

## WHAT DO YOU SEE IN THE MIRROR?

### - OM In Guatamala

'TELL her! Tell her, so that she can help you!' Three girls pushed another girl forward to the members of the Operation Mobilisation Guatemala team and closed the door. 'Please, help her,' they asked team leader Pilar Castro. She found herself standing face to face with 15-year-old-Manuela, a girl living in Quiché, an indigenous village that was heavily affected by the guerrillas.

Pilar and her two other team members had travelled to this village to work in schools in several neighbourhoods, in partnership with the local church. On 20 February, they offered a program on life values and shared the Gospel with nearly 600 children.

The team was almost ready to leave when classmates brought Manuela to Pilar. 'Look,' they told her, 'Manuela tried to kill herself because her boyfriend has left her for someone else. You have to help her, because she could try to do it again.'

#### A Look In The Mirror

Pilar didn't know what to do. She hugged the girl, and she asked God to help her. 'I'm pretty sure God told me in that moment to have Manuela look at herself in a mirror,' she says. That's what she did. But Manuela refused. She automatically covered her face with her hands and didn't want to take a look at herself. 'I don't want to see myself,' she said. 'I'm ugly and nobody wants me.'

Pilar however made her look at herself. She asked Manuela what she saw in the mirror, but Manuela didn't say anything and cried. 'I told her that she had to acknowledge that she was God's perfect creation,' says Pilar, 'that she was unique and very valuable and that no man was worth it for her to kill herself.' She explained that her boyfriend hadn't left her because she was ugly and the other girl pretty, but just because God wanted the best for her.

Manuela started to cry again when Pilar told



Sharing Christ's love in Guatamala

her that she had to forgive her boyfriend and be forgiven. Finally she did that, and accepted Jesus Christ. Together with team member Mirna, Pilar sang her a song about forgiveness. 'This song challenges us to forgive others, forgive ourselves and accept the forgiveness of God,' she says.

#### Worth The Effort

Rosemary, a member of the church who helped OM in the program, was observing the situation. A few years before, she had suffered from bad depression. Now she seemed to have overcome it and has since got married. But as she watched Manuela and Pilar, it was like Pilar was asking her to look in the mirror. And she also didn't have an answer to the question: 'What do you see?'

'We believe that God is also working in her life,' says Pilar. The team members are very grateful for the opportunities they had to share the love of God in Quiché. 'We suffered from the heat and the dust and slept on the floor. But we give thanks to God because He used us to bless others. That is what makes it worth the effort.'

What do you see in the mirror? We see a person whom God has created and loves. If you would like to find out more about sharing God's love with OM please visit [www.om.org.au](http://www.om.org.au)

- Debbie Gan

## FROM THE EDITOR:

# When Storm Clouds Gather ...

THERE can be no doubt that the Christian Church is under attack today in a way at least as ferocious as she has been at many times in the past. All around the world, Christians are under attack. In some places this even reaches to the point of persecution and martyrdom. In Europe (including Great Britain), America, Australia and New Zealand our activities are curtailed and privileges lost or increasingly threatened.

The latter might not be such a bad thing in many ways, but benefits received as a result of privileges accorded to the Church have generally flowed back to the society which gave them as social welfare work done in greater quantity and with better effect than would otherwise have been the case.

Here in Victoria the secular humanists are waging a bitter battle against the teaching of Religious Education in schools complete with all the 'horror' stories, scare mongering and distortions of truth we expect to see when the Faith is under attack.

This issue of *New Life* contains the usual assortment of reports of persecution and hindrance, but each month we receive many more reports than we are able to fit into our pages. We have therefore devoted some space to simply printing the headlines in order to give readers a sampling of what is happening around the world (see p. 9). Pages 3,9,10 of this issue therefore make for informative rather than encouraging reading.

Thankfully, though, the Christian faith is one which is Divinely designed to bring encouragement to the Lord's people in the midst of discouragement. In my preaching ministry I've just set out to preach through Exodus, and last week we landed on Exodus 2.1-10, the old Sunday school favourite of Moses in the bullrushes.

Dear old Matthew Henry gives us the good oil on this event: 'This chapter begins the story of Moses, that man of renown, famed for his intimate acquaintance with Heaven and his eminent usefulness on Earth ... Probably the mother of Moses was full of anxiety in the expectation of his birth, now that the Pharaoh's edict was in force. Yet just at the time when Pharaoh's cruelty rose to this height, the deliverer was born. Even so, when men are projecting the Church's demise, God is preparing for its salvation. Duty is ours, events are God's. Faith in God will set us above the ensnaring fear of man.'

### How can the Lord's people cope in times of discouragement and distress?

- Recognise that life goes on – and participate in it.
- Look to the Lord to send us better days and raise up leaders after His own heart.
- Behave in such a heavenly way that we will be of great earthly use.
- Always remember that God will have the last word in human history.

– Bob Thomas



**VOLUME 73 NUMBER 13.** ISSN: 1033-7903

**ISSUE DATE:** 1 April 2011.

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**SUBSCRIPTION FREE ON REQUEST.**

**ACCEPTANCE OF ADVERTISING DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT.**

**PUBLISHED BY:** New Life Australia Ltd.

**ABN 15 005 035 138.**

### How Can YOU Help *New Life*?

SINCE the closure of *New Life* as a print publication, a number of people have contacted us offering to help in one way or another if only we would keep *New Life* in print. Sadly, the print edition cannot be revived – the numbers just don't add up to viability – but we have been able to put together a business model which will enable us to revive it as a web-based and email publication.

To do this we would be extremely grateful for your help and support in the following ways:

- ◆ Keep us in your prayers.
- ◆ Recommend us to others.
- ◆ Forward *New Life* to your friends.
- ◆ Advertise with us.
- ◆ Send in your news and pix.
- ◆ Make a donation as you feel led.
- ◆ Check out our web-site from time to time ([www.nlife.com.au](http://www.nlife.com.au)).

# Sudan: Serious Conflict In South; Abyei Attacked

INSECURITY in predominantly Christian Southern Sudan has intensified since the 9 January 2011 referendum on Southern self-determination. The Sudan People's Liberation Army has been fighting various southern armed opposition groups, in particular the forces of General George Athor and those of Gabriel Tanginya ('Tang').

These conflicts arise from political and tribal grievances. A fellow Dinka and close aide to the late SPLM/A leader John Garang, Athor has been a strong supporter of Garang's 'New Sudan' vision for a united, secular, democratic Sudan. He opposes the current SPLM leadership but denies he has links to Khartoum. 'Tang' on the other hand has been allied to the National Islamic Front in Khartoum (Northern Sudan) since 1984. Khartoum backs Tang's Nuer forces in their fight against 'Dinka domination'. When fellow Nuer, pro-secessionist Reich Machar, split from the SPLA in 1991 over ideological and tribal differences, he aligned with Tang. (After their coup failed in 1991 Machar's Nuer forces massacred some 500 Dinka-Bor civilians, razing their villages and lands so that some 25,000 subsequently died in a NIF-engineered famine. Reich Machar is currently the Vice President of South Sudan.)

