

## MBI → BCV → MST: New Life For Old Nutrimerics Building

THE old Nutrimerics Building at the corner of Mountain Highway and Burwood Highway in Melbourne's Eastern Suburbs used to be a place where cosmetics were made in the hope of making people look good on the outside.

On 12 February 2011 the finely refurbished building was dedicated to the glory of God as the premises of Melbourne School of Theology – a place dedicated to training the Lord's people for the work of making people new on the inside through bringing them to new life in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

Thus the work begun as Melbourne Bible Institute in 1920 by C.H. Nash continues in its latest incarnation as Melbourne School of Theology under the leadership of Principal Michael Raiter and with the mission statement: *Truth Informing Life And Practice.*

### John Anderson's Challenge

The former Deputy Prime Minister of Australia, John Anderson, gave the occasional address. 'If ever society needed to hear the message of the Bible, it is now,' he said. The Bible is the most remarkable book of all. It has transformed countless lives, and it transforms them still.

'How can anyone find the answers in life when they don't even know the questions,' he asked. 'Creation in all its awesomeness is a conundrum without God, and only the Bible gives the answer. But the greatest of all questions, how can we be made right with this creator God, is answered in John 3:16 as it outlines God's plan for the individual's salvation.

'I know as a farmer that if you want to get a crop you have to till the soil. And so it is with faith. We must work and pray to combat the shallow materialism which is destroying our society. Only the power and love of God can counter the pres-



***MST's new campus – making a bold statement to the passing parade.***

ent darkness.

'Given our position in Asia we should be building up theological colleges in such places as China and Indonesia, where Christians have a desperate need for training.

'As Christians, we are in the business of hope, and we must do everything in our power to ensure that people are given an understanding of that hope.'

### Michael Raiter's Vision

In lively interviews with students Gillian Asquith and Bin Xie, Michael Raiter, drew out the advantages of studying at MST from the student's point of view before sharing his own vision of MST being a place which will equip its students to go out and change the world one life at a time. 'Missionaries, not aid money, is Africa's greatest need', he said, 'as it is the Christian faith which changes lives for the good.'

Buildings, fine as they are, are not everything, and the principal shared his vision for the establishment of a Department of Missiology. Contact MST at (03) 9881 7800 or email [mst@mst.edu.au](mailto:mst@mst.edu.au) for details of how to make a tax-deductible donation.

## FROM THE EDITOR:

# We're Back – And We're Free!

SADLY, as a print publication, *New Life* really had run its course. It had simply fallen below the level of viability despite all our prayers and best efforts. But as we went through the painful process of closing the operation down it became increasingly obvious that if *New Life* vacated the scene, it would leave an enormous gap in the lives of many Christian people.

At this point let me say how deeply touched we have been by the many expressions of thanks and goodwill which came flooding in after the decision to close *New Life* was announced.

Clearly, they showed that *New Life* still had a part to play in the life and work of the Christian Church, so we committed the matter to the Lord, and just as clearly He renewed our vision and opened up the way for us to make a new beginning via email and the World Wide Web.

Now, we know that some of our readers are not computer literate. If that's the case for anyone you know (especially a grandparent), we suggest that you might share your e-copy with them on your computer and step through each issue with them. What a great opportunity this will be for both bonding and evangelism!

### Here's Our Plan, The Lord Being Our Helper:

- ❖ Each edition of *New Life* will be sent free of charge to anyone who requests it.
- ❖ Each edition will also be posted on our website.
- ❖ Each edition can be freely printed out in whole

or in part by those who receive it.

- ❖ Each edition can be forwarded to as many people as you like.
- ❖ *New Life* will be funded by income from a small capital reserve, advertising, donations and sale of books which we plan to publish electronically.
- ❖ We will aim to publish a fresh edition monthly or bi-monthly if possible, February to November.
- ❖ Since *New Life* belongs to the Lord and His people, we will be relying on His sustaining grace and your goodwill and participation for this ongoing ministry.

### 'And Finally ...'

Perhaps the greatest 'And finally ...' of all times is that of the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 6.10-20.

'Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power ... Put on the whole armour of God ... Stand firm ... Pray ... Be alert ... Keep on praying ...'

This is not some grit-your-teeth-and-bear-it kind of Stoicism; it is a full-bodied, simply-trusting-every-day faith in the sovereign purpose and power of God.

And it is in this spirit that we boot up our computers again, re-open the books and rededicate *New Life* to serving the Lord and His people as we seek to 'tell the whole story of this new life'. Please partner with us, pray for us and positively promote *New Life* to your circle of family and friends.

– Bob Thomas



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## 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.
- ◆ 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).

## MATTERS FOR PRAYER

### Christians In Nigeria, Iraq, Egypt, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Laos, Lebanon, Somalia, Tunisia – All In The Firing Line

*'You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.'* 2 Corinthians 1.11 ESV

**DURING JANUARY WE PRAYED FOR VICTIMS OF TERROR**, after dozens of Christians were killed and well over 100 wounded in terror attacks targeting Christian districts and churches in Northern Nigeria, Iraq and Egypt over the Christmas-New Year period.

**UPDATE:** Sectarian violence continues to plague Jos, NIGERIA. Armed Muslim gangs have attacked Farin Lamba in Riyom Local Government Area and Fan in Barkin Ladi Local Government Area five times in the last two weeks. The death toll stands at 34. In Mosul, NORTHERN IRAQ, gunmen burst into the surgery of the prominent cardiologist Dr Nuyia Youssif Nuyia on 15 January and shot him at point blank range. Dr Nuyia, a devout Chaldean Catholic and father of four, survives with serious injuries. Violence also continues to plague EGYPT. On 11 January a policeman shouted 'Allahu Akbar' before shooting six identifiable Coptic Christians travelling together on a train between Assiut and Cairo. In a move to reduce Coptic fears, the government has sentenced to death the perpetrator of the Nag Hammadi church massacre. Still, one Egyptian Christian described the environment like being in a room full of gas waiting for someone to light a match.

**PRAISE GOD:** On 25 January Al Arabiya reported that Egyptian security forces had arrested 19 would-be suicide bombers who were ready to launch attacks on places of worship nationwide. Police also seized weapons and documents belonging to al-Qaeda, including plans and maps for places of worship in southern Egypt and Alexandria. Please thank the Lord and pray that He will continue to frustrate the ways of the wicked (Psalm 146.9).

