That In Your Hand?’ Exodus 4: 2-5

Hills Bible Church
A Baptist Fellowship
43 York Street, Mont Albert, VIC
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inquiries@hillsbiblechurch.org
The expulsion of some 70 foreign Christians should not come as a total surprise. As Reuters reports (12-3-10): ‘Morocco has expelled up to 70 Christian foreign aid workers since the start of this month, saying they were abusing its tradition of religious tolerance to try to convert local Muslims.’

**Wave Of Intolerance**

According to Compass Direct News (12-3-10), ‘A Moroccan pastor, his wife and a relative were arrested on 10 March and released on the next day, raising fears among local Christians that the wave of intolerance may spread to the country’s small but growing Church of nearly 1,000 believers.

‘An expert on religious freedom in the Middle East who requested anonymity said that attacks on the Church are inevitable even in a Western-looking, modern country like Morocco, as the church grows and becomes more visible.

‘Because conversion is a taboo, if the government looks like it is doing nothing in regard to all the foreign missionaries that are coming and “corrupting” the country and its “national soul,” it gives credit to Islamists who could challenge the “Islam-ness” of the Royal Family and the government, and that’s just what Morocco can’t afford,’ said the expert.

**Government Malaise?**

‘The clampdown on foreign workers could signal government malaise toward the growing church. The more they grow, the more visible they become, the more they’ll attract this reaction,’ said the expert. ‘And that’s why they’ve been so quiet with house groups. It’s just a matter of time.’

Commenting on the deportations in relation to the closure of a Dutch-run orphanage, Morocco Board News Service writes: ‘It is puzzling what the Moroccan authorities are trying to achieve by this latest wave of deportations from the country. In addition to giving the country a bad image, it also negates a long cherished claim by Moroccan authorities that the country is a bastion of religious freedom.’

**Dramatic Shift In Policy**

While the mass expulsion of foreign Christians does indicate a dramatic shift in policy, it should not come as a total surprise.

In September last year, the government moved against a new local civil liberties group known as the Alternative Movement for the Defence of Individual Liberties when they attempted to stage an act of civil disobedience in protest of Article 222 of the Moroccan Penal Code, which criminalises public eating during the fasting hours of Ramadan.

MALI’s founder, Ms Zineb El-Rhazoui (a young female journalist and dual Moroccan-French citizen) has stated that MALI’s objective is to defend ‘all freedoms, including freedom of worship’.

In September 2009, Zineb El-Rhazoui appealed through the group’s Facebook site for supporters to join her on 13 September 2009 for a fast-breaking public picnic in the woods outside the town of Mohammedia. However, when MALI supporters arrived at Mohammedia railway station they were met by a large contingent of some 100 police, who recorded the names and details of the religious dissidents.

Outraged Islamic clerics responded angrily, labelling MALI as ‘agitators’ and demanding punishment. Subsequently MALI’s leaders began receiving death threats.

**Not Against Islam, But For Freedom**

According to Human Rights Watch, MALI explained its objectives in a statement issued on 17 September 2009: ‘MALI is not a group that is against Islam. We are for freedom of religion: in calling for the abrogation of a repressive article of the penal code (article 222), we also support Tunisian women who are attacked for wearing the headscarf ... MALI is not an organization that seeks to provoke any community. Our goal is to draw attention to contradictions between international law, Morocco’s constitution, and the country’s laws, contradictions that are costly to Morocco’s citizens and that undermine collective and individual freedoms.’

The Moroccan Association of Human Rights is very concerned about Ms Zineb El-Rhazoui, who has been listed as ‘disappeared’ since 17 September 2009.

**Conclusion**

The persecution of MALI indicates that the issue goes deeper than state anxiety over conversions and church growth. It is quite common to find governments seeking to contain Islamists, appeasing Islamists. It is like a barter system: if you do this for us, then we’ll do that for you. In fact this system of costly containment is utilized widely from London to Riyadh, Amsterdam to Algiers, Brussels to Jakarta etc etc etc.