On 9 February fighting erupted in Fangak, Jonglei State, between the SPLA and the forces of General George Athor. Two days of fighting left at least 200 dead. On 22 February fighting broke out in Malakal, Upper Nile State, between the SPLA and Tang's forces, leaving some 50 dead. Children taken hostage from a local orphanage were subsequently released. So even within South Sudan, political and tribal divisions are deep and toxic, not least because Khartoum has been fostering the widening of these divisions for decades as part of its divide and rule strategy. However, if there is to be any hope for a brighter future, the Southerners must reject corruption and megalomania and strive for reconciliation in the South. Ultimately it is the masses that suffer. As goes the African proverb: 'When elephants fight, it is the grass that gets hurt.'

The most serious outbreak of all occurred at flash-point Abyei. Fertile and oil-rich, the Abyei region straddles the North-South border. The people of Abyei were to get their own referendum to decide whether Abyei would be part of the North or the South. Traditionally, Abyei is 'Southern' and predominantly Dinka. But the Islamic regime in Khartoum

wants the Misseriya Arab nomads (allies of Khartoum who traditionally pass through the region each year) to be given voting rights. Ultimately disagreement forced the referendum's cancellation. Khartoum wants Abyei divided and the US urging the South to 'compromise' for the sake of peace has only emboldened Khartoum in its land-grab.

On 27 February the police station in Todach, Abyei region, was attacked at 6.30am by a 100-strong force comprised of Misseriya Arab militiamen and militants of the Khartoum-backed Popular Defence Force. Seven police were killed and six wounded. The attacks continued the following day, but included uniformed members of the Sudan Armed Forces using advanced heavy weaponry. On 28 February an estimated 100 police and civilians (mostly youths) were killed. On 2 March Maker Abior, Abyei region, was attacked by a force of some 1,000 Misseriya, PDF and SAF elements, resulting in 33 casualties. Two helicopters deployed from Khartoum evacuated wounded Arab-Muslim soldiers. The Khartoum-led Joint Integrated Units did not intervene nor did they warn the Dinka of the looming threat. This violence has triggered a mass exodus of Dinka from Abyei with as many as 45,000, mostly women and children, fleeing south.

According to Sudan analyst Eric Reeves (13 March), there has subsequently been a dramatic military build-up in the area, with the SAF building roads and forward military posts inside Abyei region. They have brought in tanks and advanced weaponry and have occupied and fortified several recently torched villages. The SPLA is also reinforcing its positions. In some places the two forces are only 20km apart. There is concern that Khartoum is preparing to divide Abyei by force. Meanwhile the Government of South Sudan has been holding talks aimed at securing alternative routes for its oil, routes that would deprive Khartoum of revenue. Surely Khartoum would regard this as a massive provocation. Tensions are soaring.

### **Please Pray Specifically That:**

● God will have mercy on the impoverished, long-suffering, war-ravaged masses of South Sudan, especially those who faithfully love, worship, walk with and trust in the Lord. 'Please Lord, interpose Yourself, protecting and delivering Your loved ones in answer to prayer.'

– Elizabeth Kendal, for the Australian Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty Commission.

## REACH FOR THE SKY ...

# Come To ACMA Camp For A Taste Of Missionary Service

Hi! I'm Nathan Lang and I'm an engineering student here at the Australian Centre for Mission Aviation. In July last year, ACMA ran their annual ACMA Camp, which was my first as a leader and my third overall. Preparing for the event and interacting with the campers reminded me of my own experience as a camper ...

I first heard about the Mission Aviation Camp and the campus here at Coldstream in 2007. Friends of ours had gone to previous camps and recommended it, and my own interest in aviation led me and one of my friends to come to the camp. Five days of learning, fun, and spiritual encouragement resulted, and I quickly became friends with the other young people on the camp. We slept and ate in the cold hangar, and the morning and evening devotions were full of life and encouragement. The week ended far too soon, and we went home changed from the experience and knowledge of a place where God was working.

In 2009, the leaflets again came out for the year's ACMA Camp. I was halfway through year 12, and trying to work out what to do after finishing school. My brother Dan and I registered for Camp and turned up in the freezing cold with another of our friends at Coldstream. I saw people I knew from the 2007 Camp, met new leaders and made new friends. One of the things I most remember is sitting on the bus for one of the excursions, with everyone on the bus singing *Amazing Grace* off by heart, a group of leaders and campers alike praising their Lord.

Most importantly, God showed me that I could and should be a part of this environment, learning and supporting each other in Christ, and working towards the goal of telling others about Jesus. The week ended, but I decided I wanted to come back.



Ready for take-off!

So I applied and was accepted into the engineering course here at ACMA, and on 5 July 2010 there I was, as an ACMA student and now one of the camp leaders, with the opportunity of being an influence and help in the lives of other young men and women.

The 2010 camp was a bit different, as we were now accommodated in warm rooms instead of a cold hangar. But the Lord again blessed the work we put in, and we were encouraged by the campers as much as we encouraged them. We learnt, worshipped and had a heap of fun together.

This year's camp will be just as big an event as all the previous camps. Campers will again make aeroplanes from styrofoam and bits of wood, learn in classes about navigation, piston engines and other subjects, and head out on exciting excursions to various aviation organizations in the Melbourne area. And as our CEO Bruce Searle has said: 'If by this camp we can bring each of our campers just a little closer to God, it will all be worthwhile.' I hope to see some of you there!

– Nathan Lang

Contact ACMA, 96 Killara Rd, (PO Box 223), Coldstream Vic 3770; Phone: 03 9739 0612; Email: [www.acma.vic.edu.au](http://www.acma.vic.edu.au) for more details.

## Gloria Jeans Coffees Co-Founder Peter Irvine Joins Aussie Harvest

PETER Irvine, the co-founder of Gloria Jeans Coffees, teamed up with the Aussie Harvest team for a speaking tour to western NSW from 21 March. Peter travelled with Aussie Harvest founder and pilot, Rod Cuthbertson to Lightning Ridge, Grawin, Barraba, Tomingley, Narromine and Bathurst during the four day trip.

Peter has had over 40 years experience in busi-

ness at a high profile management level.

