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New Life

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITY LAWS COULD CAUSE CRISIS FOR CHRISTIANS

FAMILY Voice Australia hosted an informative meeting at St Mary's Anglican Church, Caulfield, Vic, on Tuesday 23 June to warn Christians of possible difficulties which could arise from the passing of Equal Opportunity Laws by the Victorian Parliament. Elizabeth Kendall, well known to *New Life* readers through her regular *Religious Liberty* briefings, and the Rev Mark Durie, Vicar of St Mary's, Caulfield, were the main speakers.

Elizabeth Kendall noted that the proposed laws were part of an international trend of legislation which on the surface appears to enhance personal freedom but in their working out could be used to severely hamper and compromise the work of the Church. She said that revival is what is needed to meet the present situation, where churches come on fire, Christians are prepared to face persecution and the nation is transformed.

Mark Durie said that the issues relating to religious freedom and human rights are complex and poorly understood in Australian society. There is also a rising sense of anxiety about religious freedom at the grassroots level among many (but not all) Australian Christians. At the same time,

among secularists there is a good deal of hostility to the Church's claims for exemptions from human rights legislation.

'A position argued for by an Anglican taskforce has been that protection of human rights through legislation could be desirable,' he said, 'but only provided that the standards set in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights are followed, and adequate safeguards are built in to protect freedom of religion and conscience. For example, anti-incitement legislation could be supported, provided that incitement was narrowly defined (in terms of the ICCPR protocols) and not loosely as in the Victorian Racial and Religious Tolerance Act. To protect religious rights it is also necessary to provide reasonably broad exemptions to anti-discrimination legislation. At present religious bodies enjoy such exemptions in Victoria. However there is a strong push from secularists to remove these exemptions, or severely curtail them.

'The determination with which the Victorian Government brought in the abortion law reforms, trampling on religious



The Rev Mark Durie

rights of conscientious objectors to abortion, suggests to me that Victorians cannot afford to fall asleep on the watch with this issue. We must take it extremely seriously.'

Christians are asked to visit their local Labor MP soon to urge the government to resile from the proposed legislation. Contact Family Voice on 1300 365 965 for details.

Missionaries Rescued By Missions Interlink

AS part of its cost-saving measures in the 2009 Budget, the Federal Government has decided to tax all Australians who are working overseas. Tax Laws Amendment Bill (No.1) took effect on 1 July 2009.

Specifically excluded are diplomatic and defence personnel and workers engaged under the AusAID program, including all AusAID approved overseas aid organisations.

This covers most of the 90,000 Australian resident taxpayers working overseas, but unfortunately not missionary or other Christian ministry personnel – unless their mission is a member of

Missions Interlink. Prior to the Bill passing in both houses on 24 June, MI was able to make last minute representations which resulted in an exemption for all member missions of Evangelical Alliance's Missions Interlink and a small number of missions including CLTC-PNG and Steer Inc.

For a copy of the Bill, which is awaiting Royal Assent, contact Melbourne chartered accountant Kimberly Smith of the Missionary Taxation Service at contact@missiontax.org.au

To join Missions Interlink contact the national director, Pam Thyer at mi@ea.org.au

HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE WITH THE WILSONS



Urgent Prayer Request

FORMER Global Interaction staff member Gary Piper is very ill and the prognosis is not good. Heather and the family would appreciate our prayers for healing and for Christ's comfort at this time. They served in Zimbabwe and PNG in the 1980s and 90s.

Update On John And Bronwyn Bain

TWENTY years have passed since they first left Australia for Bolivia to serve with SIM. God has accomplished much through their work in the media department and in other areas where they were needed. Throughout those years they have seen God at work in and through their lives in incredible ways, including His marvellous provision when their daughter had back surgery. The time has come to seek God's will for the next stage of ministry and they ask that we pray with them. Their girls are now in the midst of university studies here in Melbourne and actively involved in their home church.

Victorian Indigenous Prayer Network

THERE will be an evening of prayer and focus on indigenous ministries with Auntie Jean Phillips (from Qld) at 17 Daniel St, Burwood, on Wednesday 15 July from 7.30-9pm. All are invited to share with them.

Cath Solomon

Cath Solomon, Indigenous Christian leader at Lakes Entrance and Bairnsdale, thanks us for prayer for Ben, her 23 year-old grandson, who was recently savagely bashed and is paralysed as a result. He is still in hospital but praises God he can move his arms – a miracle. Pray that this will be a turning point in his life. Remember the family who are under great stress, that they will turn to God at this time. Please pray for Keith, a young Christian leader, who has been given a guitar for use in ministry with the Gippsland Indigenous Community.

More Praise

COLIN and Jill Bakon (SIM, Loja, Ecuador) are rejoicing in Colin's improvement after neck surgery earlier in the year. He is now free from pain and back ministering to those at the English Clubs as Jill has a KYB group with the ladies. A women's conference will be held in July.

Global Interaction Update

PRAY for Anna who has just commenced a new semester at her university in Thailand. Many fellow students are eager to join her study groups to practise English with her. Pray for opportunities to share the Gospel.

Marg in South East Asia asks for peace as she grades the students' work. She seeks to develop close friendships with them by assisting with their preparation and creativity in their teaching methodology. Pray for these 'tentmakers'.

Rob And June Head – Answered Prayer

THE Heads have left Mebourne to return to PNG for eight weeks of ministry with Wycliffe. They have completed and edited the recording of *Mark* and *Luke* in the two dialects they work in, and have nearly completed *Matthew* and *John*. They will need to reactivate some of the MegaVoice units. The big praise point is that they have been recognised as recipients of the Aged Pension. This has been successful and they will receive the pension whether they are in Australia or temporarily in PNG. Pray this will continue. Pray for protection in travel, for strength and for full co-operation from local church leaders.

Trans World Radio

TWR asks prayer for their *Women of Hope* radio ministry in Central Asia where many women face great personal difficulties. May they come to know Jesus and find that He will never leave them.

News From HCJB Ecuador

HOSPITAL Vozandes-Shell is now a part of the training of future Ecuadorian medical missionaries who are going to places like Ghana and Sierra Leone. Pray for the success of this project and for God's provision for it to continue.

Jerusalem Field Studies

THE Associates For Biblical Research announces that from 2-17 January an international team will be sifting artefacts from the Temple Mount. Evening lectures will be given by leading Israeli archaeologists. See www.BibleArchaeology.org/outreach for details.

Celebrating 90 Years

THE Bush Church Aid Society is celebrating this significant milestone and many will be thanking God for the incredible difference this society has made throughout remote Australia – especially to those in the North West. Over the years they have mobilised dozens of ministers, costing millions of dollars, and thousands of churches to pray so that people in isolated communities might hear of God's saving grace in Christ.

OAC Ministries

JULY is a busy month for the team in NSW with training afternoons, Sunday School

programs and holiday club programs. Pray for stamina and skill to share the good news of Jesus with young people. Phone 1300 669 806 for details.

'Do You Wonder Why?'

THIS is the title of the booklet distributed to children affected by the Victorian fires by Dorothy Lawrence, from Child Evangelism Fellowship of Australia. If you know of any child who could be helped to understand how God is in control even in such a devastating experience, please contact Dorothy (02) 9645 5639.

Moore College Endowment Fund

THIS project has been launched to equip 10,000 men and women with a solid foundation for a lifetime of Christian ministry. They aim to have 10,000 students undertaking certificate-level study through on-line and correspondence courses as well as constructing a resource centre. The fund has been launched to finance the \$75 million dollars needed over the next ten years.

National Marriage Day

THIS will be promoted on 13 August by the Australian Family Association with a breakfast in the Great Hall of Parliament House. See www.marrieday.org.au or phone 02 6383 4242 for details.

International Teams

PRAYER is requested for the Lord to expedite the sale of International Team's offices to Parramatta Baptist Church and to complete their new premises at North Parramatta Gospel Chapel. They want to be able to move in by the end of August.

Charles Perry Lecture 2009

CHARLES Perry was the first Bishop of Melbourne in 1848, and in 2009 Professor David Bebbington of Stirling University in Scotland will deliver the lecture entitled *The Essence of Evangelicalism: The Islington Conferences* on 20 July at 5.30 pm in the Stanway Alpha Lecture Room at Ridley College, Melbourne. For more information go to r.bezzant@ridley.edu.au

Impacting India

HCJB Australia is upgrading its broadcast facility at Kununurra to more effectively impact India in the 14 languages it currently broadcasts in. At present more than half the huge population of India can hear the Gospel from Radio HCJB in their own language.

(Continued on p.3)

'THE BLOOD OF THE MARTYRS ...'

Bible School Students Murdered In Yemen

– German Nurses Were On A Short-Term Hospital Internship

TWO German Bible School students have been kidnapped and murdered in Yemen.

Anita G. (24) and Rita S. (26) were studying at the evangelical Brake Bible School in Lemgo, West Germany, as director Matthias Ruether confirmed on 16 June.