So quite possibly, this is what is happening in Morocco.

– Elizabeth Kendal,

Religious Liberty Monitoring. Special to ASSIST News Service
HCJB Continues To Expand Clean Water Projects

WORLD Water Day is celebrated annually on 22 March following designation by a United Nations General Assembly resolution in 1993. HCJB, as part of its humanitarian aid ministry, is hard at work helping to provide clean water to various communities in South America.

More than 1,000 families in Ecuador may be oblivious to the event, but they now enjoy clean water year round. These families live in 16 communities where the clean water team of HCJB Global Hands assisted on projects, helping people both physically and spiritually.

The remote Quichua communities in Moste Chico, for example, recently celebrated the 20th anniversary of their regional water system which serves about 500 homes that cling to the steep Andean mountainside.

Team members helped the local residents design and build the water system while giving a clear Christian testimony. As a result, many of the local residents came to faith in Christ during the construction, and a number of churches were formed.

The testimony of God’s provision and the benefits of clean water continue in sharp contrast to the majority of rural water systems which fail (such as in neighbouring Santa Rosa). As a result, the community has requested help from HCJB Global Hands to design and build its water system that will connect to the Moste Chico regional system.

On any given day, members of the clean water projects team are working with about 10 communities in planning, design or construction of water systems. The mission has been involved in clean water projects in Ecuador since 1980, utilizing funds from individual donors, churches, governments and collaborating charitable organizations.

Who Can You Invite to Subscribe to ‘New Life’?
BOOKS WORTH READING

Creationists’ Latest Thinking


PAUL Garner argues for the scientific credibility of a literal reading of the early chapters of Genesis as real history. He does more than defend the Bible, he seeks to build a convincing picture of the origin and development of the world on the basis of what is recorded in Genesis chapters 1-11. He tries as much as possible to couch his argument in everyday language, but also provides a glossary of scientific terms at the end of the book.

He provides an alternative to the well-known ‘Big Bang’ theory of origins that allows a young Earth. In the process of doing this, Garner discusses the many ways the Earth is suitable to sustain life, with all this showing evidence of the Creator’s wisdom. The Earth is rightly called the ‘Goldilocks Planet’ (not too hot and not too cold) or the ‘user-friendly planet’, bearing all the signs that it was designed for life.

Believing as he does in a young Earth (about 6,000 years old), Garner tackles the vexed issue of radioactive systems of dating old rocks. He shows the impossibility of life emerging spontaneously from a primordial soup of chemicals. The mind-blowing diversity of living things suggests to Garner that species are not totally fixed in time or location. He views the similarities between non-related creatures as undermining the ‘tree of life’ diagram of supposed evolutionary relationships. Arguments using the stages of embryo development and so-called vestigial organs that are thought to favour the theory of evolution are debunked.

Garner explains the latest theory of the mechanism by which the worldwide flood took place, involving an understanding of plate tectonics. So too he seeks to explain the relation between the fossil record and Noah’s flood, and between the coming of the (only) ice age and those we refer to as cavemen.

While acknowledging that there are many unanswered questions, Garner marshalls sufficient evidence to show that creationists can develop impressive theories that explain many features of the world better than the competing evolutionary theories. This book will bring readers rapidly up to date with the latest thinking from the creationist camp. — Greg Goswell

THE FOUR C's OF PRAYER

Prayer is co-operation with God. It is the purest exercise of the faculties God has given us – an exercise that links these faculties with the Maker to work out the intentions He had in mind in their creation. Prayer is aligning ourselves with the purposes of God ... Prayer is commitment. We don't merely co-operate with God with certain things held back within. We, the total person, co-operate. This means that co-operation equals commitment. Prayer means that the total you is praying. Your whole being reaches out to God, and God reaches down to you ...

Prayer is communion. Prayer is a means, but often it is an end in itself. There are times when your own wants and the needs of others drop away and you want just to look on God's face and tell Him how much you love Him ...