The Aussie Harvest team meets with over 150 men each time they fly out west. 'It's great to see God using this ministry to bring a spiritual awakening in mature Australian men that the church hasn't reached,' said Rod Cuthbertson. For more information and to join the Aussie Harvest mailing list, go to [www.aussieharvest.com.au](http://www.aussieharvest.com.au)

## MAKING THEIR MARK ...

### Morling/Southland College Graduates 182

MORLING College celebrated the graduation of 182 theology, counselling and education students at the annual Commencement and Conferral Service at Ryde Civic Centre, Sydney, on 7 March. As well as the graduating students, the Morling community welcomed 60 new full-time Bible and Theological students, 171 new part-time residential and distance students, 26 new counselling students, 25 new education students and 24 Plunge (the gap-year program for 18-24 year old) students.

In 2011 Morling and Southland Colleges have around 700 students studying theology, counselling and teaching. Rev Dr Ross Clifford, Morling's Principal, said, 'Morling remains committed to training men and women for full-time ministry. Each of us should consider who God might be calling, and set them apart and encourage them to train. There is no higher calling than full-time ministry. Encourage people to serve God and be trained in that way.'

Keynote speaker for the evening was Rev Karl Faase, Senior Pastor at Gynea Baptist Church, who challenged everyone to look at what their outcome of study is and will be. Karl focused on Romans 1.1-7 and 14-17, particularly Paul's statement, 'I'm not ashamed of the Gospel', reminding all graduates

that, although they are at the end of their degree, learning never ceases. 'As you leave with your degree, can you repeat the words of Paul, "I'm not ashamed of the Gospel"?' Karl concluded.

The 182 graduating women and men received their awards from Rev Kel Willis, Chair of College Council, Rev Dr Graeme Chatfield, Associate Dean of the Australian College of Theology, Dr Edwin Boyce, Principal of Pacific Hills Christian School and President of Southland College, and Mr Ken Dickens, Principal of National Institute of Christian Education and CEO of Christian Education National.

#### Kingdom Building

Kel Willis commented that this was a special night for the graduates, that after years of hard work and study the reward at the end of the process has arrived. He encouraged graduates to use what they have learnt, and the commencing students what they will learn, to advance the Kingdom of God.

Morling is committed to raising up a generation of students equipped to take God's Word to God's world and to serve the local church.

For further information about Morling College or the courses on offer, email [admin@morling.edu.au](mailto:admin@morling.edu.au) or phone (02) 9878 0201.

### World Evangelical Alliance Condemns Killings Of UN Workers In Afghanistan And Actions Of Terry Jones

IN the strongest terms the World Evangelical Alliance condemns the senseless killings of United Nations workers in Afghanistan by those protesting the burning of the Qur'an by Terry Jones.

Dr Geoff Tunnicliffe, CEO of the WEA, speaking on behalf of 600 million Christians, stated, 'No matter how much we disagree and find abhorrent the actions of Jones, responding in violence can never be justified.' Dr Tunnicliffe is also concerned about other acts of violence that have occurred since the Qur'an burning. 'We are deeply distressed by the attacks on churches in Pakistan and the aggression against Christians.'

The WEA underscores that Jones does not represent the teaching of Christianity and the Christian Church. The WEA had already condemned the actions of those in this small group responsible for burning the Qur'an back in March and has since been in close contact with Muslim leaders in the US on this matter. The WEA believes no book of any faith community should ever be burned or desecrated in any way. The WEA also calls upon all Christians to refrain from disrespectful and provocative activities towards all other religions.

The WEA is asking Muslim leaders to call upon their communities to end the violence and the WEA urges Muslim leaders to clearly explain to their followers that the actions of this tiny extremist group who have burnt the Qur'an are absolutely condemned by Christians globally – this action does not represent the true Christian faith or the world's two billion Christians.

The WEA extends its deepest sympathy to the families of the UN workers killed in this violent attack. The WEA also calls upon its global community to pray for peace and an end to this and all violence.

## MOVING ON ...

# Mike Raiter To Resign From MST

THE Rev Michael Raiter has advised the Council of Melbourne School of Theology that at the end of 2011 he will not be seeking another term as the MST Principal. Michael has come to this decision as a result of deep, prayerful and considered reflection before God.

In his letter to Council Michael wrote: 'The end of the Principal's contracted term of service gives both the Council and the Principal an opportunity to review the past term of service and to prayerfully consider what is best for the college for the next five years. Undoubtedly, the College has undergone momentous changes in the past five years. The changes have not met with universal acclaim but I believe they have been in the best interests of the College. I'm convinced that our new campus in Wantirna provides us with the best opportunity to maximise our impact for the Gospel in Melbourne.

'There is much about leading a college, and MST in particular, that I have found very satisfying and even, at times, exhilarating. At the same time, there are aspects of the role of Principal that I have found extremely difficult. As you well know, my heart's passion and gifting lies primarily in my teaching and preaching. Few things bring me more satisfaction than exercising this ministry. I am therefore, with mixed feelings, informing you of my intention not to seek a further term as Principal of MST. "Mixed feelings" because I have a deep affection for the College, and my work colleagues in particular, and I have been thrilled to be a part of the

remarkable changes we've witnessed over the past year.

'I look forward to the year ahead, and you can be assured that I will continue to serve, and promote the

college, to the very best of my ability. And you can be assured of my prayers as you search for a godly and suitable person to take on this important role.'

The MST Council has expressed its deep thankfulness to God for the faithful and Christ-focused leadership given to MST in the years Mike Raiter has been Principal. Council invites the Lord's people to pray for Michael, Sarah and the family as they seek His direction for their lives and ministry into the future.

Ian Cathie, MST Council President, reports that in response to Michael's decision, the Council has established a Principal Search Committee, with the aim of having a new Principal in place for the commencement of the 2012 academic year, doing everything possible, under God, to make the transition to a new Principal as seamless as possible.

Council would deeply value prayer for the Committee, as they prayerfully seek the person of God's choice to lead MST for the next season of ministry.



Rev Michael Raiter

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## MEET LEONARD KISWANJI...

### Kingdom Building Through Reconciliation

LEONARD Kiswanji, African Enterprise's Director in the Democratic Republic of Congo, visited Australia recently to share about his work of Kingdom building in a land which for much of its history has been deeply traumatised by exploitation, war and internecine strife, when 4.5 million people were killed.

So the biggest social problem is the need for reconciliation, for people to forgive and be healed. Leonard leads an AE team who set out to heal the wounds by dealing with people one at a time.

They seek to reach the people through reaching the pastors, mobilising church leadership through holding workshops throughout the country. The task is complicated because many of the pastors, like the general population, are poverty stricken, presenting the problem of compromising their prophetic role.

Leonard paid tribute to the missionaries who came from many countries and served with a variety of missions and denominations and laid a strong foundation for doing the Lord's work today.