Both nurses were on a short-term internship at the Al Jumhuri Hospital in Saada, North Yemen which is supported by the humanitarian agency Worldwide Services in the Netherlands.

Anita G. and Rita S., members of a Baptist Church in Wolfsburg, North Germany, were abducted 12 June north of Saada while on an excursion with a German couple and their three children, a British engineer and a South Korean teacher.

The two German women were first stabbed and then shot. Young-Sun I. (34) was also murdered, while the fate of the other hostages remains unclear. According

to some unconfirmed press reports they have also been murdered.

Brake Bible School is in deep shock about the murder of the students. They were dedicated in their desire to help the needy. That was their sole motivation to go to Yemen.

Both the German and the South Korean Governments have denounced the barbaric acts of violence. Because the hostages were brutally killed, some observers believe it likely that the terror network Al Qaida was involved.

In the last 15 years at least 200 foreigners have been kidnapped in Yemen. In most cases, they were set free after ransom payments.

This is not the first time that Muslim ex-



tremists have murdered hospital workers in Yemen. Two men killed three US citizens at a Baptist hospital in Jibla on 30 December 2002. Another American was wounded. The culprits were later convicted and sentenced to death.

Yemen is one of the strictest Islamic countries in the world, as 99% of the 21 million inhabitants are Muslims. Small groups of Christians mostly gather in secret.

– Wolfgang Polzer, ASSIST News Service

HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE WITH THE WILSONS

Life-Changing Opportunity

PROSHIKKHON 2010 will provide an opportunity of a lifetime to join in a cross-cultural experience with experienced leaders helping to train national believers to share the Gospel with their own people. The last group that went to Bangladesh saw lives changed, amazing answers to prayer and an incredible impact on their own Christian lives. To join the next group contact: keith_benn@wycliffe.org

Tokelau Bible

FOR 160 years there has been no Tokelau Bible but that has now changed. On 23 May the Tokelau Bible was dedicated near Wellington, NZ and the first consignment will be shipped to the Tokelau Islands on 11 July. Pray for safety and for revival. An amazing 1,500 were actually sold on the day of the dedication!

Tahlee Bible College

PRAY as the Tahlee team continues to seek God's direction for the future of the college. Pray for the active childrens' ministry that goes out from the college.

Bible League

WALK4BIBLES and Run4Bibles have been sponsored throughout Australia so as to

place Bibles with Bible-less Christians in China and Africa. Every \$7 raised through sponsorship will place a Bible in a needy hand. Contact: Bible League, PO Box 714, Penrith NSW 2751, freecall 1800 800 937.

A New Challenge And A New Vision

GLO Ministries Australia praises God for the new outreach to the Waray people on the large island of Samar, the Philippines.

There are up to 3 million Waray in at least 2,000 villages and suburbs in need of an evangelical church. There is now a local church planted and GLO is praying that a team from Australia will go, live among the Waray, learn their language and share Christ with them. GLO Ministries, PO Box 171, Riverstone, NSW 2765.

Literature For Myanmar

JOSEPH Rajan, of The Pocket Testament League of Australia, reports that he is printing 50,000 copies of John's Gospel and 2,000 copies of the New Testament. He asks prayer for their distribution and acceptance.

Central Victorian Gospel Radio Inc

CVGR, based in Harcourt near Bendigo, has been granted a further six month extension to broadcast on 101.5 FM. The present

temporary licence was due to expire on 30 June. They give thanks to the Lord for this extension to broadcasting. They have been on-air 24/7 since 2003. CVGR is now also streaming on the internet, which means anyone with access to broadband internet can listen to the station. To find the link to listen via online streaming, check on www.cvgr.org.au.

Unrest In Pakistan

THREE Pakistani girls were recently killed along with their driver not far from Kunhar Hospital where Teach Across workers are located. Pray for peace in Pakistan.

Church Planters

WE praise God that Empart (an Australian organisation working in North India) has been recognised as one of the most influential church planting movements in the world. This recognition was given at a recent gathering of global church planting leaders meeting in Israel. The Director is Jossy Chacko, a graduate of the Bible College of Victoria, who has been especially anointed by God for this ministry. However, finance is a current major challenge. The current economic situation is hitting hard and urgent prayer is asked for God's provision.



'Peter Costello Was Never A Backstabber!'

IN a letter to the Melbourne *Herald/Sun* dated 22 June, the writer says that he is sick of Peter Costello's supposed lack of courage to challenge for the Liberal Party leadership.

He rightly makes the point that Peter and his brother Tim had a very supportive family upbringing with strong moral beliefs, and a sense of what is right.

Barbara and I know that to be very true, for their parents Russell and Anne Costello

are all that he claims. They have been friends of ours for nearly 50 years. Russell was a lecturer in Greek when I was lecturing there at MBI back in the 1960's.

The writer to the *Herald/Sun* states: 'I thank Peter Costello for his legacy in leaving this country debt free, and for putting Australia in a strong position to meet the current financial crisis.' There has been no lack of courage on the part of Peter Costello. Well said – we heartily agree.

'It Was Like The End Of The World'

THE Royal Commission into the fires in Victoria has been told by a Marysville resident that 'the town's major tourist venue was like a holocaust! – the end of the world'. Although film makers and others have used this term to apply to other catastrophes, most Christians would regard the word as having a biblical relevance, along the lines of some of the statements made in Revelation about the end times. Having experienced such a foretaste let's pray that all of us will turn to Jesus Christ as the one and only Saviour, in whom we are secure for eternity.

'I Hate Being Miss Universe!'

NEWLY crowned Miss Universe Australia is Rachel Finch, and we are told how she spends nights crying because of what she has had to deal with – especially in relation to a 'rushed' contract signing.

I especially noticed the fact that the Melbourne *Herald/Sun* write-up of the crowning spoke of it as involving 'a crown of thorns', and I was reminded once again of the way biblical language and incidents are so closely tied in to our English language – in this case to the crown of thorns which our Lord wore when He died for us on the Cross of Calvary.

PCU – The New World Currency?

WE have an email from a very successful business man who would like to remain nameless. He states that 'A regional and trade currency is developing fast. The often discussed Pacific Currency Unit (PCU) incorporating the Australian Dollar, Canadian Dollar, New Zealand Dollar and United States Dollar are moving to convergence rapidly.'

It is rumoured that the Reserve Bank of Australia and the Central Banks of Canada, New Zealand and the United States are near agreement on a single currency as a synthesis of those currencies, and it will incorporate the Pacific Islands.

We are told that discussions have proceeded after research emanating from Stanford University over a number of years. It further states that the time is now

approaching for the creation of a Pacific Currency Unit (PCU). It is rumoured that in addition to the above currencies this could be a regional and perhaps a reserve world currency and so could assist the rest of the world to release itself from total dependency on the US currency.

Among other points made is the widely held belief that the Australian Dollar is clearly undervalued when compared to the US dollar and certain other currencies. The pending re-evaluation of the AUD to parity with the USD in the free foreign exchange markets is gaining pace with a view to occurring within a very short time.'

Once again we can ask ourselves: are coming events casting their shadows towards the establishment of a one-world government?

'We'll Never, Ever, Forgive You'

THE victims of the Hoddle Street massacre have responded in these strong words to the written apology by Julian Knight, and on the same page it is claimed that an ex-Pentridge Prison guard revealed that the killer had confessed to a plan to kill again.

He supposedly bragged that despite killing more people he had received a shorter sentence than the Russell Street bombers, and the ex-warder offered to take a lie detector test in an effort to help make sure that Knight is never released.

How wonderful it is that the love of God is such that He is able to save to the uttermost all who put their trust in Him. As someone has said: 'From the guttermost to the uttermost'. I can't blame the relatives and friends taking the stand they have, but we also need to mention the possibility of repentance and forgiveness which is shown

so clearly in John 3.16 – 'God so loved the world that He gave His only Son ...' May Julian Knight come to know that true transformation of heart that God alone can bring.

Many Americans Confused By Barack Obama

BARBARA and I receive lots of letters from contacts in the US and we're hearing serious criticisms of the new President. One that might not be meaningful to many people, but certainly disturbs some, is that in his recent visit to a number of Muslim countries he used his full name, his middle name being Hussein. There has also been considerable disquiet about his statement that America is no longer a Christian country and that Christianity is but one of the major faiths of the country – the Muslim religion being another. Let's pray for righteousness and right standards of morality and spiritual

ity to be accepted by our nations and by our leaders, including the President of the USA.

The King Of Pop Is Dead; The King Of Kings Truly Lives

MICHAEL Jackson, the King of Pop, has been one of the best-known men of recent years. Young and old have raved about his contribution to the world of music. Unfortunately he is also widely known for a way of life that hardly commends him as a moral leader. His death was sudden and unexpected. Some of the ongoing difficulties he has faced in life are well documented and in spite of making millions, it is reported that he also lost millions. Scripture says: 'It is appointed to all men once to die, and after this the judgment.' It is foolish to reject the living God in the one life He gives us. We who are Christians may never be called 'King of Pop' – but one day we will be seated with the King of Kings. What a privilege!