Prayer is commission. Out of the quietness with God, power is generated that turns the spiritual machinery of the world. When you pray, you begin to feel the sense of being sent, that the divine compulsion is upon you ... — E. Stanley Jones in Growing Spiritually, quoted in Soundbites

Bringing Back The Memories

MALLEE BOY IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY, Donald S. Bone, 3 Regan Court, Withers, WA 6230.

I ENJOYED reading this sequel to Mallee Boy to Missionary Pastor, for it brought back memories of my own time working in the Territory in 1959-1960, when I worked with several of those named.

Not only does Donald Bone describe his own itinerant work starting in South Australia and then in Western Australia, the Northern Territory and back to Western Australia, with its joys and difficulties, he also shares the spiritual journey of the aboriginal and part-aboriginal people he was working with. The way God would work was very real but the hold of their traditions was fiercely contested and many did not experience long term release and freedom in Christ.

Donald Bone emphasises the need for spiritual warfare in breaking down these strongholds of Satanic influence that we as Europeans rarely understand, and so we experience great frustration in our own ministry in the outback. Donald Bone has been able to get right alongside the Aborigines and understand where they are coming from. Time will show the great effectiveness of his ministry.

We pray for God's blessing on him and his wife and that the book will be a challenge to many. — Barbara Wilson

CORRECTION

Our report of the recent Banner of Truth Ministers’ Conference (NL 2010-03-18 p.24) gave the wrong email address for obtaining the CD of all messages given at the conference. The correct address for PTC Media is: ptcmedia@presbyteriancollege.org
FOR THE YOUNG ONES:

Names and Meanings

Here’s some of the Hotshots’ names with their meanings.

- **Suzy:** Trusting
- **Sean:** God is Gracious
- **Kate:** Pure
- **Alana:** Good looking and fair
- **Reuben:** Good son

Mei gave me this great book. It tells what your name means.

Write your name here. Ask someone to help you find its meaning.

Name

Meaning
Jacob – Covenant Man

A different perspective on Jacob given at the Messianic Simcha Conference on Phillip Island, Vic, late last year, by Dr Ashley Crane, Principal of Harvest West Bible College, Perth ...

POPULAR preaching frequently slams Jacob, especially over his interaction with Esau. He is frequently called a deceiver, liar, or supplanter. The NIV in a footnote re Jacob’s name states: ‘figuratively, he deceives’. He is seen as a deceptive man going through a conversion-like experience and coming out the other end as ‘Israel’, the ‘prince with God’ – finally an acceptable person. But does the Biblical text really portray Jacob in this way?

Power Of The Prophetic Word – Genesis 25.21-26
Isaac’s wife Rebecca was barren, and God gave her the ability to have children. He told her the intended birth order: the older shall serve/work for the younger. ‘One shall be stronger than the other,’ God said, but He doesn’t clarify which. Only in unfolding the story do we see that the stronger is actually Jacob and not Esau, as many initially think.

This prophetic word would likely have been made known in their community. Jewish tradition has Jacob being conceived before Esau and thus Jacob had natural birthright. But when born, Esau came out first. The tradition says Jacob rightfully grabbed Esau’s heel to stop him from breaking the correct birth order (Jacob: ‘supplanter-deceiver’, lit. ‘heel grabber’, or ‘may God protect’). The Bible never condemns Jacob. In fact, God met with Jacob after his actions and transferred the Patriarchal covenant onto him.

Power Of Belly And Birthright – Genesis 25.27-34
This passage sets the scene for the whole story. On first reading, Esau seems to be the hero as the skilful hunter, and Jacob appears to be the mummy’s boy who stays at home hanging around the tents.

But we need to think ‘community’. Esau was a ‘man of the field’, a lone ranger off doing his own thing; while Jacob was mild and quiet; but the Hebrew ‘tam’ means ‘upright, perfect, integrity’; ‘dwelling in tents’: covenant man, community-focused. Jacob’s focus was on community; protecting tents, homes, families.