**IRAN**, where at least 70 Christians, mostly converts from Islam, have been arrested in a government crackdown on apostasy and Protestant fellowships. The Ministry of Islamic Guidance arrested Pastor Vahik Abrahamian and his wife (both in their 40s) and Arash Kermanjani and his wife (both new Christians in their early 30s) on 4 September 2010. Having been warned that any public statement would elicit severe consequences, their families initially kept quiet. However, since these couples have now

suffered four months of imprisonment with 'intense physical abuse and psychological pressure', their families have decided to go public with an appeal for prayer. Please honour this courageous act of faith by praying for Iran's imprisoned Christians and for God to demonstrate His supremacy over the regime of President Ahmadinejad and Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

**CENTRAL ASIA**, where harassment and persecution is escalating as authoritarian regimes repress anything that could threaten the status quo.

**AFGHANISTAN:** The trial of Said Musa, an Afghan Christian charged with apostasy (rejecting Islam), is expected to commence early February if the case against him can be finalised by then. According to Sharia, apostasy is punishable by death. Please be in prayer for Said Musa, for his testimony, and for all who will hear it. (Matthew 10.19,20)

**ERITREA:** International Christian Concern reports that Eritrean security officials have recently arrested more than 100 Christians. On New Year's Eve the entire 41-member congregation of Philadelphia Church in Asmara was taken into custody for questioning, with some reportedly being beaten. On 9 January, 35 worshippers were arrested as they prayed together. The regime of President Isaias Afewerki is one of the most violently abusive in the world. More than 3000, mostly Protestant Christians of all ages, are imprisoned for their faith in Eritrea. Conditions are inhumane and torture is routine.

**LAOS:** On 4 January Lao officials arrested 11 Christians (including children) at gunpoint, accusing them of holding a 'secret meeting', a political crime. *Compass Direct* reports that eight have been released but three church leaders – Pastors Wanna, Chanlai and Kan – remain behind bars in Khammouan Provincial Prison. The 11 believers had gathered with permission from village authorities to celebrate Christmas together over a meal at Pastor Wanna's home. Again, prison conditions are inhumane and torture is routine.

*For more information, updates and helpful links see Elizabeth Kendal's blog 'Religious Liberty Monitoring' <<http://elizabethkendal.blogspot.com>>.*

*This RLPB was written for the Australian Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty Commission by Elizabeth Kendal.*

## MOVING FORWARD ...

# GENEVA PUSH And New Churches In Melbourne CBD

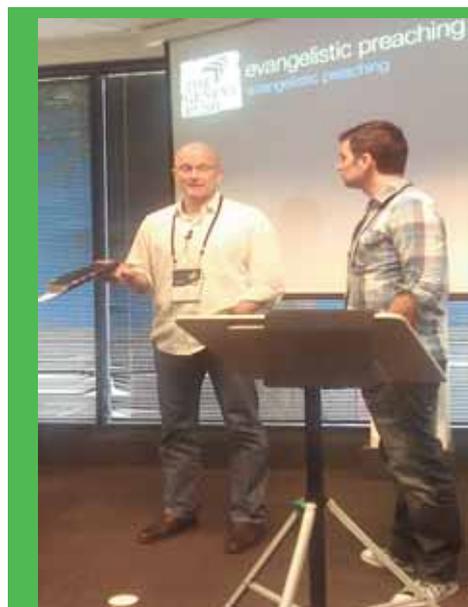
'DON'T let your preaching be like an aircraft safety talk,' Al Stewart told 30 budding young church planters gathered at City Unichurch on 17 January.

Melbourne's newest church, which meets in the Gallery Room, Melbourne Multicultural Hub, 504 Elizabeth St, hosted this seminar on *Evangelistic Preaching* – and Al certainly wasn't giving any aircraft safety talk as he delivered the basics of *Evangelistic Preaching 101* then gave a demo, *From T-Shirt To T-Intersection*, a talk he was planning to give at a night of pub evangelism. This is a man who practises what he preaches!

'Gospel', he said, 'is a "portmanteau" (hold-all) word – the Gospel can be summarised in three words: "Jesus is Lord".



Guy Mason (left) helps Paul Rawson undergo peer review.



Al Stewart (left) – ready for lift-off.

The cross is the beating heart of the Gospel, but we preach the resurrection as well. We must be gosselling as we preach every week, working up to world-view preaching.' Al Stewart reckons that evangelistic preaching isn't just hard work, it's a tough, ongoing spiritual battle.

We have to give it our best shot, but God has to open hearts and minds, so prayer is of the essence.

### Three Brave Men

Luke Brownley, Chris Thele and Paul Rawson each delivered evangelistic sermons which were critiqued by the others present. This ageing onlooker sat back rejoicing to hear these young men display their heart for the Lord and love for the lost as they showed how they would tell the Old, Old Story in the Brave New World.

### Join The Push

Guy Mason is pastor of *City On A Hill* in Melbourne's Docklands and John Diacos is pastor of *City Unichurch*. The Geneva Push is an Australian church planting network. Under Al Stewart's leadership they are ready and willing to assess the suitability of those who feel called into church planting work, and to help, equip and encourage them. Further details from: [www.thegenevapush.com](http://www.thegenevapush.com)

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## TAKE IT TO THE LORD IN PRAYER ...

### World Evangelical Alliance Issues Urgent Call To Prayer For Egypt

THE World Evangelical Alliance communicated to the Evangelical Fellowship of Egypt its concern over the current unrest in the country and asked how the WEA community can effectively pray.

In reply, the EFE confirmed that the church all over Egypt is united in prayer for the country and called on the church globally to pray with them. Since then, the situation has become more violent and unstable.

Nobody knows what the changes in Egypt will be, but evangelicals in Egypt know that God is in control. Though they are a small minority, they are deeply committed to being good citizens and contributing positively to the future health and development of their nation. They are praying for:

- ❖ Wisdom for all leaders in Egypt – both for the present government and for the future leadership of the country.
- ❖ Safety of the young people in Tahrir Square –

some of them are Christian, some of them are Muslim. The Christians believe strongly that most Muslims and Christians are united in their common concern for the welfare of the nation.

- ❖ Peaceful change.
- ❖ Positive outcomes that will benefit the country as a whole and will bring glory to God.
- ❖ Positive impact on the region and the wider world as a result of the change in Egypt.

Some years ago, the Evangelical Fellowship of Egypt developed prayer networks nationally. In recent days they have contacted these networks to urge them to pray. Christians (Evangelical, Coptic, Roman Catholic) are uniting in prayer in homes all over the country for the welfare of their beloved nation. The WEA calls on the global Church to join them in prayer. WEA remains deeply committed to the Egyptian Christians and to that nation's present and future religious liberty.