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AUSTRALIA'S CHRISTIAN NEWSPAPER



When Someone Does Something

A CALLER to a recent ABC 774 talk-back program on raising children said: 'We have a generation of kids who are lost if someone doesn't do something for them.'

Too true! Almost every day we hear of horror road smashes in which young people have been killed or injured, often as a result of 'hooning around'; of young people intent on obliterating themselves through the abuse of alcohol; of the steadily rising toll taken by illicit drugs on young people.

Yes indeed, 'someone needs to do something.' We should be grateful to the Federal Government for persisting with their tax increase on alcopops. Sales have dramatically decreased since the increase came into force. It's a pity about Senator Xenophon's amendments though, which the government dropped the second time around. Shame on the government for that. Shame on Senator Fielding, whose vote the first time around would have resulted in the passing of the Xenophon amendments and consequently an even more useful piece of legislation. Perhaps Christians really do have to be 'wise as serpents and harmless as doves' – Matthew 10.16 – and in that order!

But let's move on. One of the greatest forces for good among young people is that faithful band of Christians who go into our public schools week in, week out, year in, year out to teach Christian Religious Education. By their dogged perseverance they not only share the Gospel with these young people, they show that they care for the good of their souls.

And there is fruit for their labours.

Stories are constantly cropping up of people whose parents cared little or nothing for their souls, not sending them to Sunday School or taking them to church, and giving them no encouragement to believe. But somewhere along the line a faithful Scripture teacher at school made a mark on their young minds sufficient for them to come to faith in Christ.

The fields are ripe there in our public schools. So many are involved, so many more are needed. ACCESS Ministries here in Melbourne (phone 1800 063 341, www.accessministries.org.au) will be pleased to hear from 'someone who will do something' (in fact, the most important thing of all) so that our young people will not be lost.

– *Bob Thomas*

CHRISTIANS IN THE ACTION ...

Chief Minister Of Nagaland State And Christian Members Of Indian Parliament (MP) Assures Support To Christian Victims Of Persecution

MR Neiphiu Rio, the Chief Minister of Nagaland State in India, along with Christian MPs, has assured Christian victims of persecution of their support in a recent meeting with the National President of Global Council of Indian Christians (GCIC), Dr Sajan George.

According to news carried by GCIC on their website, Mr Neiphiu Rio said the meeting was organized in order to familiarise the newly elected members of Parliament with the current situation of Christians in India and their needs.

The news source reported that the Chief Minister and the MPs gave an assurance of their whole-hearted support in getting justice for victims of persecution.



They were deeply hurt by the inaction of the authorities concerned in extending timely help to the 50,000 displaced victims of persecution and martyrs' widows in Kand-

hamal communal attack in Orissa state last year.

According to the website the Chief Minister of Nagaland said that "the people of Nagaland were thankful to the Christian missionaries who transformed Nagaland from a head-hunting community to one of the most literate communities of India".

"The North Eastern community wishes that the progress that was achieved through Christian missionaries in Nagaland could spread all over India and take us to the ranks of being a superpower in the world," he added.

—James Varghese,
ASSIST News Service

New Life Now Available Electronically

FOR over 70 years, *New Life* has come to subscribers and readers through the post or Christian book shops, but we can now offer an alternative way of receiving *New Life* – by email. The email edition contains an additional four pages of news and views we can't fit into the print edition, subscribers receive it a few days ahead of the print edition, and it costs half the price!

Thanks to Haddon Chang



HADDON Chang, a Year 10 student at St Andrew's Christian College, Burwood, Vic, came to *New Life* for work experience from 22 to 26 June. We want to say thank you to Haddon for doing a hard week's work in helping to write and produce this issue of *New Life*, as well as helping us catch up on those 'must-do' jobs which often don't get done.

The Annual Edersheim Lecture

'JOHN CALVIN AND THE JEWS'

Speaker: Dr Peter Barnes, Lecturer in Church History,
Presbyterian Theological Centre, Sydney

Sydney Venue: Ashfield Presbyterian Church,
Cnr Liverpool Rd & Knox St, Ashfield

Time: 7.30pm, Tuesday 28 July

Melbourne Venue: Presbyterian Theological College,
684 Elgar Road, Box Hill North

Time: 7.30pm, Wednesday 29 July

Alfred Edersheim is a well-known 19th Century Jewish Christian scholar from Vienna who ministered in the UK and Romania. He authored *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, and other classics. Following in his footsteps, the concern of this lecture is to examine themes relating to the Jewish people and the Christian faith. In the year which marks the 500th anniversary of Calvin's birth we aim to examine what he said and did regarding the Jewish people and the lessons for us today.

Sponsored by Christian Witness to Israel, www.cwi.org.au

For further information contact CWI: info@cwi.org.au; (02) 9371 5956

No admission charge.



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CHRISTIANS IN THE ACTION ...

Bishop Al Stewart To Head New Church Planting Group

ARCHBISHOP Dr Peter Jensen has announced the appointment of Bishop Alan Stewart to spearhead a major diocesan church planting initiative.

Dr Jensen says 'Connect09 has challenged us to move from maintenance to mission. The fact that I have released Bishop Stewart from his valuable ministry in Wollongong is an indication of how high church planting is on our mission agenda.'

In announcing the appointment, Archbishop Jensen recalled his words to the Synod in 2008: 'As we have prayed for our city and its region this year, there has been what seems like a remarkable spiritual movement summoning young men into church planting. Is this an answer to our prayers?'

'I have come to the conclusion that Bishop Stewart is the best one to lead this vital work as Director of the Department of Evangelism (Evangelism Ministries). The board of EM has warmly recommended his name to me and foreshadowed discussions within the board on the reshaping of EM and a new name to reflect a new emphasis on church planting. Al Stewart brings expertise, energy and firm leadership to this vital task.

'I recognise that Al has served for only a short time as Bishop of Wollongong and his leaving the region will no doubt come as a surprise and a disappointment to many. Nevertheless I believe that others will be able to build on the good work he has done in the Wollongong region.'

An announcement on Bishop Stewart's successor is expected by the end of the year.

Bishop Stewart says he looks forward to his new role with enthusiasm.

'I am absolutely committed to inspiring, recruiting, equipping and placing young men with a passion for church planting and reaching the lost.

'There is so much discussion and enthusiasm for church planting at the moment that I'm pleased the Archbishop has given me the opportunity and freedom to strike while the iron is hot.



'We must reach all of our diocese – people of all backgrounds and in all locations.'

Bishop Stewart, who is 50, will officially take up his position in February 2010 upon the retirement of Rev Jim Ramsay as Director of Evangelism Ministries.



THE 2009 Australian Christian Book of the Year award short-listed books are:

Bright Lights, Dark Nights: The Enduring Faith Of 13 Remarkable Australians by Simon Smart (Blue Bottle Books);
Catherine's Gift: Inside The World Of Dr Catherine Hamlin by John Little (Pan Macmillan Australia);
Leadership On The Front Foot by Zachary Veron (Anglican Press Australia);
No Ordinary View: A Season Of Faith And Mission In The Himalayas by Naomi Reed (Ark House Press);
Now That You Are Back: A Journey Through Depression by Richard Beeston (Blue Bottle Books);

Preach Or Perish: Reaching The Hearts And Minds Of The World Today edited by Donald Howard (Donald and Nan Howard);
Refuge On The Roper: The Origins Of Roper River Mission, Ngukurr by Murray Seiffert (Acorn Press);
Take Heart: For Families Living With Disability by Kate Hurley (Blue Bottle Books).

This year's judges are: Alex Crawford, who is a practising barrister in Brisbane. He attends St Mark's Anglican Church, Clayfield; Kel Richards, who is an author, journalist and broadcaster. Kel has written 41 books and is a lay canon of St Andrews Cathedral, Sydney; Sally Smith, who is pas-

sionate about nurturing writers towards excellence. Together with a role in children's ministry development for Baptist Churches NSW, she is a freelance editor and writer of Christian education resources and books for children.

The 2009 Australian Christian Book of the Year award winner will be announced at a prize giving ceremony in August 2009.

More information about the award can be found at:

www.spcka.org.au/ACLS_About.htm

– Michael Collie, Award Co-ordinator,
Australian Christian Literature Society,
www.spcka.org.au
Phone 1300-13-SPCK

Australian Christian Heritage Foundation Looks To The Future

THE Australian Christian Heritage Foundation Board currently consists of Stuart Piggin, Assoc Professor, Macquarie University (Chair); Daniel Willis, CEO Bible Society NSW (Treasurer); Earl Roberts, former National Director of Campus Crusade for Christ, Australia; and Elizabeth Ward, former Principal, PLC Melbourne (Education Co-ordinator). The ACHF is actively working on the following projects:

National Forum 2010

We are planning our second National Forum in Parliament House, Canberra to be held in 2010 on the theme *Making the Invisible Visible*.