AE's mission today is to evangelise Africa by reaching the cities in word and deed. The Lausanne



Leonard Kiswanji (centre) with (l-r) Sue Garner, Madge Sugden (former missionary in Congo), Joan and Jonathan Addison (AE Director in Australia)

Covenant is AE's basis of faith and it remains deeply committed to assisting the whole Church to take the whole Gospel to the whole world.

To keep bringing pastors together for training and expand its ministry of reconciliation, AE needs ongoing prayer and financial support. Enquiries may be directed to Jonathan and Joan Addison, phone 0412 352 543 or 0412 523 609, or through the website: [www.africanenterprise.com.au](http://www.africanenterprise.com.au)



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- **IMPACT** God's World                    Matthew 28:18-30

### Services 10:00AM

**17 April - James Snare**

- 'Priests & messengers' - Malachi 2:1 - 9

**22 April - Stuart Jack - Good Friday Service 10:00am**

- 'The Love of God thru the Cross' - Romans 5:6 - 11

**24 April - Wally Vinaev - Easter Sunday**

- 'The Importance of the Resurrection' - Corinthians 15:1 - 22

**1 May - James Snare**

- 'Faithful & Faithless' - Malachi 2:10 - 16

**8 May - James Snare**

- 'The messengers of the Covenant'  
Malachi 3:1-5

### Hills Bible Church

A Baptist Fellowship

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### Preach The Gospel! – Tullian Tchividjian and Mike Horton

THE other day I was reading through a book that Mike Horton gave me last time I was in San Diego – a relatively new book that he edited and contributed to entitled *Justified: Modern Reformation Essays On The Doctrine Of Justification*. At the end of the book Mike outlines six core beliefs that define his mission. While all six of the core beliefs are foundational, I was struck by the gripping clarity of belief number two on the importance of Gospel-centred preaching. Everything he writes here not only defines my theology of preaching but is, in my opinion, the only type of preaching that will rescue the church from Christless Christianity. He writes:

‘Scripture is of no use to us if we read it merely as a handbook for daily living without recognizing that its principal purpose is to reveal Jesus Christ and His Gospel for the salvation of sinners. All Scripture coalesces in Christ, anticipated in the OT and appearing in the flesh in the NT. In Scripture, God issues commands and threatens judgment for transgressors as well as direction for the lives of His people. Yet the greatest treasure buried in the Scriptures is the good news of the promised Messiah.

‘Everything in the Bible that tells us what to do is “law”, and everything in the Bible that tells us what God has done in Christ to save us is “Gospel.” Much like medieval piety, the emphasis in much Christian teaching today is on what we are to do without adequate grounding in the good news of what God has done for us in Christ.

“What would Jesus do?” becomes more important than “What has Jesus done?” The Gospel, however, is not just something we needed at conversion so we can spend the rest of our Christian life obsessed with performance; it is something we need every day – the only source of our sanctification as well as our justification. The law guides, but only the Gospel gives. We are declared righteous – justified – not by anything that happens within us or

done by us, but solely by God’s act of crediting us with Christ’s perfect righteousness through faith alone.’

#### Read And Reread

Preachers, read that paragraph over and over.

As I’ve said before, don’t make the mistake of assuming that people understand the radical nature of what Jesus has done so that your preaching ministry is focused primarily on what people need to do.

The ‘what we need to do’ portions of the Bible

are good, perfect, and true – but apart from the ‘what Jesus has already done’ portions of the Bible, we lack the power to do what we’re called to do. The good commands of God, in other words, do not have the power to engender what they command. They show us what a sanctified life looks like but they have no sanctifying power.

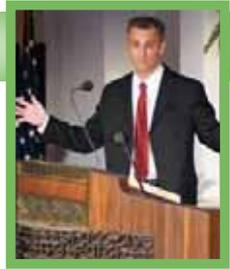
Only the Gospel has the power to move us forward. This is why the Bible never tells us what to do before first soaking our hearts and minds in what God in Christ has already done.

The fact is, that any obedience not grounded in or moti-

vated by the Gospel is unsustainable. No matter how hard you try, how radical you get, any engine smaller than the Gospel that you’re depending on for power to obey will conk out in due time.

So, preach the Gospel!

*William Graham Tullian Tchividjian (pronounced Cha-vi-jin) is the Senior Pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Ft Lauderdale, Florida. A Florida native, he is a visiting Professor of Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary and a grandson of Billy and Ruth Graham. Tullian was the founding pastor of the former New City Church which merged with Coral Ridge in April 2009. A graduate of Columbia International University and Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando (MDiv), Tullian is the author of ‘The Kingdom of God: A Primer on the Christian Life’ (Banner of Truth), ‘Do I Know God? Finding Certainty in Life’s Most Important Relationship’ (Multnomah), ‘Unfashionable: Making a Difference in the World by Being Different.’*



*‘For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.*

*– Romans 1.16*

## THE GATHERING STORM ...

**Our Hands Are Tied** – Difficult Conditions for youth among Russian unregistered Baptists and Pentecostals.

**Christians Targeted In Election-Related Violence** – Violence threatens next month's elections in Nigeria.

**Two Indian Christians Languish In Saudi Prison** – 'Religious police' raid apartment; no official charges.

**Can Promoting Easter Church Services Land You On The 5 O'clock News?** – Church Easter commercial in USA deemed as 'too controversial' rejected by national movie theatre chain and pulled from paid ad rotation.

**Cuban Pastor On Conditional Release Prohibited From Preaching.**

**Secret Execution Of Jewish-Armenian Couple In Tehran's Evin Prison** – Iranian authorities recently secretly executed a Jewish-Armenian couple on 14 March along with one woman and two other men. It's unknown what they were charged with.

**Asia Bibi Fasting For Justice In Pakistan During Lent.**

**Refugees Fleeing Libya To Egypt Denied Humanitarian Assistance.**

**Two Believers Killed And Two Others Severely Injured In Pakistan For Defending Christian Women** – Open Doors, USA confirms.

**Nepal Should 'Review Proposed Religious Restriction' Laws.**

**VICTORY: Illinois Public School Officials Agree To Stop Instructing Students In Buddhist-Based Chants And Meditation Exercises During Class Time.**

**Five Christians to Face Trial in Iran for Blasphemy. Bangladeshi Lay Minister's Home Destroyed**

Gospel for Asia reports extremists have destroyed many homes belonging to Christians. Unni Joyce is homeless today because he preached the Gospel.

**Missionaries Attacked, Arrested Just Before Gift Distribution** – Seven Gospel for Asia-supported missionaries were robbed, beaten and arrested on 28 March as they were preparing for a Christmas gift distribution event in South Asia.

**Bangladeshi Burglars Target A Church Planter** – there is a law in place which allows property to be confiscated if the owner is considered an 'enemy' to the state, often used to seize property from Christians.