### A Letter From The Anglican Bishop Of Egypt

GREETINGS in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

In the midst of the turmoil which Egypt is going through, we have felt that the Lord is very near to us. We have experienced His peace and we were assured of His protection. In most of our churches and homes there have been prayer meetings for the situation and for our beloved country Egypt. All our churches are safe, although they have not been guarded by the security since all the security were withdrawn. This assured us that the One who protects the churches is the Lord of the Church.

I was touched to see young adults, Muslims and Christians, guarding the streets, homes, and our churches. They did not allow any thieves or looters to come near the area. They also arrested some of those and handed them over to the army. I applaud our local Egyptian clergy and people who joined the youth in the streets guarding homes and churches.

I admired all our expatriate clergy and diocesan staff who refused to leave Egypt in order to stay in the midst of the people who decided not to go, even when their embassies encouraged them to leave and provided airplanes to do so.

We praise the Lord that we have now the internet back and we can communicate with you all. The security have also returned to guard the churches as normal. Yesterday, President Mubarak made it very clear that he will not seek re-election after he fin-

ishes his term in November 2011. He appointed Mr Ibrahim Soliman as Vice-President. He has a good reputation among Egyptians. President Mubarak also appointed a new Prime Minister, Mr Shafik who was the Minister of Civil Aviation (Egypt Air, etc). He is a very good man and has done a lot of improvement in his previous Ministry. President Mubarak also called for a review for the Constitution to allow democracy; he also assured the people that those who were responsible for the violence, destructions, looting, escape of prisoners, etc will be brought to judgment.

Our concern was that extremist groups would take advantage of the demonstrations to push for violence. We thank God that this has not happened.

Egypt is a very important country in the whole of the Middle East, and whatever happens in Egypt affects the rest of the countries.

We appreciate your prayers for our churches and institutions, so that we can fix our eyes on God who is in control. May what is happening help us to draw nearer to God and to know that the time is short.

Once again, thank you so much for your prayers and words of encouragement. May the Lord bless you!

Yours in Christ, +Mouneer

– The Most Rev Dr Mouneer Hanna Anis,  
Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Egypt.

## MOVING ON ...

### David Cook Retiring From SMBC

REV David Cook is to retire from the principalship of Sydney Missionary & Bible College at the end of 2011 after more than 25 years of service.

SMBC Chair Geoff Deane reports that the college has grown significantly since David and Maxine Cook arrived there in 1986.

There are now multiple externally accredited courses, a large faculty, twin campuses and an ever-growing student body. Students regularly comment on the strength of the diverse community and the teaching they receive at SMBC. 'David's contribution to the development of strong biblical expository preaching has had a wide influence,' Deane says, 'and May this year marks the 11th SMBC Biennial Preaching Conference.'

David and Maxine say that the past 25 years have been years of privilege for them as they have seen so many students pass through the campus and enter into productive Christian service.

David also expressed his grateful thanks to the faithful supporters of SMBC who contribute so essentially behind the scenes with prayer and financial support. David and Maxine thanked the College Board, the faculty, the staff and the many students who have studied with them over the years for the rich fellowship they have enjoyed.

They have decided that this year is the appropriate time to move on to other areas of ministry, having been greatly enriched by their time at SMBC.

Geoff Deane has advised that the Board and faculty are strongly committed to a smooth transition of leadership, and, importantly, the ongoing work of the College through its Bible-centred training in an interdenominational and missional community.



David Cook

**New Life**  
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**office@nlife.com.au**

### Politicians Challenged To Christ-Like Service

THE annual service to mark the commencement of the new Federal Parliamentary Year was held in the chapel of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture on 8 February. Senator Ursula Stephens, Chair of the Parliamentary Christian Fellowship, welcomed a large congregation, the service was led by Professor James Haire, Professor of Theology in Charles Sturt University and Executive Director of the ACC&C. Local clergy and secondary school students took part in the service. Among the Scripture readers were Wayne Swan and Tony Abbott.

Professor Allan Harman, from Geelong, gave the address entitled *Called to Serve*. He pointed out that the very act of worship in which the congregation was engaged was a service, that is, something rendered to God. It is not so much what worshippers get out of a service that is important, but the acknowledgement of a sovereign God and submission to His lordship.

Speaking from Mark 10 (Jesus' teaching on servanthood to His disciples) and Paul's description in

Philippians 2 of Jesus' coming as the servant, even to death on the cross) Professor Harman held up Jesus as the model of servanthood, saying that though we need to provide models for others, the Christian message goes much further than that. Being a servant is not just an ideal to be aimed at, but is a reality to be experienced. The Gospel proclaims that if we really want to be a servant to others we must first, by faith, become servants of the Lord Jesus who came to give Himself a ransom for many. 'The teachings of the New Testament are not just there to satisfy our curiosity,' Professor Harman said, 'but to challenge us. Jesus still calls us to become His servants. Whatever our situation in life, or position or office, we are called to serve. To show true humility is to choose the will of God over one's own will. To be a servant is to decide to go God's way rather than our own.'

He urged all present to offer themselves in service to God, being not just hearers, but doers of the Word.

## **Aussie Leader To Be World Head Of Salvation Army**

CANADIAN-born Commissioner Linda Bond, who currently heads up the Army's work in the Australian Eastern Territory, has been elected as the 19th General and world leader of the movement founded 146 years ago by William Booth and now working in 123 countries around the world.

Commissioner Bond becomes the third woman and the fourth Canadian to hold the post of General of The Salvation Army since the international church and charity organization was founded 146 years ago. Commissioner Bond (64) will have the title General-Elect until she succeeds the current world leader, General Shaw Clifton, who retires at the beginning of April.

Once in post as General of The Salvation Army, the commissioner will become the head of more than one million Salvationists in 123 countries. The Salvation Army also has more than 100,000 employees who between them communicate in 175 different languages.

In recent days and months, The Salvation Army has been involved in relief work in the aftermath of the Australian floods, the devastating mudslide in Brazil, floods in Sri Lanka, and the New Zealand earthquake.

### **Wide Experience**

Commissioner Bond comes to the role of General of The Salvation Army with 42 years' experience of Christian ministry and leadership. Since 2008 she has headed up The Salvation Army's work across Eastern Australia, a huge territory with its headquarters in Sydney. This includes the recently devastated state of Queensland where The Salvation Army continues to be heavily involved in assisting victims of widespread flooding.

Prior to this, the Commissioner worked at Salvation Army International Headquarters in London as the Secretary for Spiritual Life Development and International External Relations. This was her second spell at IHQ where she had previously served as Under Secretary for Personnel in the mid 1990's.

As a Salvation Army officer (ordained minister of religion and leader) Commissioner Bond has served in local corps (church) ministry, on the staff of Salvation Army national and regional (divisional) headquarters and as part of the training staff for new officers in her home territory of Canada and



*General-Elect Commissioner Linda Bond*

Bermuda.