National History Curriculum

ACHF is currently working on a number of educational units to supplement the National History Curriculum which will provide easy-to-use resources for teachers and

schools to include Australia's Christian Heritage in its curriculum. The first series will be showcased and available at the National Forum 2010. Stuart Piggin is on the Advisory Board for the National History Curriculum. He would appreciate your prayers.

Heritage Centre

We are currently working with the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture in Canberra to utilise some of their land as a Heritage Centre. We are in the very early days of this project. We will keep you informed as progress is made.

ACHF Website

We are nearly finished our brand new website www.achf.org.au This has taken some time as we are upgrading it to better serve you. You will shortly be able to register for our mailing list, donate on line and receive regular ACHF updates on the website.

Tax Deductibility

With the end of the financial year upon us, we are pleased to inform you that we have tax deductibility through our library fund. You can post a cheque to the address below. You will shortly be able to donate online. We will send you the URL link as soon as it is complete.

We have a number of exciting projects up and running. This has meant the need to improve our administration structure to handle the increasing work load.

We ask you to prayerfully consider making a donation to ensure these projects are accomplished for the advancement of our nation and the glory of God.

– O.J. Rushton, Secretary,
ACHF, PO Box 375, North Ryde NSW 1670.

Phone: 02 412 504 153

Email: ojrushton@me.com

SAT-7® Urges Prayer For Iran; Adjusts Farsi Programming To Comfort Viewers In Turmoil

SAT-7 is urging its friends and supporters to continue to pray for peace in Iran, where street demonstrations following recent elections have led to bloodshed and loss of life.

Sara Afshari, SAT-7 PARS Executive Director is very concerned about how people in Iran are being treated. 'We have many young viewers and we worry about those who have been caught up in the violence,' she said. Ms Afshari believes the current political unrest in Iran reflects an even greater disillusionment with life in general. 'Everything in Iran is difficult. Even before the election, many people in Iran had become disillusioned. Some have turned to drugs, immoral lifestyles and even suicide. Others have been seeking hope elsewhere. This factor has led to the unprecedented interest of so many to find out more about the Christian faith.'

SAT-7 PARS, the ministry's Persian language channel, has begun broadcasting prayers for peace in Iran, and placing encouraging scriptures on the screen. SAT-7 PARS producers are scrambling to adjust their broadcast schedule to include new programs designed to comfort viewers. They also plan to send Scripture verses to all SAT-7 PARS viewers who have registered a cell phone number or an email. – Dan Wooding, ASSIST

Iran: Parliamentary Committee Scraps Death Penalty For Apostasy, Stoning

A DECISION has been made by the Iranian Government's Parliamentary Committee to remove articles stipulating the death penalty for apostasy from the Islamic Penal Code.

Ali Shahrokhi of the Legal and Judicial Committee of the Parliament reportedly told the Iranian State News Agency of this pronouncement according to a BBC Persian news service report on 23 June.

Mr Shahrokhi also stated that stoning was not 'in the interest of the regime'.

He told IRNA that 'Islam has set a strict set of conditions for the implementation of punishments such as stoning, that they can rarely be proven. Hence the legal and judicial commission members concluded that some of these laws are unnecessary to mention.'

The Islamic Penal Code bill will now be sent to the Iranian Parliament for a final vote before its review by the Guardian Council.

Alexa Papadouris, Advocacy Director at Christian Solidarity Worldwide said: 'CSW warmly welcomes this positive development in the progression of the Islamic Penal Code Bill.'

'However, until the Islamic Penal Code Bill is finalized by the Iranian Parliament and Guardian Council, there is still a danger that the judicial committee's revisions may not be taken into account.'

'The international community must continue to urge the Iranian Government to ensure that the final text of the bill does not include any punishment for apostasy.'

Indian Government Seeks to Repeal Anti-Conversion Legislation

PASTORS in India may soon enjoy increased freedom and protection by the government as they reach out with Jesus' love. The newly elected Indian government, led by the moderate Congress Party, is taking a strong stand against anti-conversion legislation that has restricted religious freedom in the nation. They plan to block bills introduced in a number of states by the Bharatiya Janata Party. This is very encouraging news for Christians and other minorities in the nation.

The controversial anti-conversion laws, ironically called the 'Freedom of Religion' acts, are currently active in five states: Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat. Two more states – Rajasthan and Arunachal Pradesh – have passed anti-conversion legislation but not yet put it into practice.

Iran: How Best To Pray

IN 1989 the father of the Iranian Revolution, Grand Ayatollah Khomeini, died without a successor. His rightful and designated successor, Grand Ayatollah Hussain Ali Montazeri, had been sidelined in 1988 for protesting corruption and human rights abuses.

At that time Khamenei was President, Mousavi was Prime Minister and Rafsanjani was Speaker of the Parliament. They were secure because they had not protested the purges and massacres! Possibly because Rafsanjani thought Khamenei could be easily controlled, Rafsanjani convinced the Assembly of Experts to appoint Khamenei as Supreme Leader even though he was not qualified for the role.

However, after Rafsanjani became president the two men started to clash. Rafsanjani's power base was the business class, so he supported business, the elite and economic growth.

Khamenei's power base was 'the masses', so he supported the clerics, the poor and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps. Khamenei and the IRGC brought Ahmadinejad to power in 2005 specifically because he would serve their interests. With Ahmadinejad in power, the IRGC have been able to extend their control over much of the Iranian economy and pursue their own and Khamenei's regional ambitions.

So, at the heart of the present troubles is a power struggle between the Khamenei-IRGC-Ahmadinejad camp versus the Rafsanjani-Mousavi camp.

Both camps are in the conservative block and all those involved are Islamists. None of them are counter-revolutionaries.

The Ahmadinejad camp is ideologically driven and committed to exporting Revolution, spending billions of petro-dollars through the IRGC on foreign adventures in Iraq, Gaza, Lebanon and beyond to establish regional hegemony.

The Mousavi camp on the other hand, though equally Islamist, wants less belligerence and good international relations so it can focus on domestic issues and the economy. The largely young, urban intellectuals who have been protesting in the streets of Tehran are simply embarrassed by and frustrated with the present regime and are des-

perate for change. One analyst described Mousavi as merely a 'balloon' that had been 'inflated' by those determined to express their anger against Ahmadinejad and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei.

Independent analysts both inside and outside Iran believe that election fraud has taken place. However, this does not mean that Ahmadinejad would not have won the election anyway as he is enormously popular and is virtually worshipped by masses of rural poor who greatly appreciate his generous handouts.

It is widely believed Khamenei and the IRGC wanted not only to guarantee Ahmadinejad's election but to provide him with a powerful mandate. The ruling regime had every intention of retaining power. As opposition started to mount even before the election, a senior official from the IRGC, Yad-

ollah Javani, warned that the Revolutionary Guards would crush any attempt at a 'Velvet Revolution'.

Khamenei and Ahmadinejad control the guns and have the support of a clear majority of the 86-member Assembly of Experts. When Rafsanjani (who heads the AoE) recently approached the AoE – possibly in an attempt to de-legitimise Khamenei – his daughter and four other relatives were arrested. The Khamenei-Ahmadinejad-IRGC camp will retain power for the time being. Meanwhile, discontent, desperation and disillusionment are mounting.

This RLPB was written for the Australian Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty Commission by Elizabeth Kendal, international religious liberty analyst and advocate; member of the AEA RLC team.

PLEASE PRAY FOR IRAN THAT:

- ❖ the hunger of Iranians for openness and answers will grow as many of them start to question what has gone wrong there and as they search for a better way; may many find answers in Jesus Christ. (Generally the protesters still hope for a pure Islamic State. They believe that Islam is the solution and that the present regime has merely diverged.)
- ❖ God will wonderfully protect and preserve His besieged Church as persecution will doubtless escalate when the regime moves with rage and force to repress or even purge those who oppose it or are perceived to be a threat.
- ❖ the Holy Spirit will breathe supernatural courage into the Iranian Church, so believers will witness with courage, conviction and authority; may every word of witness be blessed, with every believer a prophetic voice and a light shining in the darkness.

'For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.' (John 3.17 ESV)

Something To Remember: After the Tiananmen Square massacre in Beijing on 4 June 1989, large numbers of Chinese elite (including Communist officials) rejected Communism and in a few short years the Chinese Church became more representative of Chinese society. Christianity is now just as much a faith of the urban elite – doctors, lawyers, artists, scholars and the like – as it is a faith of the rural poor. Even amongst non-Christians, Communism is largely discredited and rejected and openness and liberty are sought.

PERSECUTION WATCH ...

'Remember those in prison ... and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.'
(Hebrews 13.3)



Christian Attorney Zheng Enchong Interrogated And Tortured By PSB

A CHRISTIAN human rights attorney has been interrogated and tortured for nine hours by Public Security Bureau officers because of his work defending Chinese citizens whose land has been confiscated by the government.