The reason Isaac loved Esau was for food, not Esau’s character! Esau the great hunter couldn’t wait to eat from his hunt. Jacob here was providing food for the community! Esau was dominated by his belly and immediate-ness, not birthright; Jacob’s focus was on birthright, not belly.

Note that Jacob did not ‘trick or deceive’ – he just asked a price that Esau could have refused. Esau’s contempt for the birthright was likely because of the attached responsibilities, to take care of the community: provide, protect, nurture, judge, atone for, give religious service. Community care and covenant service was not in Esau’s character.

Esau ate, drank, and went off to do his own thing. The next thing we hear of him is his non-covenant Hittite wives who caused grief to the community.

Power Of Blessing – Genesis 27
Isaac was old: 100, but he lived for another 80 years. Blindness was no reason to give out the family inheritance/blessing (‘will’) ahead of time. He called Esau to give the inheritance privately, whereas passing on the blessing was a community affair (Genesis 49). Why in private? Because Isaac knew his community would not accept his actions. Isaac and Esau were the deceptive ones – breaking covenant community!

Isaac intended to give everything to Esau: the firstborn was to get only double, not all. No wonder Rebecca sought to obtain the blessing for Jacob!

Isaac asked Esau for ‘the food I love’. Isaac was moved by carnal bodily desires rather than by spiritual matters. Esau expected to receive the birthright blessing, knowing he had previously traded it away (Hebrews 12.16,17). Rebecca overheard what was said in secret and worked for Jacob to get the blessing. She was prepared to be cursed for her actions, yet no curse is recorded or hinted at anywhere in the Bible.

Jacob obeyed Rebecca and brought food to Isaac. Compare his deferential attitude: ‘my father’. Esau now wants the birthright blessing, not for community or covenant sense but for personal gain and domination, as reflected in his selfish ‘eat-then-bless-me’ greeting. The blessing could not be reversed and Isaac had given everything to the one son rather than dividing it up between his sons as Jacob did at the end of his life (Genesis 49-50).

Knowing he had been caught out, Isaac now made good and ratified the blessing onto Jacob, including making him his brother’s master, thus fulfilling the original prophecy.

Power Of Covenant: Genesis 28
In this chapter Isaac again knowingly ratifies Jacob’s birthright, the ‘Abramic’ blessing, and without rebuke. Jacob was sent away to find a covenant wife by his father, not as a punishment. The Bible indicates it was also to avoid Esau’s revenge.

God does not rebuke nor correct Jacob, nor call him a deceiver. Instead He ratified and expanded the Patriarchal promise with Jacob. Jacob’s covenant response was to offer a tithe to God (cf Abraham and Melchizedek).

In Summary:
So whilst some modern preachers may condemn Jacob for his actions, God does not (cf Romans 9.13). Jacob was a covenant man whom God met with and rewarded his faithfulness, and changed his name to Israel, ‘prince with God’. He was a man of integrity. Perhaps we should beware of condemning the father of the Twelve Tribes when the Bible does not!
ISRAELI archeologist Eilat Mazar has reported an exciting discovery – evidence that newly unearthed fortifications in Jerusalem were built 3,000 years ago. Based on the age of pottery shards that she found at the site, Mazar believes that the fortifications were built by Solomon, just as described in the Old Testament.

Of course that’s interesting news for Jews and Christians, but there’s a lot more to this than you might expect. As the Associated Press reported: ‘If the age of the wall is correct, the finding would be an indication that Jerusalem was home to a strong central government that had the resources and manpower needed to build massive fortifications in the 10th Century BC.’

That’s a direct contradiction to the views of some scholars who believe, as the AP puts it, ‘that David’s [and Solomon’s] monarchy was largely mythical and that there was no strong government to speak of in that era.’

No wonder that Mazar calls the wall ‘the most significant construction we have from First Temple days in Israel.’ And if she’s right, we will have another link in the long chain of evidence that demonstrates the historical veracity of the Bible.