**Conditional Release Of Two Detained Iranian Christians From Karoon Prison In Ahvaz** – Two

### **Urgent Message To Barnabas Fund Supporters**

AN article highly critical of Barnabas Fund and its International Director Dr Patrick Sookhdeo was published in *The Age* on Wednesday 23 March, entitled *Anti-Muslim Tub-Thumping Creates Fodder For Extremists*.

The author, Rachel Woodlock, also wrote an email on 18 March to three Australian religious and cultural organizations which was even more strongly critical, accusing Patrick of Islamophobia and falsely implying that he had links with a far-right British political party. In the email she asked the organizations to consider running a demonstration ('peaceful vigil') outside a church in Melbourne on Monday 4 April when Patrick is speaking there.

Please pray about this situation, and in particular for protection over Patrick and other Barnabas Fund speakers on 4 April. Pray also that the false allegations against Patrick of Islamophobia and far-right links will be clearly refuted and that the ministry of Barnabas Fund in Australia and around the world will not be damaged.

Patrick requested the Opinion Editor at *The Age* for the right to reply by writing an article for publication, but has been refused. If you would like to write to *The Age* you can send a letter by email to: [letters@theage.com.au](mailto:letters@theage.com.au), or via the website, or by post to: Letters Editor, The Age, 655 Collins St, Docklands, VIC 3008.

new Christian believers who were arrested by security agents and spent more than 63 days in Karoon prison of Ahvaz were conditionally released after posting a combined bail of \$US100,000.

**Christians Targeted In Election-Related Violence In Nigeria.**

**Deadly Attack In Jerusalem Prompts Strong Response From Israel** – Jerusalem police are on high alert following a terrorist bombing that jolted the city on 23 March, linked to the renewed hostilities between Israelis and Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. 40 were wounded. The one casualty in the attack was a Wycliffe Bible Translator team member, Mary Gardner. Spokesman Scott Toncray says, 'Mary was at a bus stop in Jerusalem where she was studying Hebrew to work in advance with the language communities in Togo, Africa, when this unfortunate event took place.' Gardner was a key member of the Togo translation team and had begun studying to help with Old Testament translation.

## PERSECUTION WATCH

### Bangladeshi Christian Goes To Prison For Evangelism

COMPASS Direct News reports that a Christian in Bangladesh has been sentenced to one year in prison for 'creating chaos' by selling and distributing Christian books and other literature near a major Muslim gathering north of the capital city.

CDN says that a magistrate court in Gazipur District handed down the sentence to Biplob Marandi, a 25-year-old tribal Christian, on 28 February after he was arrested near the massive Bishwa Ijtema (World Muslim Congregation) on the banks of the Turag River near Tongi town on 21 January.

'Duty police found Marandi creating chaos as he was propagating his religion, Christianity, by distributing the tracts as a mobile court on 21 January was patrolling near the field of the Bishwa Ijtema,' the verdict reads.

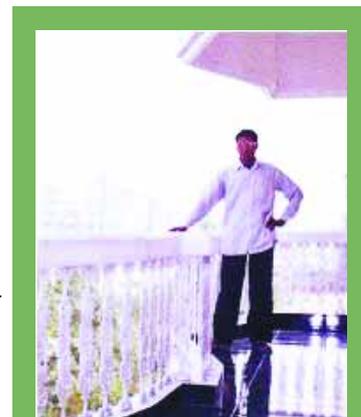
'The accusation – creating chaos at a Muslim gathering by distributing Christian booklets and tracts – against him was read out in the court before him, and he admitted it. He also told the court that he had mainly wanted to propagate his religion, Christianity.'

The Rev Sailence Marandi, pastor at Church of Nazarene International in northern Thakurgaon Dis-

trict and older brother of Biplob Marandi, told Compass that there was no altercation between his brother and area Muslims, though some may have found his literature un-Islamic and created 'chaos.'

Likewise, the verdict makes no mention of any confrontation. 'In the verdict copy it is written that my brother admitted his offence in the court,' Pastor Marandi said. 'This case being very religiously sensitive. I suspect that his confession statement might have been taken under duress.'

For more information go to:  
[www.compassdirect.org](http://www.compassdirect.org)



*Biplob Marandi*  
Photo: Compass Direct News

– Dan Wooding,  
Founder, ASSIST Ministries

#### Muslims Attack Christian in Egypt, Cut Off Ear

A GROUP of Muslims attacked Ayman Anwar Mitri, a Christian Coptic man in the Upper Egyptian town of Qena, cutting off his ear. According to a story by Mary Abdelmassih of the Assyrian International News Agency, the Muslims claimed they were applying Sharia law because Mitri, 45, allegedly had an affair with a Muslim woman.

The Muslims called the police and told them: 'We have applied the law of Allah, now come and apply your law,' according to Mitri in an interview for the Egyptian Human Rights Organization.

#### Christian Protestors Attacked By Egyptian Army

CHRISTIAN protestors who staged a nine-day sit-in calling for the rebuilding of a church torched by Islamists have come under attack by the Egyptian army. According to a news release from Barnabas Aid, the demonstrators were reportedly shot at and struck with electric batons outside the state television headquarters in Maspero, downtown Cairo. Fifteen suffered injuries, including broken limbs, head wounds and burns.

This happened in the early hours of 14 March, two hours before an agreed suspension of the sit-in. Representatives of the demonstrators had met with

Egyptian Prime Minister Essam Sharaf and members of the military council the previous afternoon to discuss their demands.

Barnabas Aid reported the army has said it will rebuild the church in Soul, destroyed on 5 March. The demonstrators agreed to suspend the sit-in until 25 March to give the government time to fulfil its pledges.

Around 500 people were still at the site when military forces smashed the demonstration in the early morning hours. Barnabas Aid reported one of the organizers said the soldiers cut the wire fences and started running towards the people, shouting the Islamic war cry 'Allahu Akhbar' ('god is great.') Thousands of Christians took to the streets of Cairo the previous week in protest over the attack on the village of Soul, 30km from the capital, where Christian homes were targeted and the church destroyed by a mob of nearly 4,000 Muslims.

Barnabas Aid said on the evening of 8 March, a Muslim mob attacked the Christian demonstrators around Mokattam garbage village, resulting in deadly clashes. Thirteen people were killed and 140 wounded. For more information go to:  
[www.barnabasfund.org](http://www.barnabasfund.org) – Jeremy Reynolds, ASSIST

## A MATTER OF OPINION ...

### Greens Attack On Faith Backfires

THE failure of the Greens in the recent NSW election to capitalize on their alliance with Federal Labor shows the decisions of faith groups to unmask Greens' social policies has traction, according to John Miller, the parliamentary liaison officer for the Australian Christian Values Institute.