According to ChinaAid, during his detention on 17 June, Zheng Enchong was beaten, stripped and cigarettes were held to his lips and eyelids. Zheng Enchong has filed a written protest and plans to file a complaint to the central government.

According to ChinaAid sources, Zheng Enchong was summoned by four officers from Zabei District Branch of Shanghai Municipal Public Security Bureau on 17 June.

During his detention, officers took turns slapping him five or six times in the face, and hitting him three times in the back of his head. Police also held lit cigarettes to his lips and eyelids. Later, the officers pulled him from the seat and took off all his clothing, except his underwear. Police threw his personal belongings, including money, keys, pen, and a Bible and some cookies to the floor. Then the PSB officers proceeded to



search his body. Authorities compiled a written record of the interrogation without interrogating Zheng at all, and then wanted him to sign it.

Instead, he wrote down a statement on the record describing his violent treatment by the PSB. He denounced authorities for using the same method on him as they use on Falun Gong practitioners. ChinaAid says that Zheng has been summoned by officials nearly 20 times and his house searched twice in the past two and a half months.

In 2003, he filed a major legal case exposing how government officials con-

spired with Zhou Zhengyi, 'the richest man in Shanghai,' to illegally confiscate homes for demolition. Since that time, Zheng Enchong has been continually harassed and persecuted by Chinese officials. He was sentenced to three years in prison for 'illegally providing secrets to overseas entities.' The charge related to two faxes regarding workers' protests that Zheng was accused of sending to Human Rights in China, a non-profit organization. Zheng has also been beaten by authorities four times, so badly that he now has difficulty walking.

Bob Fu, president of ChinaAid and a friend of Mr. Zheng and his family, said: 'As an internationally well-known Christian human rights lawyer, Attorney Zheng has always defended the poor and vulnerable. The repeated harassment and torture against such a conscientious rights defender demonstrates the Shanghai authorities' total disregard to citizens' basic human rights. We encourage the international community to continue to press the Chinese authorities to stop these hideous acts and to hold the abusers accountable.'

– Michael Ireland, ASSIST News Service

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH!

Indian Central Government To Block Anti-Conversion Bill

THE Indian Central Government is planning to block the anti-conversion bills introduced by various BJP state governments throughout India, but the response is not uniform. According to news released by the All India Christian Council, P. Chidambaram, the Home Minister of India, has decided to take a firm stand against the controversial anti-religious conversion bill. But the response is different for various state governments. The BJP-led states had proposed laws in response to the increase in conversions by Christian missionaries. – ASSIST

Laos Arrests Christians

PLAIN-clothes police in Laos have arrested 13 Christians, Voice of the Martyrs reports. The believers had been on a daily visit to work in a Christian village when the police questioned them. Officials have not yet given a reason for the arrest, or for the on-

going detention of the believers at a provincial police station. Laos places heavy restrictions on Christians, and openly promotes Buddhism and Buddhist organizations. Pray for the spread of the Gospel in Laos.

Pakistani Christian Murdered For Drinking Tea From A Muslim Cup

INTERNATIONAL Christian Concern has learned that radical Muslims running a tea stall beat a Christian man to death on Saturday 9 May for using a cup designated for Muslims. The young man, Ishtiaq Masih, had ordered tea at a roadside stall in Macharkay village outside of Punjab, Pakistan, after his bus stopped to allow passengers to relieve themselves. When Masih went to pay for his tea, the owner noticed that he was wearing a necklace with a cross and grabbed him, calling for his employees to bring anything available to beat him for violating a sign posted on the stall, warning non-Muslims to declare their religion before

being served. Masih had not noticed the warning sign before ordering his tea. The owner and 14 of his employees beat him with stones, iron rods and clubs, then stabbed him multiple times with kitchen knives as he pleaded for mercy. The other bus passengers and some passersby finally intervened and took Masih to the Rural Health Centre in the village, where he died of his injuries. Masih's family immediately reported the crime to the police, but so far no action has been taken in the case.

– International Christian Concern

Rock Church of Zhengzhou, Henan Banned; Seven Christians Still Detained ON 14 June, Chinese government officials raided Rock (Panshi) House Church in Zhengzhou city, Henan province, and arrested six believers, including Pastor Dou Shaowen, and his wife Feng Lu. The six arrested were later sentenced to 15 days of administrative detention with a fine.

GOOD NEWS FROM ABROAD ...

SCOTLAND'S HIGHLANDS REACHED THROUGH EVANGELIST LUIS PALAU'S TWO-WEEK CAMPAIGN

THE Highland Festival with Luis Palau culminated in the city of Inverness, Scotland, on Saturday, 20 June after two weeks of more than 60 outreach events in more than a dozen towns throughout Scotland's Highlands.

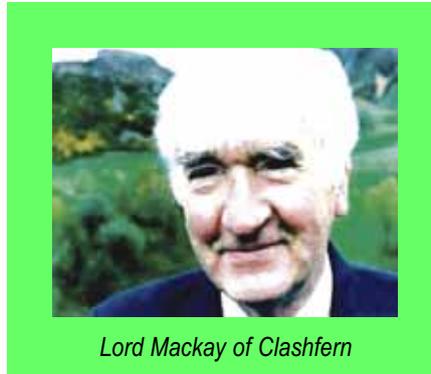
Local pastors praised the Palau outreach for the unity it created among participating churches and for saturating the Highlands of Scotland with the Gospel message. Most of the sparsely populated towns impacted by the campaign have not witnessed such a large scale effort since Palau's previous Scottish campaigns that ran from 1979-1981.

'You can definitely sense the secularization and lack of church attendance,' said the Argentine-born evangelist, the grandson of Scotsman Robert Balfour. 'I've asked young people "do you go to church?" and they look at me like I'm from another planet.'

But just as he noted 30 years ago, Palau said: 'Scotland is once again dry tinder, ready to catch fire for the Lord.'

The Highland Festival involved more than 100 churches – more than half the region's total church population – representing nearly every denomination.

Together with Luis Palau, his son An-



Lord Mackay of Clashfern

drew and a team of partner evangelists, these churches made a profound impact through a combination of preaching, music, skateboarding, sports, and good, old-fashioned fun. An estimated 5% of attendees made a commitment to Jesus Christ.

'What a great blessing we have seen through Highland Festival with Luis Palau,' said Lord Mackay of Clashfern, honorary chairman of the campaign and, until recently, the third most powerful person in the United Kingdom's government as Lord Chancellor. 'Never in recent history has there been such a widespread evangelistic effort that touched so many people of all ages in so many locations throughout the Highlands.'

at the personal castle of well-known Christian businesswoman Anne Gloag, a business leaders' luncheon, and two evenings of traditional music and preaching at an indoor theatre.

By the end of the culminating festival, officials estimated approximately 20,000 people had been reached with the Gospel message, representing 10% of the population of the surrounding area and marking a significant step forward for evangelism in the region.

'The number of people reached is tremendous for Scotland's Highlands,' said Palau, noting that the clear message of God's salvation was broadcast throughout the entire United Kingdom via BBC4 and through press stories. 'I am encouraged! But even more, we are excited for the unity, collaboration, and vision this campaign has given the local churches. Christian leaders want to continue this work.'

Palau's worldwide festivals also include widespread community service initiatives, now known as Season of Service campaigns. In Inverness, thousands of pounds of food were collected through a partnership with Blythwood Care. 'It is obvious that the recession and resulting unemployment is hitting parts of the Highlands very hard,' said Blythwood chief executive James Campbell. 'The food bank will tide many hundreds of adults and children over, when otherwise they would face the prospect of real deprivation.'

'We are praising God through this entire campaign,' said Palau. 'We give thanks to our prayer partners who interceded on behalf of the people of the Highlands and gave to make it all possible. We continue praying that this is just the beginning of what God plans to do in this area.'

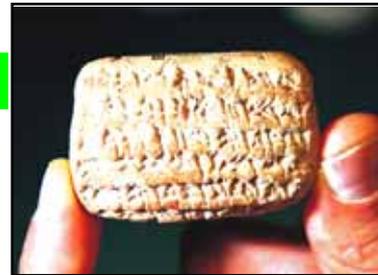
– Dan Wooding, Founder, ASSIST



Leading up to the final event, an outdoor festival in Inverness on 19,20 June, were eight mini-festivals in nearby towns, more than 40 outreaches at schools and prisons, a tea for women held

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Has The Site Of Ancient Sodom Been Found?



Genesis describes the region of Kikkar as the disc of Jordan. 'When the Bible uses the description of Kikkar it is only referring to the region of the Jordan Valley east of Jericho and north of

pottery, architecture (it was a fortified city), and the chronological consistency of the region to the Biblical text, it is a match made in heaven, so to speak.'