As I’ve said before, discoveries like these are worth getting excited over – even though we need to be careful not to get too carried away by them. Every archeological, historical, or even scientific find that we make that supports the Scriptures is welcome news. They remind us that the Bible is a record of real people, places, and events – that as Dorothy L. Sayers put it, Jesus Christ was ‘born into history,’ not into mythology.

**Refreshing Reminders**

At a time when the veracity of the Bible is under attack from all sides, such reminders are always refreshing and encouraging.

Yet at the same time, the primary source of our beliefs must remain the Bible itself. I made this point several years ago when archaeologists discovered an ossuary – that is, a box for bones – marked ‘James ... brother of Jesus.’ Even today there is controversy over the ossuary’s authenticity.

But even if the discovery of an ossuary or a city wall corroborates what the Bible says, that does not make the Biblical facts more factual – it simply confirms them. And as historian Paul Johnson says, the confirming evidence for scriptural accuracy is mounting – so much so that the skeptics, not the Christians, must fear the further course of scientific discovery.

But always remember – the Bible stands on its own credible witness, regardless of whether secondary sources confirm or seemingly contradict it.

If we get too caught up in each discovery that seems to support the Bible, we run the risk of building our faith on a less-than-solid foundation. And we run the risk of being disappointed and disillusioned should a certain artifact be somehow discredited.

Better to build our faith on the solid rock of God’s Word – even as the evidence continues to mount, this time from a pile of ancient rubble pointing to the Word’s veracity.

Several years ago, Paul Johnson gave a remarkable speech at Dallas Seminary called *A Historian Looks At Jesus*. It’s one of the best pieces on the accuracy of Scripture I’ve encountered. I encourage you to read it as well – and you can do that now because we have it for you at our website, BreakPoint.org.

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**Great Teaching Planned For Wimmera Easter Convention**

WIMMERA Victorious Life Convention is fast approaching, focussing on the true meaning of Easter and the Cross. Speakers are Dr Douglas Milne and Rev Chris Danes, who will take the theme of ‘Easter Jesus’ and what it means for us today in His death, burial, resurrection and appearance.

Dr Douglas Milne, pastored a church in Scotland for seven years before coming to Australia. He is now Principal of the Presbyterian Theological College in Melbourne. He has written a number of books, mainly commentaries, as well as many articles for Christian journals. Dr Milne’s Bible teaching is inspiring and memorable.

Rev Chris Danes is an effective and dynamic speaker. Having spent six years in the Structural Steel and Metallurgy industry, Chris is convinced that this experience and his theological training has equipped him well to relate to today’s young people. Chris currently heads up Baptist Youth Ministries for Victoria. He enjoys surfing, golf and family.

Mal and Jenny Watts, SIM missionaries will share of their experiences in Burkina Faso in central West Africa, and Ewen and Elizabeth Cummings of Wycliffe Bible Translators will share of their life and ministry in the politically unstable environment of Eastern Chad amongst the local people and the Darfur refugees.

For further information go to: www.wimmeraeasterconvention.org.au
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A detailed information pack is available by contacting:
Our Senior Pastor, Jonathan Stark, on 02 6056 1777 or email jstark@wodongabaptist.org.au

Applications close 30 April 2010

Many Exciting Ministry Opportunities Have Opened Up In Victoria.

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Small-To-Medium Country Town, in mid-northern region, seeks a part or full time ordained minister or home missionary. The facilities are great, but more than that, the Church Family consists of loving Christians just waiting for the right pastor to lead them into the ministry into which the Lord is calling them. 30 minutes from larger regional town.

Part-Time Pastoral Assistant Required for ministry in north-western Victorian regional towns. Are you a team player? Do you love country ministry? Parish is being re-organised and is in need of a dedicated proven preacher and Bible Study leader who is not afraid to drive an hour to serve on a rotation at three centres.

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Full-Time Minister to lead a spiritually strong congregation to engage a rural and industrial population with the Gospel in the heart of Gippsland. A growing city on the Princes Highway in the La Trobe Valley, sustained by a diverse and growing population (currently 15,000), seeks a pastor willing to work with a team to establish and build the Lord’s work within this ripe harvest field.