During those years she also served as a divisional leader and subsequently became chief secretary of The Salvation Army in Canada and Bermuda. Other appointments have included divisional leadership roles in the Manchester region of the United Kingdom between 1998 and 1999, and as Territorial Leader in the USA Western Territory of The Salvation Army.

### **Deep Faith**

Speaking just after her election Commissioner Bond said: 'I love the Lord Jesus Christ and pledge my utmost obedience to Him. I am absolutely committed to a life of praise and thanksgiving to God. We, the Salvation Army, need to be an Army of praise and thanksgiving to God and we must place our trust in God. We need His Holy Spirit to come mightily on The Salvation Army.'

*– Dan Wooding, ASSIST News Service*

### **COMING TO**

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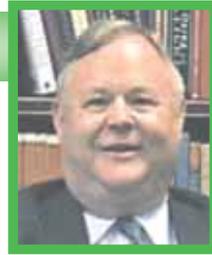
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# The Mystery of Disaster

- God Has Outlined, If Not Revealed, His Plan In Natural Calamities

- Dr John M. Frame

IT seems that natural disasters have become more common lately. The devastating earthquake in Haiti was one of four or five around the world about the same time. The Icelandic volcano Eyjafjallajökull brought European transportation nearly to a stop. The Gulf of Mexico oil spill was a man-caused disaster, but it, too, had devastating consequences, pointing to the fact that man is also part of nature and can bring terrible destruction upon the natural world. Most recently have been devastating floods in Australia and the Christchurch earthquake in New Zealand.

I don't know if such events are becoming more common, or if they are better reported, or if perhaps there is a temporary spike in their numbers. But certainly they have alerted us again to the fact that the world is not entirely a safe place.

And these events alert us again to the question of God's involvement in it. The old question is, 'How can God be loving and all-powerful when He permits such things to happen?' Just recently a local pastor's family was terribly grieved when his 5-year-old granddaughter was suddenly taken sick with an aggressive brain tumor. Ten weeks later she passed away. They could do little but pray and commit her to the doctors, who, in the end, could not stop the cancer.

What was God thinking? The most fundamental answer is that He has his own good purposes that He does not always reveal to us. For example, He did not tell Job why He allowed Satan to hurt him so badly, and when Job complained about it, God rebuked him (chapters 38-42). He does tell us that He is working all things together for good (Romans 8.28). Not everything is good today, but evils are part of a divine plan. One day we will look at that plan and praise God's righteousness and goodness (Revelation 15.3,4). But He hasn't shown us this plan yet, and we have no right to demand to see it.

Though we don't see this plan in detail, God has shown us its outlines. The broad context is that the first man, Adam, forfeited a life of blessedness for a life of pain and suffering when he disobeyed God. Genesis 3.16-19 tells us that Adam's sin led to disasters in the natural world.

But even as God describes the fallen world, He gives good news: though Eve and her daughters will have pain in childbirth, one will bring forth a child

who will destroy the serpent, Satan, and bring salvation to all of us (v.15).

Those who trust in the Saviour are destined for a new Heaven and new Earth, free of suffering and pain, though for now they may have to live through tragedy.

But even now nature is on their side. Paul says in Romans 8.19,22 that 'the whole creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God ... For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.' Natural disasters are disasters for nature too.

Nature, God's creation, doesn't like them any more than we do, if I may personify it. The creation looks forward to the time when it can make people happy consistently. 'Creation' here includes our own bodies (Romans 8.23). If there will one day be no natural disasters, neither will there be any diseases or injuries. Indeed, no-one shall ever be hungry or thirsty (Revelation 7.18), and no-one shall ever weep from sadness (Revelation 7.17, 21.4).

God will bring about this wonderful consummation of our existence when He is finished dealing with our sin. Jesus has taken our sins upon Himself, and His work is finished once and for all. God has forgiven those who belong to Him. But the new heavens and new earth did not come immediately

(Continued p.9)

*'Those who trust in the Saviour are destined for a new Heaven and new Earth, free of suffering and pain, though for now they may have to live through tragedy.'*

## THINKING THINGS THROUGH

(From p.8) after Jesus' completed sacrifice. God is delaying the final consummation until He brings all of Jesus' people into this world and brings them all to repentance and faith (2 Peter 3.9). So though God has redeemed us, we still live in a time when nature groans together with us, a time when bad things happen.

Occasionally we get some indication of God's purposes in our suffering. When my pastor friend and his family agonized over the sickness and death of their little girl, some observed their earnest prayer and resolved themselves to get right with God. Thousands of people attended the memorial service personally and online, and heard the Gospel proclaimed with power. God was bringing good out of evil.

Was this worth the death of a beloved child? I cannot say that it was. But it is evidence that God can bring good out of the worst, just as He brought the greatest good, our salvation, out of the greatest evil, the crucifixion of the Son of God.

That is, as I have said, an outline of God's purposes in history for suffering and disaster. These serve as a discipline to fallen man, a reminder of what our sin has done and a warning of death. They are God's summons to turn away from the greatest disaster, the wrath of God, to trust Jesus Christ and live.

Luke 13.1-6 is Jesus' own application of the natural disasters of His own day. In these remarks, Jesus warns us against the idea that when someone dies in a natural disaster, it is because he sinned more than others. Yes, there is a general connection between sin and disaster: God cursed the Earth because of Adam's disobedience. Sometimes, indeed, there may be a more specific correlation: Paul says that some Christians have become sick and died because they took the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner (1 Corinthians 11:29,30). Sometimes people can be healed of disease when they confess their sins and receive the ministry of the church's elders (James 5.13-16).

But our illnesses, injuries and death do not always indicate extraordinary sin on our part. Jesus makes this clear in Luke 13.1-6. And the Book of Job makes it even clearer. Job is hurt, even though he is righteous in God's sight. Indeed, one important reason for his suffering is to prove his righteousness to his wicked accuser (1.8-12,22). So, Job foreshadows Jesus, who endured terrible suffering despite His innocence.

Jesus, supremely innocent, suffered to take away the sin of the world. In that event, incomprehensible as it is, we gain the clearest view into the mystery of disaster. When believers suffer for Christ or His people, they participate in Jesus' sufferings. Paul says, 'Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church' (Colossians 1.24; compare 1 Corinthians 1.4-7, Philippians 1.29, 3.8-10, 2 Thessalonians 1.5-6, and 1 Peter 2.21, 4.13, 5.10). I said earlier that Christ's sufferings were sufficient to save us from sin; nothing more was needed. But Jesus continues to be persecuted when His people are persecuted (Acts 9.4,5).