'They've Just Got To Keep On Digging!' Steve Collins stated that the 'Tall el-Hammam site has 25 geographical indicators that align it with the description in Genesis. Compare this with something well known – like Jerusalem – that has only 16. Other sites only have five or six. So this site has many times more indicators than any other Old Testament site. That is truly amazing.

Steve Collins is a humble man and he states: 'It is a wonderful time to be in archaeology! I am both humbled and excited to be a part of something as significant as this. What we discovered in the literature seemed to coincide with our findings; Sodom was not in the south, it was north east of the Dead Sea.'

However, archaeologists at times do make mistakes, and either Bryant or Steve is wrong in this commitment. I wish we could side with one or the other, but this is another one of several sites thought to be Biblical (not just Sodom) where we can only look at the evidence and realise that the jury is still out. Years ago in the 1960's when I was relatively new to 'hands-on' archaeology in Israel, I asked a leading scholar for his opinion about the location of Ai, for more than one site was being suggested.

He made the point: 'They've just got to keep digging!' Eventually the Bible is right any way, and this may be just another of those cases where 'they've just got to keep digging.'

BARBARA and I have had the privilege of working alongside a number of leading archaeologists including Dr Steven Collins who is also the Provost (and Professor) of Trinity College in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The other archaeologist we have in mind is Dr Bryant Wood who continues to lead excavations at Tell Maqatir searching for what he believes to be the site of Ai, the city that is well-known from the Book of Joshua. In fact, the most recent statement is that further finds last May have made it even clearer that Tel Maqatir is indeed ancient Ai – and we agree with that.

But here's the problem. We have tremendous respect for both of these men, sharing our Christian faith and our commitment to the Bible. Dr Bryant Wood has believed for years that Bab-edh-Dra is in fact ancient Sodom, for quite a lot of pointers from excavations seemingly have pointed to this as the right site.

Bab-edh-Dra Versus Tall El-Hammam
However now Dr Steve Collins has shown very convincing evidence to indicate that another site north of Bab-edh-Dra is the real site. One of our highly qualified friends in Australia wrote to us saying how excited we must be to see this evidence, and possibly he is correct. We especially liked the way Steve used the clues given in the Bible to argue that this new site really is ancient Sodom.

In a recent report, Steve reports about the site of Bab-edh-Dra: 'This cannot be the place. There are too many differences of description.' Steve claims that the text in

the Dead Sea. This region is the breadbasket of the area, full of fresh water and farmland.'

Steve claims that the traditional Southern Theory of the site of Sodom does not have the geographical parallels described in the text. Namely:

1. One can see the whole area from the hills above Jericho (Bethel/Ai).
2. It must be a well-watered place (described 'like Egypt').
3. It had a river running through it (the Jordan).
4. It must follow the travel route of Lot who went to the other side of the Jordan, eastward away from Jericho.'

Though the traditional site (Bab-edh-Dra [CAW]) does not have any of these geographical indicators, the site in Jordan, Tall el-Hammam, does. The man presenting this report is Brian Nixon of ASSIST News Service, who lives in Albuquerque where Dr Collins is involved with his college work. He says that with the current dig that is well under way, the findings have been staggering.

He reports Dr Collins as stating: 'Not only do we have the right place geographically speaking, but it falls within the right time frame (the Bronze Age)) and it was destroyed during the time of Abraham (the Middle Bronze Age). When you add in the



Short Term Missionaries, Sewing Machines And Showers Of Blessing Minister The Love Of Christ To Young Lives In Thailand



WHAT an exciting, rewarding and wonderful volunteer experience it has been setting up a vocational training centre at Agape Home in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

The Founder and Director, Avis Rideout, set up the children's home 13 years ago after finding a sick child in a Government orphanage. Avis took the child to her home and applied to adopt her. Today Nikki is a healthy teenager, full of life and energy.

Since then, 76 children have come to this home from all over Thailand. Some have been orphaned because their parents have passed away from AIDS-related illnesses and others were abandoned, perhaps neglected as babies. Most of the children have the HIV/AIDS virus. Every child has their own story, all very heart breaking to hear.

One child was left years ago at the children's home by her Dad who said: 'I will come back for you' – but Dad never has. She keeps asking: 'When is Dad coming for me?' One boy, due to his virus, has had his funeral planned three times. He is now at his healthiest, due to the love, medical care and a Christian family environment that makes a difference to each and every child in this home.

Mrs Robyn Johnson from Wollongong and I went on this self-funded short term venture to set up a sewing centre for the teenagers. This training will lead these children to learn vocational skills for future use.

On the day after our arrival, the teenagers were excited and others were nervous and/or scared. But even the boys were keen to use a foot peddle on the electric sewing machines.

We're thankful to Brother Commercial Thailand for their donation of two sewing machines to Agape. The children and nannies will all have many years of use on these electric machines.

The teenage girls cut and machined their very own shoulder bags. One girl said that she will take her Bible to church in her very own bag and she did. Another girl used her initiative and sewed pin

cushions. One teenager cut squares and created a patch-work bag. One student found large scraps of material and draped them around herself, the beginning of her creative skills. Within a week, 300 shoulder bags had been cut, machine sewed and finished.

Another day, two of the teenagers had a morning dental appointment and did not want to return to school. They wanted to go to the sewing centre to learn more sewing. After school, the teenagers were eager to come to the centre to work more. Some returned after dinner.

One teenage boy, who has been in the home for nine years, excelled in practical work, ironing the material and skilfully cutting out material. His keenness and genuine interest showed.

To see this Christian faith funded children's home was a delight. The children give thanks to God for their food, the kinder children take turns to pray, all the children attend church on Sunday as a big family.

To see Ma Avis walk past a child and pat them on the head, tickle them, listen to their school news, just as any caring, loving Mum does, was a delight. What an inspiration she is – so active and energetic, a very special lady and role model Christian Mum to each and every child.

Ma Avis drives two truck loads of children to the local public school each morning then returns each afternoon to collect them

from school. When any child is admitted to hospital, Avis goes with the nanny, who stays with the child for the duration of the time in hospital. Ma Avis treats each child as her own, with loving devotion.

Sponsorships for each child are still needed. At present only 57% of the children are sponsored. Love gifts have helped construct the buildings of this home. More funding is required for the ongoing costs. Agape re-ceived an award for the most outstanding non-Government organisation from the Thailand Government. Agape is a well known example for other orphanages, and other care takers come and learn from Agape.

I have been blessed on this mission trip. Avis said to me: 'Judith, you are a breath of fresh air – you have the gift of encouragement'.

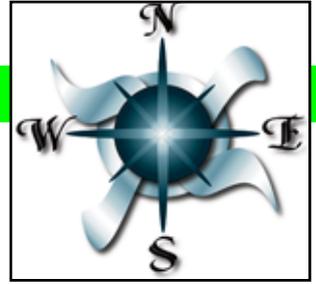
This volunteering experience was a



humbling, fulfilling and worthwhile time. As volunteering is such a rewarding experience, perhaps this will 'sew' a seed just for you. Volunteers from countries around the world have returned and stayed. The office staff include three lovely, happy volunteer ladies from Australia who are supported by churches and friends. For volunteering or to find out more about the Agape Home visit www.nikkisplace.org

Outside was tropical heavy rain, inside this home is the love that makes a difference in the lives of these precious children who are accepted, loved and valued unconditionally.

– Mrs Judith Bond



Bible Translation Needs 25,000 Workers

WITH joblessness becoming a greater and greater issue in today's world, new government programs have been created for job re-training. In Europe, the EU has suggested offering five million apprenticeships for jobless youth.

Wycliffe Bible Translators has their own re-training program – or rather, a second-career option.

A person's economic worries may signal a great time to consider full-time mission work. For families concerned about the bills that come between now and when they begin serving, Wycliffe is in the process of producing a financial support system.

Wycliffe is looking for people of all skill sets. 'Of course, a large number will go into translation. But for every translator team we send out we need three support personnel: people who are pilots, IT personnel, teach-

ers that will teach missionary children, managers that will help us in our administrative work, government relations officers, and a whole host of other areas,' said Chuck Michaels of Wycliffe Bible Translators.

While some training is provided, many people come with skills already in place. Vision 2025 is Wycliffe's goal to have started translation in every language by the year 2025. In order to accomplish this, they have estimated that they need 25,000 more workers in the next ten years.

The application process takes a few months. 'We look for people who are healthy in the areas of finances; so how they handle finances is important. We like to have people who have had some experience with cross-cultural work – either living in diverse communities or workplaces or have worked overseas. And then, we need

people who are really living out

the life that they profess,' Michaels said.

Bible translation has changed quite drastically since the days of jungle huts and writing everything out by hand.

Michaels explains: 'The computer will go a long way towards helping spit out some early first drafts of the translation.

'Previously, it took years and years to do translation, but with new computer technology, you can cut that sometimes in half or a third.'