'When Federal Labor went into an alliance with the Greens following the 2010 election, the Greens' anti-Christian agenda was on the negotiating table, and alarm bells rang in the electronic networks criss-crossing Christian Australia.

'Fears were justified when, weeks before the NSW election, a bill proposed by the Greens, having the effect of legalizing euthanasia and same-sex marriage, was slipped through the ALP caucus. The next day, shocked senators were successful in side-tracking the bill to a senate committee where it is stalled.

'In March, Roman Catholic bishops issued a statement to the faithful warning them of the anti-Christian agenda of the NSW Greens. This was followed by the President of the Baptist Union, Frank Willis, who endorsed the bishops' statement. Roman Catholics and Baptists are not the closest neighbours on the Christian spectrum, and their common ground indicated that a major bloc of faith opinion had emerged.

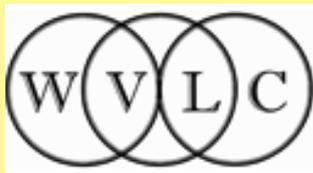
'Adding to concerns of Jews and many Christians, a Greens candidate in a marginal seat had led a local council economic attack on Israel.

'Also in the week before the NSW election, the ACVI wrote to Federal MPs about the Green's bill, asking them to protect marriage for what it is and to reject what it is not. They enclosed letters of support from the Imam of the West Heidelberg Mosque, Riad M Galil OAM, and the Director of the Institute for Judaism and Civilization, Rabbi Shimon Cowen. This was a sign that an even broader faith coalition was emerging.

'On Sunday morning following the election, about 450,000 Christians were attending churches in NSW. Most understood the Bible passage about being good stewards of the environment. But when they went to the polls the previous day, many took with them concern about the Greens anti-faith agenda. Consequently, the Greens' ambition of winning lower house seats and grasping the balance of power in the Upper House slipped away.

'The Greens should stick to their environmental policies, dump their fringe social policies, and stop picking fights with Australians who have faith in God.'

– John Miller, Australian Heart Ministries,  
Unanderra NSW.



### **Wimmera Victorious Life Convention Easter Convention 22 April – 25 April**

**At:** Warracknabeal Uniting Church, Jamoneau St, Warracknabeal

**Speakers:** Rev Mike Raiter, Principal, Melbourne School of Theology;  
Mr Jay Sawyer, Youth Director, Churches of Christ Conference

**Camps:** Junior Years 3 – 6  
Teen Years 7 – 12  
Young Adult 18+

All camps fees: \$85, Early Bird Camp Fees: \$75 booked by 8 April  
Adult Accommodation & meals available (Register online)

**Music:** Norm McLean Music Team from Horsham Church of Christ

**Web Site:** [www.wimmeraeasterconvention.org.au](http://www.wimmeraeasterconvention.org.au)

**Enquiries:** Ron Jackson, Phone 03 5094 6394, Email: [wvlc@gmail.com](mailto:wvlc@gmail.com)

## HELPING HANDS

# Preparing For Earthquake Relief In Myanmar

GOSPEL for Asia is deploying Compassion Services teams to offer relief after a 6.8 magnitude earthquake hit Myanmar (Burma) March 24. The *Bangkok Post* reported that the first quake was followed by a 5.0 aftershock about 30 minutes later, according to Thailand's Meteorological Department. A smaller aftershock hit the country the next morning.

Gospel for Asia supports hundreds of workers in Myanmar. They serve as pastors of churches and work at Bridge of Hope centres scattered throughout Myanmar. The Compassion Services teams will be comprised of GFA-supported workers throughout Myanmar.

'The test of the depth of our love for Christ is understood in the response to those suffering and who are in desperate need of Jesus' love,' said Gospel for Asia President K.P. Yohannan. 'The Lord loves these precious people so very much, and it is our joy to show them His love in action.'

CNN reports that the earthquake hit eastern Myanmar about 55 miles north of Chiang Rai, Thailand. Tremors were felt hundreds of miles away in both Bangkok, Thailand, and Hanoi, Vietnam. The epicentre of the quake was near Myanmar's border with Thailand, Laos and China – an area known as 'The Golden Triangle', notorious for supplying the world with opium for many years.

The death toll Friday morning was reported at 120 according to most major news agencies. Dozens of homes and public buildings were also de-

stroyed by the quake.

The earthquake is the latest in a series of natural disasters to strike Myanmar, beginning with the deadly cyclone Nargis in 2008 that took more than 100,000 lives. During 2009, the people suffered after an explosion in the rat population stripped crops from the field. Another cyclone hit Burma last summer.

'It's heartbreaking to see the people of Myanmar suffering through one crisis after another,' Yohannan said.

'I am so grateful the Lord has allowed us to be His hands and feet to serve these precious people. Our ministry to the cyclone victims and those suffering from the rat infestation will continue along with meeting the needs of those who now face this new crisis.'

Please pray for the people affected by the earthquake. Also pray for the Compassion Services teams to be able to determine what kind of aid is needed. And pray for the peace and love of Jesus to be on display during this crisis.

– ASSIST



A Myanmar congregation, led by a GFA-supported missionary, stands in front of its bamboo-walled church building.

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## GOOD NEWS FROM ABROAD

### Luis Palau Invited To Join With Believers In Vietnam For Historic Celebration

WORLD evangelist Luis Palau will join with Christian leaders throughout Vietnam for historic celebration events this (northern) spring. With events scheduled in Ho Chi Minh City (Old Saigon), Hanoi, and Danang, the effort will focus on the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the first Protestant Church in the nation. These will be the first such since the country's reunification in 1975.

Speaking to 500 Vietnamese church leaders in Hanoi recently, Palau commended Vietnam's pastors for their unity, respect for authorities, and passion for church growth. And now, with nearly every evangelical denomination inviting Palau back as a guest for the upcoming celebration, local leaders are anticipating attendance for these historic events to reach into the hundreds of thousands.

The effort directed by local believers will include

a series of region-wide celebration events, starting with gatherings in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi in April. Palau will return to Danang and Hanoi in June to participate in follow up events and celebration services.

Vietnam, the world's 13th most populous nation, has seen tremendous church growth over the last several years, growing from 100,000 believers in 1975 to more than 2 million in 2010. Church leaders have a vision to see that number increase to more than 10 million by the year 2020 (representing more than 10% of the population). They see Palau and his team as playing a strategic part in this growth over the next several years.

For further information about these historic efforts in Vietnam, as well as other evangelistic efforts around the world, visit [www.palau.org](http://www.palau.org)

### SPCKA Loan Enables Publication Of *Soif De La Parole*, The French Edition Of *Search The Scriptures* – initiative of GBU, the French IFES-affiliated student movement.

'I would love to get *Search The Scriptures* into the hands of every French-speaking student who wants to read and study the Bible,' writes GBU staff worker, Jonathan Chaintrier. 'God has given us His Word so that we can meet Him, know Him, love Him and keep trusting Him. I want students to read the Bible with their heads and their hearts.'