When you or your loved ones suffer in the course of seeking to obey the Lord and seek His kingdom, you are not only suffering for Him; you are suffering with Him. He has not abandoned you. In this life, suffering for Jesus is the deepest kind of fellowship with Him.

*Dr John M. Frame is a Professor of Systematic Theology and Philosophy at RTS-Orlando, Florida, USA. His prolific writings include many books as well as contributions to reference volumes, scholarly journals and magazines.*

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*'God can bring good out of the worst, just as He brought the greatest good, our salvation, out of the greatest evil, the crucifixion of the Son of God.*

*That is an outline of God's purposes in history for suffering and disaster.*

*These serve as a discipline to fallen man, a reminder of what our sin has done and a warning of death. They are God's summons to turn away from the greatest disaster, the wrath of God, to trust Jesus Christ and live.'*

## PERSECUTION WATCH

### Egypt's Christians Can't Afford Food As Prices Double

THE protests in Egypt have brought the country's economy to a grinding halt, and as chaos reigns and resources become scarce, there is a 'free for all' that is pricing impoverished Christians out of the market. The cost of basic supplies has at least doubled since the demonstrations broke out, and with no end to the unrest in sight, Christians need ongoing help to meet their daily needs.

In providing help for Christians in Egypt, Barnabas Fund is prioritising the supply of food, which is currently the most pressing need for many Christian families, before working to help restore the livelihoods of those whose businesses have been destroyed in the riots.

Many Egyptian Christians, especially in Upper Egypt, were already struggling for subsistence before the crisis because of widespread anti-Christian discrimination, in areas including employment and education, which forces the majority to live in extreme poverty.

Dr Patrick Sookhdeo, International Director of Barnabas Fund, says: 'Please give all you can to help our Egyptian brothers and sisters at this time of great uncertainty and upheaval.'

'Christians remain extremely vulnerable to attack while the country continues in a state of instability.'

#### Christians Excluded From Talks

The future for Christians in Egypt looks increasingly worrying; new Vice President Omar Suleiman has

held talks with the Muslim Brotherhood and other opposition parties while Christians have been excluded from dialogue

about the future of the country. The churches want a new secular and democratic constitution, which removes the current article that makes sharia the principal source of legislation and Christians second-class citizens.

#### Please Pray:

- That order will soon be restored in Egypt and that all citizens will be able to access affordable provisions, especially impoverished Christian families.
- That the voice of the Christian community will be heard at the highest level as talks about Egypt's future take place.

#### Please Give:

To help provide food and other basics for poor and vulnerable Christians in Egypt, please call Barnabas Fund on 07 3806 1076 or 1300 365 799. Please quote project reference 11-220 (Feeding needy Christian families in Egypt).



#### Baptists Call For Religious Tolerance In Indonesia

INDONESIAN security forces must do more to curb attacks on religious minorities and bring perpetrators to justice, says Australian Baptist Ministries National Director Rev Dr Brian Winstlade.

'As Baptists we support religious tolerance and the peaceful resolution of conflict,' he said. 'People should be free to hold their religious beliefs and to act in accordance with those beliefs within the law. Resort to violence is never an appropriate way to resolve religious differences.'

His comments followed news that three followers of the Islamic sect Ahmadiyah were murdered in West Java last month.

In an unrelated incident, a 1500-strong mob burned and ransacked two churches in Temanggung, Central Java.

'We condemn the recent violence against Christians and Muslims during Indonesia's Interfaith Harmony Week and applaud the decision by Indonesian

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to order a police investigation into the three murders. The attacks on Christians and churches also warrant investigation,' Dr Winstlade said.

There were 75 reported attacks on churches in Indonesia in 2010.

#### Persecution Escalates In Muslim Areas Of Ethiopia

THE Ethiopian Government federalised the state in 1996, devolving power to nine autonomous, ethnic regions. Rather than appeasing and pacifying Ethiopia's diverse peoples, this ethnic federalism has only undermined nationhood while magnifying ethnicity and differences. Divisive forces are now stronger than ever. Furthermore Ethiopia's traditional Sufi Muslims are being radicalised by Saudi (Wahhabi) entities, inflaming religious tensions.

Protestant believer Tamirat Woldegorgis (30s) is in an Islamic prison, having been falsely accused of defacing a Quran.

*(Continued p.11)*

## PERSECUTION WATCH

*(Continued from p.10)*

Also Christians in the southern town of Besheno are being told they must convert to Islam, leave or die. Persecution and application of Sharia law are increasing. Yet the central Government appears loath to intervene lest self-determination, 'harmony' and 'national unity' be undermined. Please pray for the Church in Ethiopia. – Elizabeth Kendall.

### **China Human Rights Activist 'Under House Arrest' Following Jail Term**

ONE of China's most high-profile human rights activists says he is being held under house arrest. 'I've come out of a small jail and entered a bigger one,' Chen Guangcheng says in the secretly-shot video, released by the Midland, TX-based ChinaAid Ministry. These are the first comments from Chen since his release from prison last September. He accused the authorities of carrying out forced abortions.

Standing in his home, the blind self-taught lawyer then describes how for the past five months he has been under 24-hour surveillance. 'I cannot take even half a step out of my house. My wife is not allowed to leave either. Only my mother can go out and buy food to keep us going,' he said. 'I can be jailed again at any time, it is very easy. They can say I am a criminal and just lock me up.'

'Mr Chen is living in miserable conditions, cut off from all outside contact, and detained illegally in his home,' said Bob Fu, China Aid's founder and president. 'We cannot believe that China is serious about the rule of law when Chen Guangcheng and other rights advocates are jailed, disappeared, or harassed.'

The BBC said US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton last month highlighted Chen's case, calling for his release together with the jailed Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo and another detained lawyer, Gao Zhisheng.

– Michael Ireland, ASSIST News Service

### **Two Million Hindus And Tribals At Social 'Kumbh' In India**

INDIA'S combined Hindu nationalist forces, the Sangh Parivar, held their second social 'Kumbh' in Mahhya Pradesh on 10-12 February 2011, attended by an estimated two million tribals and Hindu devotees. As in the 2006 Kumbh in Gujarat, pamphlets, posters and speakers vilified Christianity.