For further information on these or other vacancies please call our Ministry Development Director, Rev Dr Robert Carner, on 03 9702 0548.

To register your interest in a position, please forward your Resume to: ministry@pcvic.org.au or to Presbyterian Church of Victoria, Ministry Development, PO Box 617, Berwick VIC 3806
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Alan Baker on 03 9623 9114 or alannolabaker@crossculture.net.au  
The closing date is Monday 12 April 2010

**Somerville Presbyterian Church**

**VACANCY**

A vacancy exists in an evangelical congregation of the Presbyterian church.

The Somerville (Victoria, Australia) congregation is strong in its reformed theological understanding and would expect any candidate to share this position.

If, as an experienced ordained minister, you sense God’s Leading to find out more please contact the Interim Moderator for Somerville.

Rev Michael Wishart  
03 59759514  
rev.mw@bigpond.net.au

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• Christian education environment  
• Well established and progressive organisation

**King’s College** is a well respected, council-controlled, independent Christian school, serving a broad community. It has a well established reputation in academic, cultural, sporting and spiritual endeavours. The College has a Christian based curriculum, with a vibrant Biblical teaching and character development program.

**The School** has enrolments of around 380 students encompassing Pre-School, Primary and Secondary, offering a wide range of subjects to VCE level, with a staff of 40. The school has a modern, single campus, set on substantial grounds in a major growth corridor. Established 25 years ago under the auspices of the local Presbyterian Church, King’s College has developed outstanding facilities, and will finalise a major capital works program in 2010, positioning the school well for future growth.

**King’s College** is situated in the major regional city of Warrnambool, located on the coast approximately 3 hours from Melbourne in the vibrant and growing South West region of Victoria. The school’s current Principal of 15 years will retire at the end of 2010 and the School Council now seeks expressions of interest for the role of Principal, commencing at the start of 2011.

**The School Council** seeks to appoint a talented and experienced professional to effectively lead the organisation and build further on the school’s success, providing educational, organisational and spiritual leadership and implementing the Council’s vision for sustained growth.

**The Preferred Candidate** will be a committed Christian with a well developed Christian world view and a passion for Christian education. They will be supportive of a subject and mastery-based approach to education. The Principal will be a proven, dynamic leader, displaying a flair for organisational growth and development, demonstrated educational leadership and organisational skills, along with strong people and communication skills. Candidates should possess post graduate qualifications in a relevant field, with demonstrated successful classroom teaching experience.

This Is A Significant Opportunity to lead and further contribute to the growth and development of this well respected Christian organisation.

To Obtain An Application Package:  
Contact the Council Secretary on 03 5562 6302 or email: haywendy@hotkey.net.au  
**Applications Close:**  
23 April 2010 and should be addressed to:  
The Council Secretary, King’s College, 23 Riverview Tce, Warrnambool, VIC, 3280

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With Christ ...

FLO ROBINSON was born in Richmond, an inner suburb of Melbourne, on 21 February 1918, the youngest child of Edwin and Kate Guildford. Her brother Frank and sisters Bessie, Edie and Ettie all predeceased her.

In Atherton, Qld, Flo met and married Bill Robinson.

Fl was very involved in the life of her church, and in the lives of her children and grandchildren. Her funeral was conducted in Toowoomba by her Pastor, Bruce Simpson, of the Wesleyan Methodist Church.
ETHEL COLLINS. ‘GOOD night Ethel. We will see you in the morning!’ The birth of my sister Ethel brought my parents unusual joy. They had gone through the dreadful experience of losing three girls in infancy, and although three boys (Ray, Cliff and Elton) had since been welcomed into a very loving home, there was no longer a precious girl, which mothers long for so often.

So Ethel was special, and she has been for the 83 years that God gave her to live on Earth. She has been a bright witness for Christ, mainly with Brethren Assemblies in Sydney.

However, at 25 years of age she contracted poliomyelitis and for the rest of her life wore a calliper and necessarily walked with a cane. But in all her difficulty I never heard her complain, and she rejoiced greatly when her first child Sue was born, when Ethel herself was 25 years of age.