The response of students has been immediate: 'This guide has improved the quality of my Bible reading. I have read loads of passages which I wouldn't have taken the time to study otherwise. I realise that the whole Bible is useful, not just the passages we know and love. And I now see how the whole Bible fits together.' Please pray that this book will encourage and inspire French-speaking students in Europe, Africa, the Caribbean and Canada to spend precious time with God.

Call SPCKA on 1300 13 7725 to find out how you can make Christian literature available where it is most needed.

### Talking Bible Dedicated In Ethiopia

MISSION Aviation Fellowship has seen technology support play an important part of Bible translation for the Majang people of Ethiopia. MAF supplied the Hoekstra family in the Ethiopian jungle in 1964. That support allowed the Hoekstras to produce Scripture on cassette tape for these oral learners. MAF's Denny Hoekstra says that's now evolved into *The Talking Bible*, a self contained listening device created to look like a Bible with the Gospels recorded on it for the very first time in the Majang language. Without MAF, the Hoekstras wouldn't have been able to survive. Recently three generations of Hoekstras were there to dedicate *The Talking Bible* in the Majang language. This partnership between missionaries and MAF has had a huge impact on the Majang. 'In 1976, when my parents left due to government restrictions,' Hoekstra said, 'there were 200 believers. When we went for the dedication last month there were 23,000 believers and 48 churches established.'

### Audio Bibles Now Available Free In 185 Languages

MILLIONS more people now have access to the Scriptures in their heart language with the tap of a finger. Faith Comes By Hearing recently made the Bible available in 89 more languages on the Bible.is app. Now, 324 versions of the Bible are available in 185 languages via iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch, Android, or computer. When five billion people around the globe have cell phones, think of all who could be reached with the Word this way. Head to: [www.faithcomesbyhearing.com](http://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com) to download the app.

## NOTICE BOARD:

### Upcoming Events:

#### Visit of Patrick Sookhdeo

THE Church and Nation Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria is holding a full day conference with Dr Patrick Sookhdeo on Monday 4 April from 10 am to 4 pm and again at 7.30 pm in The Assembly Hall, 156 Collins St, Melbourne. During the day, Patrick is covering the following subjects: *What Is Happening In The Muslim World Today? The Islamisation Of Society; Why Women Convert To Islam; The Way Ahead – Returning The West To Its Christian Path.* And in the evening: *The Christian Church In The Middle East – Powerpoint Of Barnabas Fund's Work With The Persecuted Church.*

#### A Pleasant Afternoon Tea

MELBOURNE School of Theology invites you to an Alumni & Friends Afternoon Tea on Monday 16 May from 2.30 to 4 pm at Melbourne School of Theology, 5 Burwood Highway, Wantirna. RSVP: Anne by Friday 6 May to ahorswell@mst.edu.au or call (03) 9881 7821. Enjoy testimonies, good fellowship and fine food.

#### Open Garden For The Brotherhood

'CLOVERLY', one of Melbourne's most lush and beautiful private gardens, at 5A Fordholm Rd, Hawthorn (Melbourne) - Melway ref 45 C12 will be open to the public this April, with part of the proceeds going to national welfare organisation, the Brotherhood of St Laurence. The garden will be open on Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 April from 10am to 4.30pm. The cost will be \$7 for adults, with children under 18 free of charge. Contact Sarah Pincott on (03) 9483 2484 or sarah.pincott@bsl.org.au for further details.

#### MMM In Focus

AT 10am on the first Thursday of each month the NSW Branch of Mobile Mission Maintenance presents a ministry update on the work of MMM, focussing on one state or country each month, then praying for them. Updates for NSW will be provided at each meeting. The meetings are held at the MMM State Centre, Meeting Room, 70 Wyee Rd, Wyee. (At Bethshan Mission, turn in at the church, turn immediately right down the gravel lane and go to the fourth building on left). Those needing assistance with transport should call Lyndon on 02 4357 2921.

#### Belgrave Heights Convention

THE Belgrave Heights Easter Convention will be held from Good Friday, 22 April, to Easter Monday, 25 April, with sessions each day at 10.30am (Jonathan Lamb), 2.30pm (Vaughan Roberts), 4.30pm (Saturday and Sunday) and 7pm. Contact the Centre, 3 Convention Ave, Belgrave Heights, phone 03 9752 6855 or go to their website, [www.bhc.org.au](http://www.bhc.org.au) for further details.

The Men's Convention will be held from 20-21 May, with David Cook, Steve Young and Ron Iddles speaking, while Songs Of Praise will be held on Sunday 22 May at 2.15pm.

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## BOOKS WORTH READING

### Shapers Of Christian Orthodoxy: Engaging With Early And Medieval Theologians, Ed: Bradley G. Green, Nottingham: Apollos, 2010. (Reviewed by Greg Goswell)

THE eight contributors to this volume help us to understand and appreciate the theological giants of pre-Reformation church history. We discover that 'orthodoxy' did not begin with the Protestant Reformation of the 16th Century, for this was in fact the theological tradition that the Reformers saw themselves as standing in, correcting where needed, and continuing.

For example, an attractive (and still relevant) part of Irenaeus' teaching is his use of typology to show that the Old Testament prefigures Christ and His work, and he insists on the unity of God's plan from creation to final redemption.

Gerald Bray has a previously-published book on Tertullian (1979), who wrote the first treatise on the Trinity and provided key theological terms (person, substance) that are still used today in Western Theology. Bray explains Tertullian's thought and provides plenty of extensive quotations from his works.

Evangelicals are often suspicious, even dismissive, of Origen, but Bryan Litfin shows that his investigation of spiritual truth (that was sometimes in error) was an expression of deep devotion. Origen's many commentaries testify to his love for the Scriptures.

#### A Method For Prayer, Matthew Henry, Tain, Scotland, Christian Focus Publications.

MOST of us know the name of Matthew Henry from his commentary. If we use it, we know how valuable and helpful his insights are. So it was with this book.

Most books on prayer help us to understand what prayer is, or teach us why we should pray. They remind us of what Jesus had to say, or take us through history and consider the example of those who have been great in prayer. Henry however, takes us straight to Scripture.

Chapters 1-7 deal with aspects of prayer starting with a focus on God, then our own confession, supplication and thanksgiving. Each of these chapters contains 250-300 quotes from Scripture for us to meditate on. Chapter 6 has a number of prayers for various occasions, and it would be good for us in southern Australia to focus on the prayer 'Upon Occasion of the Want of Rain.'

Chapter 8 focuses on the Lord's Prayer in the same fashion, with each section having a vast amount of scriptural references applied to it. This chapter is the high point of the book.