This year one speaker referred to Christian missionaries as 'blood-sucking bed bugs that must be killed'. 'Enlightening' the indigenous, non-Hindu tribals to 'return' to their Hindu roots has been an

effective vote-winning strategy in Hindu nationalist (BJP) local electoral victories. However, the harmony, equity and liberty the Sangh deceptively claims Hindu solidarity will bring are actually anathema to the Sangh. In reality it wants to perpetuate Hindu caste privilege and sees Christianity as its primary obstacle. Please pray for India and its Christian minority. – Elizabeth Kendall

### **Afghan Christian Forced To Renounce His Faith**

SHOAIB Assadullah, an Afghan Christian, is faced with the choice of renouncing his faith or a possible 20 year prison sentence. He is being held in a prison in northern Afghanistan since October 2010 under the country's apostasy law. Shoaib Assadullah was arrested on 21 October 2010 after he gave a man a Bible in Mazar-e-Sharif, the fourth largest city in Afghanistan. On 3 January 2011, a judge told Shoaib that if he did not renounce Christ within one week he would be imprisoned for up to 20 years or possibly be sentenced to death. Shoaib refused to deny his faith and has remained faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ. The court determined that Shoaib needs to be in prison for another six months, and it is not clear whether this would be in prison or in hospital, as it is reported that Shoaib was taken to hospital in chains, where doctors stated that he may require hospitalization as he was speaking incoherently.

There have been several other instances of charges against converted Christians under Afghanistan's apostasy law. Pray for Shoaib Assadullah, that he might find strength and refuge in Christ in this time of trouble and persecution; for other Afghan Christians, especially those who are arrested for their faith, and those who have converted from Islam; for just laws, and freedom of religion in Afghanistan.

### **Egypt's Military Has Anti-Christian History**

WITH the military in power and the constitution set aside, many are concerned about the political vacuum in Egypt. Todd Nettleton with Voice of the Martyrs says while the military has done well so far, they don't have a very good track record. He says an Egyptian Christian soldier didn't fare well under their watch. 'When his unit members and his commander found out that he was a Christian, they made his life miserable and ultimately beat him to the point that he died.' While this may have been an isolated incident, Nettleton says it's still a concern. However, a bright spot emerged during the riots, according to Nettleton: 'There were stories of Christians and Muslims standing side-by-side, praying and working together for their country.' – VOM

## 'SHINING AS LIGHTS ...'

# Churches To Ignite Beacons Of Prayer Around The World To Stand Against Injustice

HUNDREDS of thousands of Christians in 100 nations are being invited to 'light up, together, around the world' as part of *One Voice 2011*, Global Poverty Prayer Week co-ordinated by Tearfund.

Running from 27 February until 6 March 2011, in partnership with 24/7 Prayer, *One Voice 2011* seeks to start a movement of prayer around the world, igniting beacons of hope in the UK, North America, South America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australasia and inspiring people to spend time with God to pray about issues of global poverty and justice.

Tearfund particularly seeks to pray for those still suffering in the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti one year ago, the thousands of refugees displaced by the post-electoral violence in the Ivory Coast, and those affected by the floods in Pakistan.

Matthew Frost, Chief Executive of Tearfund, said: '*One Voice 2011* hopes to make an incredible difference to the world's poorest people, those suffering social injustice and the effects of natural disasters.

'As Christians, when we engage with God in

prayer, we re-focus our hearts on the mission Christ calls us into – to love our neighbours, reach out to people living in poverty and care for those in need. When we as the people of God around the world "light up" like this – united as one global movement – together – we light up the darkness.'

Many churches seeking to take part in *One Voice 2011* will create dedicated prayer spaces which will be open 24 hours a day for the duration of the week, and Tearfund's resources will help them to reflect on some of the biggest issues facing our world.

Go to [www.tearfund.org/onevoice](http://www.tearfund.org/onevoice) to share with others what God is doing where you live. There is a *One Voice 2011* Twitter account, <http://twitter.com/onevoiceprayer> where key prayer themes will be Tweeted and reTweeted to encourage Christians to pray.

Beyond the Global Poverty Prayer Week itself, the vision of *One Voice 2011* is also to raise up an on-going Global Poverty Prayer Movement for the rest of the year. – Peter Wooding, ASSIST News Service

## The King's Bible

WHAT does the wildly popular film *The King's Speech*, a now-deceased Christian librarian, and Queens University of Charlotte, North Carolina, have in common? The answer is King George VI, the late father of Queen Elizabeth II. It appears, from an article posted in the *Charlotte Observer*, that the shy, stuttering king was a man of faith who loved the Good Book and often donated Bibles to churches.

'His Majesty rarely passed up a public opportunity to invoke the Divine,' the report notes. 'He also inscribed the following message in copies of the New Testament that were given to every British fighting man in World War II: 'To all serving in my forces by sea or land, or in the air and indeed, to all my people engaged in the defence of the Realm, I commend the reading of this book. For centuries the Bible has been a wholesome and strengthening influence in our national life, and it behoves us in these momentous days to turn with renewed faith to this Divine source of comfort and inspiration.'

According to the report, for decades, one Miss Rena Harrell, who was 'crazy about all things

British', presided over Queens' Library. It was she who secured a copy of the King's Bible, replete with George VI's royal



monogram in gold on the black leather cover and a royal purple book ribbon inside for use in Queen's Belk Chapel. (Photo by Robert Lahser)

Up until that time, the report notes, only two of the King's Bibles had gone to the United States, a country George VI visited in 1939, becoming the first reigning British monarch to ever tour the former colonies. Today, the King's Bible has been 'retired' to Queens' library and placed under glass.

– ASSIST News Service

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## CURRENT COMMENT

### **A Dozen Bad Ideas For The 21st Century** – Dr Mark Durie, ASSIST News Service

HERE is a list of false beliefs and modes of thought which make it hard for people in the West to come to terms with the challenge of Islam today. If you are deeply attached to any of these ideas or ways of thinking, you will have difficulty accepting the truth about Islam's teachings and their impact.

#### **1. All Religions Are The Same**

They are not. Different faiths make different claims about what is true, what is right and wrong, and produce radically different societies. Atheists have helped entrench this belief because to acknowledge material differences between religions would undermine their narrative.

#### **2. Religion Is Irrelevant As A Cause Of Anything**

According to this view, religion can be exploited or hijacked as an excuse or an instrument (eg of oppression – such as an 'opiate of the masses'), but not an underlying cause of anything. Marxist ideology has made a significant contribution to establishing this belief. In accordance with this assumption, security analysts all over the Western world presuppose that religion cannot be the cause of terrorism: so they and the politicians they advise must say that terrorists have 'hijacked' religion.

#### **3. We All Worship The Same God**

We do not. Thousands of different gods are worshipped by people on this Earth. These gods manifest different characteristics and make different demands. The worship of them forms very different kinds of people and communities.

#### **4. Anything Can Be Justified From Any Sacred Text**

Not true. It is a postmodern fallacy that all meaning is in the eye of the beholder. Certain texts lend themselves to supporting particular beliefs and practices much more than others.