Michaels said the first step in working with Wycliffe is prayer. Be in prayer about the possibility, and then contact your home church for spiritual guidance and support. From there, you can learn more about starting the application process.

Words Of Hope Expands Local Broadcasts In Sudan As Listenership Increases

WORDS of Hope Radio Ministry is preparing to expand its radio broadcasts in Sudan, said Lee DeYoung, Words of Hope's vice president for broadcasting. Spirit FM, a Words of Hope station, has been broadcasting from Yei, Southern Sudan, since September 2008, covering an area near the Uganda border. Spirit FM broadcasts in five languages and hopes to expand its programming to other local FM stations.

'We are exploring relationships with other FM stations,' said DeYoung. 'We want to begin, as we have already done in other places ... to use a greater amount of local FM broadcasting in addition to, and perhaps eventually in place of, shortwave.'

The opportunities could extend the success that Words of Hope has already enjoyed in the region. The organization's shortwave gospel broadcasts in the Dinka and Nuer languages are already among the most listened-to radio programs for these groups.

– Mission Network News

Upcoming Event:

COMING SOON: Two Days of Forge Missional Training Electives.

Sign up now: 10,11 July 2009 at Northern Community Centre, Preston, Vic for an opportunity to be part of these outstanding opportunities and engage with Alan and

Deb Hirsch, Mic and Ruby Duncan as they share from their journeys in mission.

Micah Calls For An Offering Of Letters

MICAH Challenge is calling Christians all over Australia to pick up their pens to fight poverty. The *Offering of Letters* campaign asks churches and other Christian groups to prayerfully write a letter to the Prime Minister calling for generosity and justice for 1.2 billion people who live in extreme poverty. The letters will be delivered to Mr Rudd during the Micah Challenge national gathering, *Voices for Justice*, in September.

Last year, more than 5,000 letters were delivered to Parliament House, sending our government a clear message that Christians in Australia care about justice. Micah Challenge recently received a response from the office of Mr Rudd, thanking letter writers for 'bringing this matter to the Prime Minister's attention.'

As our world groans under the weight of a financial crisis, we must remember that it is the poorest of the poor who will be most impacted. The World Bank estimates that more than 300,000 more children will die each year from poverty-related causes if the global economic crisis continues.

The Prime Minister's office acknowledges this, stating that 'the global economic crisis is making progress towards the Millennium Development Goals more diffi-

cult. The impact of the crisis is especially severe in developing countries, and therefore the role of donor nations in protecting the poorest and most vulnerable is critical.' Now is the time for Christians to act.

This year, Micah Challenge is again encouraging Christians to write to Mr Rudd urging him to turn his words of support for the MDGs into tangible action. It will take about 15 minutes to construct a handwritten letter asking our government to remember Australia's commitment to the global poor.

'We are aiming to present more than 10,000 letters this year', said Micah Challenge National Co-ordinator, John Beckett. 'With an election pending in the next 12 months, this is our chance to let our politicians know that we want them to take issues of global poverty seriously.'

The *Offering of Letters* kits for organisers and participants can be downloaded now at www.micahchallenge.org.au/offering-of-letters. The kits include all the information you need to write to the Prime Minister, including a sample letter. You can also download a PowerPoint presentation and other resources that can be utilised to explain the campaign.

'Just as we offer our money and our time to God, we can also add our voices as part of a whole life offered in worship,' said Mr Beckett. 'This is a tangible opportunity for all Christians in Australia to "do justice and love kindness".'

hotshots



There are 8 Hotshots books to help children read the Bible. Get them from Christian bookshops or by phoning Scripture Union Mail Order on ...
1800 808 639

How can Jesus hear everyone pray at the same time?



The Hotshots are playing a great new game Kate taught them. You have to be quick, and it takes a lot of teamwork!

Alana stood up to join in, but it was no use. 'I want to join in, but I just feel too worried about Jessica,' she told Suzy. 'She's still sick and she said some of the tests at the hospital were horrible.'

The others stopped their game and gathered round.

Alana was pleased everyone wanted to pray but she wondered how God could hear everyone all at the same time.

So Kate read to the Hotshots from the Old Testament part of the Bible.

Jeremiah 23:23-24

[God said]
²³I am everywhere – both near and far, in heaven and on earth.
²⁴There are no secret places where you can hide from me.

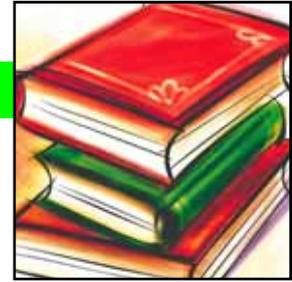
Why don't we all pray for Alana and Jessica now?



This is another hard-to-understand thing! **Because God is so big and powerful, he can hear us all.** And he loves to listen when we talk to him about how we're feeling and what's going on in our lives.

Prayer:
Dear God, thank you that you hear us and you love to listen to our prayers.

BOOKS WORTH READING



War Child – A Boy Soldier's Story, Emmanuel Jal With Megan Lloyd Davies, Abacus, 2009

EMMANUEL Jal is an acclaimed hip hop artist spreading messages of peace and reconciliation with his unique style of gospel rap. The repercussions of his dark and tragic past are what helped Emmanuel become what he is today. In *War Child* he recounts where for much of his childhood, his best friend was his AK47 rifle.

Born in southern Sudan, he lived peacefully with his father, a clandestine official in the SPLA (Sudanese People's Liberation Army) and his mother, who he adored and was loved by. By the time he was seven years old, a bloody civil war ravaged his country. The northern, Muslim/Arabs fighting the southern, non-Muslim/non-Arabs.

When the war reaches his village, his only option is to run with his family. With the constant threat and danger from the Arab militia, they continue to run from village to village looking for relatives, but the war follows them.

Soon, his father leads an SPLA movement to send hundreds of boys to Ethiopia telling them that the boys can find education, food, and no war. The trek to Ethiopia ends up unsuccessfully when their transport is damaged. But even after the disastrous boat voyage Emmanuel, as a Lost Boy, is determined to reach Ethiopia.



After further, long travels he reaches Ethiopia where he discovers that Ethiopia would be a place where they don't learn their ABC's, but become cannon fodder for the SPLA. Here they are taught the ways of war and they become child soldiers.

The war rages on and Emmanuel is caught in the midst of it. He experiences shootings, bombings, beatings, villages being burned to the ground, hunger, his sisters and aunt being raped, exhaustion,

death everywhere, blood, terror and constant fear.

Emmanuel's childhood was devastated. He was a Lost Boy of Sudan, a War Child.

This biography grips the reader on every page. The sheer desolation of Emmanuel Jal's childhood impacts our appreciation of how blessed by God we are to be safe and secure. The fact that Emmanuel wasn't a war veteran, nor a war survivor, but both as a war child is what makes his story so moving. A child so delicate, fragile and innocent being forced into a world of terror, hate and anger is so confrontational that you are heartbroken for Emmanuel for all that he endured.

This is a very touching biography that I recommend for early teens and up. This memoir is a must read.

– Haddon Chang

Divorce and Remarriage, Dr Desmond O. Gaffney, Marton Publishers, 2008.

THE Foreword to this book is by Dr Augusto Zimmermann who tells us that he found this book to be insightful as it seeks to be faithful to the Scriptures. Those Scriptures give an absolute moral code that allows us all to distinguish matters of right and wrong.

He states that: 'The institution of marriage should be defended against unscriptural, radical feminists and any other anti-family ideologues, for the institution of marriage must be seen as God-given and God-regulated, and the strongest foundation for a solid marriage is obedience to the Word of God.' He explains that 'the Matthew fornication-exception clause' ('save for fornication') has been wrongly changed – even by evangelical consensus – to permit divorce and remarriage when adultery is involved.'

Dr Gaffney gives many examples from history as to the meaning and applications put forward by various Councils of the Christian church. He touches on the consensus hypothesis – which supposedly permits divorce and remarriage for the innocent party for the sin of adultery by the spouse. He reminds us of another hypothesis known as the Pauline privilege, which also is wrongly formulated in evangelical Christian circles. That hypothesis wrongly permits

divorce and remarriage for the innocent party for desertion – but this is subject to continuing debate and controversy.

Dr Gaffney states that the outcome of these marital concessions is the tragic dissolution of families, endemic social disorder and moral decay, with children often affected with physical, mental and spiritual debilities. He brings the issue right up to date by stating that the Church is overwhelmed by complex marital problems. Unscriptural philosophy and conflicting views are emerging in the Western Church in regard to marriage, divorce and remarriage. He argues that it is tragic that scant respect is given to our Lord's prohibition of divorce and remarriage, as taught in the Scriptures.

'Seemingly governments are intent on phasing out the Scriptural institution of marriage and family which is the foundation of the Australian Constitution,' he writes. 'They are enacting legislation endorsing sexual sin with its consequent family disorder ... In the Australian political scene, anti-family lobby groups are pressing for the liberalisation and weakening of Bible-based laws governing marriage, divorce, abortion, homosexuality, same-sex marriage and the like. Sexually transmitted infections are increasing exponentially. Governments, and even some Christians, are promoting un-

scriptural sexual relationships that cause these kinds of health disorders.'