We know that Henry wrote this many years ago, and this is reflected in Chapter 9 which contains a number of prayers people may use. Some of the prayers to be used in the family are very long and wouldn't be suitable in most households. There are then three discourses from Henry about praying in the morning, through the day, and in the evening, just what we would expect in a book about prayer. While hard going, they are worth ploughing through if we are growing cold in prayer.

The final sections of the book are from Ligon Duncan, with some basic training on prayer. These would be worth having on their own to share with people who want to learn to pray, and also for those who want to understand congregational prayer better.

Henry's style is evident in this book with headings, points, sub headings, sub points etc, going through each chapter. This will be distracting to some readers, but overall is helpful in di-

Athanasius became the leading exponent of Nicene Christianity in his day. He insisted that the Son of God was of the same substance (homoousion) as the Father. Devotion to Christ and His cross is what stands out in Athanasius' life and sufferings (he was exiled five times from his bishopric). As Carl Beckwith shows, Athanasius saw Christ's victory at the cross on display in the transformed lives of monks, hermits, martyrs and ordinary faithful Christians.

The Cappadocians (Basil and the two Gregories) helped the church to clarify and accept the full divinity of the Holy Spirit, who is, therefore, able to make us like Christ and give us fellowship with God. Robert Letham does a fine job of showing their enormous contribution to trinitarian theology, with the Trinity at the heart of Christian faith, life and worship.

What we have here, then, in this splendid new volume is first-class explanations of the key theologians in the stream that led to the Christian orthodoxy valued and defended by the evangelical movement. It will help today's evangelicals to rediscover their theological roots and perhaps surprise them by the joy of discovering that they go deeper than the 18th or even the 16th Century.

viding the book up into 'bite-sized chunks'.

This isn't a book you would sit down with and read through. However, to meditate on what is in here will increase our knowledge of prayer, Scripture, God and ourselves. For that alone, it will be worth using.

— Brian Harvey

#### Stronger Than The Sword: Persecuted For Righteousness' Sake, Faith Cook, Darlington: Evangelical Press, 2010.

THIS is the third of Faith Cook's historical novels set in England over the period 1645 to 1688. England was in the grip of religious wars and intolerance when Dissenters were persecuted. The fictitious storyline centres on Hugh Wilmot (a royalist cavalryman) and the Wilkes family (farmers and faithful, godly people). Their lives begin to be intertwined when Nicholas Wilkes saves Hugh from death on the night that his own son is seriously injured during a battle with the Royalist army. The contrast is drawn between Hugh and the Wilkes family in their social station, political persuasions, religious convictions and family relationships. The injunction of Jesus to love your enemies and the power of salvation that makes all believers one in Christ are themes developed in the book.

Real historical figures such as Sir Matthew Hale and Joseph Alleine and genuine historical events such as the Black Death and the Great Fire of London are interspersed with fictitious characters and events that reflect those that could have actually occurred in the time period. So while becoming involved with the central characters in this book, the reader is also learning about the actual time period in which this story is set.

Cook is keen to show us the strength of Christian faith the people of those times needed to have. While writing a novel, she is also presenting history. As in her other books, her stated desire for readers of *Stronger Than The Sword* is that it may 'strengthen our own courage and determination to remain faithful to the truths of Scripture, cost what it may'.

Both adults and teenagers will find this an engaging novel. It has action, sorrow, conversion experiences and historical insight. In *Stronger Than The Sword* we get a sense of the times in a dramatic and easily digestible form.

— Mignon Goswell

## AND FINALLY ...



### National Day Of Thanksgiving 2011 Will Be Held On Saturday 28 May.

THOSE to be honoured and thanked as part of the National Day of Thanksgiving celebrations this year are: people involved in entertainment, music and art, who work in radio, television, film and print media and people employed in the area of information technology, also people who work for charitable organisations, particularly those involved with the homeless, disadvantaged and poor.

A special focus for many communities this year will be to say thank you to those involved in flood, cyclone and bushfire relief and recovery operations in many parts of the nation.

#### **Promo DVD, Church And School Info Packs**

Churches and schools that have not previously been involved with the National Day of Thanksgiving will find Australian Prayer Network's Info Packs and promo DVD helpful in understanding how they can become involved and the resources that are available to assist them in celebrating the day in their community. To order simply go to their website at <http://www.thanksgiving.org.au/> and complete and send the order form, or email [info@thanksgiving.org.au](mailto:info@thanksgiving.org.au) advising the postal address to which you want the DVD sent and an email address to which they can electronically transmit a Church and/or School Info Pack.

All the above resources are provided free of charge. Kits encourage understanding in how to use the day promoting thanksgiving, and by undertaking acts of kindness in the community, showcase Christian values to the community at large.

#### **How Churches Can Be Involved And Give Leadership To Community Celebrations**

◆ Outreach your community with acts of kindness to those in greatest need. Involve your local council and ask businesses to support and/or sponsor larger scale projects that will impact the wider commu-

nity. For greater impact join with other churches in your area and make a combined witness to your community.

- ◆ Organise morning teas or lunches in the week leading up to the National Day of Thanksgiving for those working in the community groups who are being thanked this year across the nation.
- ◆ Order and distribute thanksgiving day cards and ribbons to all church members (five or six of each item to each member of your congregation) to distribute to those they wish to thank throughout your community.
- ◆ Take a group of disadvantaged children on a day outing.
- ◆ Get your youth group washing cars, mowing lawns or undertaking other chores free for shut-ins, disabled or disadvantaged people.
- ◆ Turn Sunday services into Thanksgiving Services and honour and thank special people in your own congregation who work and serve in the areas chosen to be thanked and honoured this year.

#### **How Schools Can Be Involved**

- ◆ Mobilise each class to do an act of kindness out in the community that will highlight to the community at large, and the students themselves, the values for which your school stands.
- ◆ Invite people from the 2011 targeted group/s to your school to thank them and to learn more about what they do in the community.
- ◆ Get each child to send one or two cards and ribbons to someone they want to say thank you to, thus teaching them the importance of recognising what others do for us.

#### **How Families Can Be Involved**

- ◆ Get behind and encourage your church and/or school to take up the opportunity to be involved in one or more of the activities mentioned above.
- ◆ Have a neighbourhood morning tea or bar-b-que and take the opportunity to talk about the values that NDOT seeks to celebrate whilst cementing ongoing friendship and relationships with those who live around you.
- ◆ Have an NDOT party of thanksgiving to God and invite to it those you want to reach out to with the love of Christ.

#### **How An Individual Can Celebrate**

- ◆ Send cards to people you especially want to recognise for their friendship to you, and their service to your local community.
- ◆ Be an ambassador for NDOT by joining in with your church's activities and/or encouraging others.