#### **5. The Christian Reformation Was A Progressive Movement**

Not true. In fact the Christian Reformers aimed to go back to the example and teaching of Christ and the Apostles. Throughout the whole medieval period reformation always meant renewing the foundations by going back to the origins. Understanding 'reformation' in this way, Al Qa'ida is a product of an Islamic reformation, ie it is an attempt to go back to the example and teaching of Muhammad.

#### **6. Dispelling Ignorance Will Increase Positive Regard For The Other**

This was the message of Harper Lee's powerful novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Although it is true that

racial hatred can feed on and exploit ignorance, accurately dispelling ignorance sometimes rightly increases the likelihood of rejecting the beliefs or practices of another. It is illogical to assume that those opposed to a belief are the ones who are most ignorant about it. Ignorance can breed positive regard for what is wrong just as easily as it can breed prejudice against what is good.

#### **7. Everyone Is Good And Decent; Just Make A Sincere Effort To Get To Know Them And You Will Always Come To Respect Them**

This is not universally true. Holding this view is a luxury. Those who have experienced life under evil governments or in dysfunctional societies are shocked at the naivety of this assumption.

#### **8. Putting Something In Context Will Always Produce A More Innocuous Interpretation**

Not true. Attending properly to context can make a text even more offensive than it would otherwise have been. Conversely, if you take something out of context you may regard it more positively than you ought to. In reality, radical interpretations of the Qur'an, such as are used to support terrorism, almost always involve an appeal to a rich understanding of the context in which the Qur'an was revealed, including the life of Muhammad. On the other hand, many have taken peaceful verses of the Qur'an out of context in order to prove that Islam is a peaceful religion.

#### **9. Extremism Is The Problem, And Moderation The Solution**

Warnings against taking things to extremes are as old as Aristotle. More recently the idea was promoted by Eric Hoffer, in *The True Believer*, that mass movements are interchangeable, and an extremist is just as likely to become a communist or a fascist. He claimed that it was the tendency to extremism itself which is the problem. This idea has become very unhelpful and generates a lot of confusion. 'Moderation' or 'laxity' in belief or practice can be destructive and even dangerous, eg in medical surgery or when piloting a plane. Ideas that are good and true deserve strong, committed support, and the best response to bad ideas is rarely lukewarm moderation.

#### **10. The West Is Always Guilty**

This irrational and unhelpful idea is taught in many schools today and has become embedded in the world views of many. It is essentially a silencing strategy, sabotaging critical thinking. (Cont p.14)

## CURRENT COMMENT

(Continued from p.13)

### 11. Two Wrongs Make A Right Reasoning

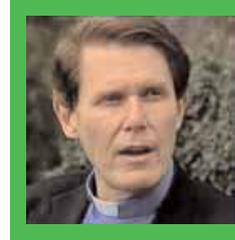
Eg: Someone says that jihad is a bad part of Islam, to which a defender of Islam says, 'What about the crusades?' Someone says that the *Qur'an* 'incites violence', to which someone else replies, 'But there are violent verses in the Bible.' This kind of reasoning is a logical fallacy. A specific sub-type of this fallacy is *tu quoque* reasoning: Tu quoque ('you too') reasoning: you can't challenge someone else's beliefs or actions if you (or your group) have personally ever done anything wrong or have objectionable characteristics. Eg A Catholic says jihad is bad, but someone counters that popes supported the Crusades. This is a sub-type of the 'two wrongs make a right' reasoning: it too is a logical fallacy.

### 12. Belief In Progress: Everything Will Always Get Better In The End

This is a false, though seductive bit of wishful thinking. Bad ideas have bad consequences. Good societies can easily become bad ones if they exchange good ideas for bad ones. Bad situations can last for a very long time, and keep getting progressively worse. Many countries have deteriorated for ex-

tended periods during the past 100 years. It is not true that ideologies or religions will inevitably improve or become more 'moderate' as time passes, as if by some magical process of temporal transformation. But things are not always going to get better.

*Dr Mark Durie is a theologian, human rights activist and pastor of St Mary's Anglican Church, Caulfield, Vic.*



*A graduate of the Australian National University and the Australian College of Theology, he has held visiting appointments at the University of Leiden, MIT, UCLA and Stanford, and was elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities in 1992. He has published many articles and books on the language and culture of the Acehnese, Christian-Muslim relations and religious freedom. For more information on his writings, including details of his books on Islam, please go to: [www.markdurie.com](http://www.markdurie.com). He can be contacted by e-mail at: [mjdurie@gmail.com](mailto:mjdurie@gmail.com).*

## BRIEFLY NOTED ...

### Upcoming Events:

#### LEADING CREATIONIST TO SPEAK IN MELBOURNE

**DR Carl Wieland** will answer peoples' most-asked questions about dinosaurs when he addresses meetings in Melbourne next weekend:

**Friday 4 March, 7.30pm**, Epping Presbyterian Church, 773 High St, Epping.

**Saturday 5 March, 7pm**, Oakleigh Christian Fellowship, 34 Hillcrest Ave, Chadstone.

**Sunday 6 March, 10.30am**, Maroondah Family Church, 44 Dublin Rd, East Ringwood.

**Sunday 6 March, 6pm**, Clayton Assembly of God, 7 Olive St, Clayton.

For more details visit [www.creation.com/events](http://www.creation.com/events) or contact CMI on (07) 3340 9888.

#### CWI WORKERS RETURNING HOME

**PAUL and Judy Morris** are returning to the UK after serving with Christian Witness to Israel in Australia.

A farewell service will be held on Saturday 5 March at 2.30pm in St Martin's Anglican Church, 103 Todman Ave, Kensington, NSW. An address will be given by Dr Mark Thompson, CWI Council member and lecturer at Moore College. Judy and Paul plan

to leave Australia for the UK on 28 March, and after a period of resettling expect to take up new responsibilities with CWI.

In other CWI news, **KayChan and Sue Park** will continue their unique ministry of outreach to Israelis in Australia. **Craig Myers** will work in CWI's Bondi office for two days a week to keep all the administrative work flowing smoothly. The office is in St. Matthew's Anglican Church, which fronts onto Ocean St, so there are opportunities to meet Jewish people who pass by the office and hopefully speak to them of Jesus. Craig and his wife Cheryl, who is a Jewish believer, have had a long association with CWI, so they know the work well and are deeply committed to it. **Julian Bull** has agreed to represent CWI in Western Australia on a volunteer basis during 2011. There are plans for a quarterly prayer meeting and a visit to Perth by KayChan Park in October 2011. **Graham Jefferys**, a retired missionary living in Tahmoor, will be speaking in churches from Penrith to the Southern Highlands.