Ethel was happily married for the best part of 60 years to well known Cecil Collins and they had five children – Sue, Allan, Roslyn, Richard and Marcus.

Ethel typed my many books even though she was a cripple and often in pain. Early in the piece one of her sons said to me: ‘Uncle Cliff, you keep those books coming – they are Mum's life-line.’ I don't know how many books Ethel typed, but I guess there were about 30 – many of them started out as radio scripts for my very extensive outreach over many radio stations all over the US and beyond.

Ethel’s daughter Sue led the funeral service on Friday 12 March, and her eldest son Allan spoke at both the funeral service and the graveside. He emphasised the need for personal commitment to Jesus Christ whom his mother served so faithfully throughout her life.

Sympathy is extended to her siblings, her sons and daughters, and other relatives, together with a large number of grieving friends, and thankfulness is given to the Lord for one who has now heard her Lord say: ‘Well done, Ethel, good and faithful servant.’

– Clifford Wilson

WITH CHRIST

WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN THE NEW LIFE FAMILY?

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A POWERFUL new 75 minute drama documentary called *C.H. Spurgeon: THE PEOPLE’S PREACHER,* has just been released.

I have just finished viewing this documentary on Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the Victorian era’s most famous preacher and social reformer.

*C.H. Spurgeon: THE PEOPLE’S PREACHER,* this beautifully-filmed and acted movie, brings to life the extraordinary story of the famous Baptist preacher and social reformer in 19th Century England.

This film, now available as a DVD, was co-produced with the UK-based Christian Television Associates, and made under the direction of Crawford Telfer.

**The Early Years**
The film starts when C. H. Spurgeon, the country boy preacher from Kelvedon, a village in Essex, England, accepts the call to move to the big city of London, with no idea of what a sensation his straight-forward presentation of the Gospel will cause.

But great churches filled with parishioners are only the beginning for this man of God. Spurgeon’s heart for the downcast leads him to found many ministries to meet the overwhelming needs he sees in the streets of London.

This is CTA’s latest production and some may ask why they would make a film about a man long dead?

A CTA spokesperson explained: ‘The answer is because his story is right up to date and highly relevant for the 21st Century. He was young, he became a celebrity, he was both vilified and adored by the media, he knew romance, and he knew personal suffering and tragedy.

‘And he made a stand against the liberal thinking of the time when Darwin and evolution were as hotly debated as they are today.

He preached a message of reliance on the Bible and faith in the One it is all about, when others in the Church were giving way to “higher criticism” and losing their faith. Sound familiar?’

CTA, which is based in Clevedon, a town in North Somerset, England, says that the challenge facing the writer and director Crawford Telfer, was to recreate the Victorian era and somehow capture the feel of the huge crowds that came to hear Spurgeon preach.

‘We had two Spurgeon’s – Christopher Hawes as the younger and Steven Daltry as the older,’ said the CTA spokesperson. ‘Both played their parts convincingly and powerfully, as did Sarah Mardel as Susannah Spurgeon.

‘A team of superb hair and make-up artists and costume designers, and dedicated props finders and 19th Century locations give the film a truly period feel.’

The challenge facing Executive Producer Malcolm Turner was to raise the considerable budget required to make the program.

‘With God’s help this was achieved, and CTA is thrilled with the thought that our biggest-ever production has been made during a time of economic hardship and recession,’ added the spokesperson. ‘It is also CTA’s first “High Definition” production which means it can be shown in cinemas which have digital video projection.’

‘And Andy Harrison presents the documentary segments which were filmed in France, Germany, Scotland and England, and the music is by Steven Faux.

‘Whether you are a history buff, or just enjoy a good Evangelical film, this is for you. I highly recommend you get this movie, not just for yourself, but also for your whole family to view as well. You won’t be disappointed!’

To find out more about the film, go to: www.cta.uk.com/news.asp?aid=114

– Dan Wooding

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