For enquiries about CWI call (02) 9388 0067 or 0424 731999; email: [info@cw.org.au](mailto:info@cw.org.au).

## 'LIVING STILL'

# Do You Have New Life? Are You Sure Of Your Salvation?

MY dear friends, are we certain that we belong to God? Do we know that we have received eternal life? Are we born again and are we sure of it?

I warn you in the name of our blessed Saviour, do not rely upon anything but the certain knowledge that you have received eternal life from God.

Interest in religion is not enough. Interest in Christ is not enough. Interest in morality is not enough. Membership in the Church is not enough – Judas Iscariot seemed to have them all.

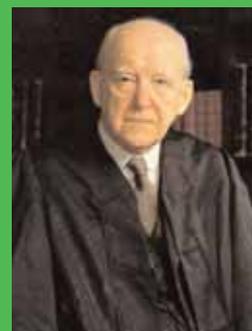
The one thing about which we must be absolutely certain is that we are the children of God.

If you are, praise Him and give yourself anew to Him. If you are not certain, then I beseech you, learn the lesson of Judas.

Go to the Lord Jesus Christ and tell Him that you are uncertain, that you do not know, that you are doubtful whether you have new life.

Tell Him the truth about yourself. Cast yourself utterly at His feet and ask Him in mercy to look upon you and by His Spirit to give you this new life and the blessed assurance that you are born again, that you are indeed His child and heir, a joint-heir with Jesus, and that you truly belong to Him.

– Dr D.M. Lloyd-Jones,  
*'Life In The Spirit', Hodder & Stoughton, p.299*



Dr D.M. Lloyd-Jones

## A PLACE IN HISTORY

ST Andrew's Church, Epworth, in the north of England is the church where John and Charles Wesley's father, Rev Samuel Wesley, was rector. They and their 17 brothers and sisters were baptised here. Their father is buried in the churchyard (near the small window left of centre).

After he had gained fame as a preacher, John Wesley paid a visit to the old home town to conduct a mission. Unfortunately his father's successor was not sympathetic to the 'Methodists' and refused to allow him to preach in the church. Wesley ended up standing on his father's grave to preach to the crowd which had gathered.



St Andrew's Church, Epworth, England

## QUOTE/UNQUOTE ...

*'THESE days I'm more concerned with the vine than the trellis.'*

– Rev David Burke,  
in *'Pulse', Magazine of the Presbyterian Church in NSW*

*'SAVING faith is not an empty speculation that flits about in the top of the brain; it is something that takes root in the depths of the heart.'*

– John Calvin, *'Institutes 3.2.6',*  
trans Ford Lewis Battles

## Strong Test For Courageous Leadership

BRITISH Prime Minister David Cameron has criticized 'state multiculturalism' in his first speech as Prime Minister on radicalization and the causes of terrorism. He also signaled a tougher stance on groups promoting Islamist extremism.

Writing for ASSIST News Service, Michael Ireland reports that at a security conference in Munich, he argued the UK needed a stronger national identity to prevent people turning to all kinds of extremism, according to the BBC website.

The BBC reported that as Mr Cameron outlined his vision, he suggested there would be greater scrutiny of some Muslim groups which get public money but do little to tackle extremism.

He argued that government ministers should refuse to share platforms or engage with such groups, which should be denied access to public funds and barred from spreading their message in universities and prisons.

'Frankly, we need a lot less of the passive tolerance of recent years and much more active, muscular liberalism,' the Prime Minister said. 'Let's properly judge these organizations: Do they believe in universal human rights, including for women and people of other faiths? Do they believe in equality of all before the law? Do they believe in democracy and the right of people to elect their own government? Do they encourage integration or separatism?'

### Predictable Response

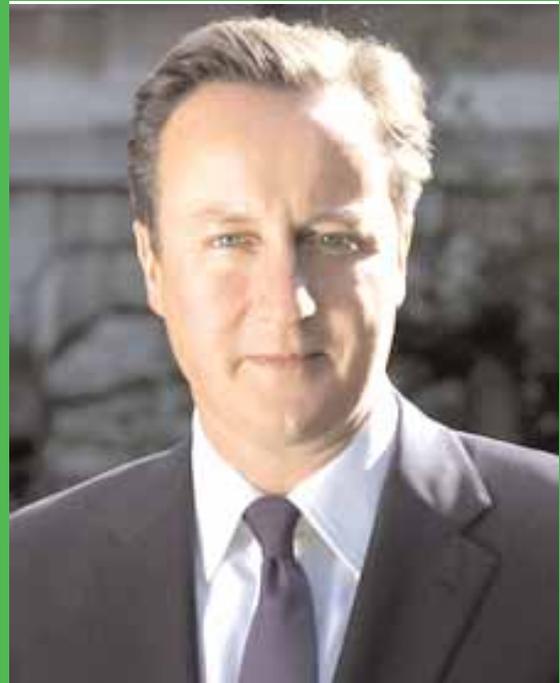
The speech angered some Muslim groups, while others queried its timing amid an English Defence League rally in the UK, the BBC said.

### Put To The Test

News is also at hand of plans to erect a mega-mosque near the site of the forthcoming London Olympic Games. The proposal is being seen as a test for government resolve in the fight against extremism and terrorism.

Jeremy Reynolds, senior correspondent for ASSIST reports: 'The Olympics Mega Mosque Threat is a first test for Cameron's speech against extremist Islam. Europe's biggest mosque with room for 12,000 Muslims could be built next to the Olympics site in east London if a radical Islamic sect wins an upcoming planning appeal.

According to a news release from the Christian Peoples Alliance party, leaders of the controversial Islamic group Tablighi Jamaat will have their plans



British PM David Cameron

considered at a public inquiry. TJ followers have been linked to a number of planned and actual terrorist atrocities. CPA leaders and former Leader of the Opposition on Newham Council, Alan Craig, say the appeal will be the first test of David Cameron's remarks about the dangers of radical Islam and the need for integration.

CPA said Newham Council ordered the group off the site early last year after TJ had been using it for a temporary mosque without planning permission for four years. The group had also constructed buildings on the site against planning regulations.

'Tablighi Jamaat have acted unlawfully and irresponsibly,' said Craig, who's also campaign director of local opposition group Newham Concern. 'Their track record amply shows they are not concerned to abide by planning regulations; they apparently consider they are above the law that the rest of us have to keep. Newham Council is to be congratulated for ordering them off site.'

TJ claims that if they lose, it could mean the end of the mega-mosque "development dreams" for the group's site at West Ham.'

● People in other countries which have embraced multiculturalism with a will would do well to watch these developments closely. – Ed.