Dr Gaffney's book is a straight out explanation of the Bible's teaching about two major approaches to the very important area of divorce and remarriage.

We mention also that Dr Gaffney talks about the need for teaching for those who are in unbiblical relationships, counselling to bring about repentance, so they can move on with sin confessed and forgiven. The law of Christ brings liberty!

Some might say that Dr Gaffney's approach is very black and white, and he is inclined to be legalistic. Dr Gaffney would counter that he is teaching the Christian ideal taught in Scripture, which is often very different from what Christians know today.

We would make the point that in our own pastoral experiences we have at times found it necessary to face difficult marital problems with compassion, understanding, and Christian love. God is shown at Luke 15 running to meet the prodigal when he repents and comes home to his father.

While Dr Gaffney's approach to the problem he addresses is straightforward and biblical, we should not forget that the Bible also sets before us Christian principles and Christ-like compassion.

– Clifford and Barbara Wilson

Freedom Of Religion And A Bill Of Rights



THE Bible tells us that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11.14). Therefore, when we hear of moves to press on with legislation in favour of anti-discrimination, freedom of religion, and a bill of rights, we ought to be mindful of what precisely is being suggested. John Henry Newman warned us that 'the world is sweet to the lips, but bitter to the taste. It pleases at first, but not at last. It looks gay on the outside, but evil and misery lie concealed within'. This kind of legislation can appear attractive, but it is fraught with not-so-hidden dangers. What is wrong with this approach?

Moral Relativism Will Entrench Decadence

Christianity teaches us to think in terms of right and wrong, but the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Anti-Discrimination Board, naturally, think in terms of rights. In Christianity it is a sin to bow down to idols, to murder, to commit adultery, to steal, to be covetous or proud, or to break any other commandments. Sin is lawlessness (1 John 3.4). There is a fundamental discrimination between truth and error, right and wrong.

But under the 'rights' approach, divorced from moral absolutes, it becomes a sin to think in terms of right and wrong. In the Christian scheme of things, the magistrate is to punish evildoers and praise those who do what is good (1 Peter 2.14). In a system governed by moral relativism, the law is supposedly morally neutral; the one real wrong left is discrimination. Hence it is supposedly wrong to discriminate against people on grounds of sexual preference. This is a ludicrous and dangerous proposition. So far it has usually been interpreted to mean that one is obliged to pander to homosexuals and transvestites, but logically it means that practices such as necrophilia or pedophilia are above criticism. If these practices can be criticised, then the anti-discrimination approach is self-defeating.

The alarming thing is that those with

legal authority apparently wish to impose their definition of sin upon everybody else. In 2004 Britain's Royal Navy allowed the worship of the devil on its ships. That is where this approach leads.

Legislation Will Be Decided By Unelected And Immovable Judges

One major problem is that rights and freedoms require definition, and hence there will be more dependence on lawyers rather than on law. Dr Samuel Johnson wisely pointed out:

*How small, of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure!*

The 1936 Soviet Constitution was perhaps the 20th Century's most liberal sounding constitution, but it was promulgated during the heyday of the brutal dictator Josef Stalin. While Stalin murdered his friends and his enemies in their millions, Soviet citizens were guaranteed all kinds of rights and freedoms. Small wonder that the ancient historian Tacitus made the pithy comment that 'The more corrupt the state, the more numerous the laws.'

In 2001 the Victorian Labor Government passed the Racial and Religious Tolerance Act. This was supposedly designed to stamp out religious vilification. Instead, it led to a long, drawn-out and expensive case against two Christian pastors, Daniel Scot and Danny Nalliah, who had ventured to criticise the Qur'an in the context of a seminar on Christian evangelism. The most cogent criticism of this whole approach has come from a former Labor premier of NSW, Bob Carr, a religious agnostic, who has declared, quite rightly, that 'More judicial review is the last thing Australia needs.' C.S. Lewis saw this decades ago, and commented: 'It may be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies.'

Society Will Become More Litigious, With More Human Rights Abuses

The UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief of 1981 affirms that 'Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.' (Article 1.1). This freedom is not absolute, as it may be proscribed by laws to protect public safety, order, health or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others

(Article 1.3). It goes on to declare: 'No one shall be subject to discrimination by any State, institution, group of persons, or person on grounds of religion or other beliefs.' (Art.2.1) Discrimination between human beings on grounds of religion or beliefs is denounced in the strongest terms as 'an affront to human dignity', 'a violation of ... human rights and fundamental freedoms', and 'an obstacle to friendly and peaceful relations between nations' (Article 3). Hence all states are to take effective measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief (Article 4.1,2).

This may sound all very edifying, noble and self-explanatory, but it is fanciful. There is no clear distinction between Christianity and Satanism, or the Ten Commandments and the practices of suttee (widow burning) or child sacrifice in the Ganges River.

Armed with no clear morality and an agenda that makes rights paramount, it would be quite in order for judges to allow polygamy or homosexual marriage, and to outlaw any body, including a church, which refused to kow-tow to this approach. The discussion paper of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Freedom of Religion and Belief in the 21st Century, released in August 2008, asks: 'How can faith communities be inclusive of people of diverse sexualities?' The question presupposes the conclusion, and it is the wrong one.

Discrimination Is Not Inherently Evil

What is so wrong about a Muslim refusing to employ a woman whom he regards as not adequately covered up so far as her clothing is concerned? Why should a Christian publisher be forced to employ a New Ager? Why should the Protestant Churches' Cricket Competition be dismantled? Such situations may prove to be paradise for lawyers and litigants, but the art of manufacturing grievances is not one to be encouraged. What appears to confer rights - or recognise them - may in fact take them away. As George Orwell put it: 'Freedom is the right to tell people what they do not want to hear.'

The Gift of the Evangelist in the Local Church

THERE is widespread desire to see people come to Christ and see the Kingdom of God expanded. God has provided the gifts and the resources to accomplish the commission Jesus gave to the Church.

have reaped the benefits of their labour.'

How does the evangelistic gift practically function?

Philip is the only person in the New Testament who was specifically named an

function.

Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied. (Acts 21).

In Conclusion:

The Church generally has not embraced the gift of the evangelist as an office for local Church function.

Some evangelists feel orphaned and not embraced by the Church in Australia. Many are opting to go offshore to use their gift where it is needed and wanted.

It is time for the Church to affirm the office of the gift of evangelism according to the Ephesians 4 model. It is time for ways to be found for the evangelist to practically function in the local church as well as for itinerant opportunities.

It is time to provide resources and mentors to equip and train young evangelists.

It is time for theological training institutions to give serious thought to providing specialist help and training for the emerging young evangelists.

It is time for denominational leaders to give serious attention to affirming and setting apart evangelists to the work of ministry.

It is time for local churches to put on staff those who are called and gifted evangelists.

It has been encouraging to witness the response to Focus on RED (Renewal, Evangelism and Discipleship) from local church pastors and leaders. The strategy is proving to be a blessing to local churches in stirring up the gift of the evangelist and helping to equip God's people to share the Gospel of Christ.

Jesus said to His disciples: 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.'

Is there someone who you could identify as a person who is a potential evangelist or harvester? Could you pray for them?

– Rev Graham Sercombe,
Southern Cross Ministries,

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Phone: 07 3390 6063; 0412 060 757.

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In Ephesians 4, the apostle Paul outlines the balance and function of the equipping gifts God gave to the Church to help accomplish the task of mission.

'It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.'

For a healthy growing Church all these gifts need to be affirmed. Those whom God has appointed to function in their equipping gift need to be set apart and put to good use. God never intended that the solo pastor be expected to do all the work of equipping and ministry.

The diagram above gives the biblical balance for the function of the five equipping ministry gifts God has given to the Church.

The purpose of the gift of the evangelist is to help equip the saints for the work of evangelism. It is the gift of the evangelist that stirs up the gift of the evangelist in the Church and equips God's people to sow and to reap. That is its primary function.

What Jesus said in John chapter 4, 'One sows and another reaps,' is true. 'I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you

'evangelist' ('We reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven.' – Acts 21.8,9) so therefore, his example provides a model to follow. Acts 8 describes what Philip did!

Six Key Principles From Philip's Practical Example:

1. Evangelists always talk about Jesus.

Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there. Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

2. Evangelists are often used by God to perform miracles.

When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said.

3. Evangelists work in partnership with the other equipping leaders.

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them.

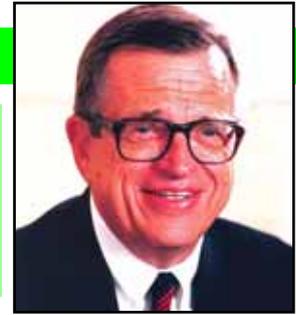
4. Evangelists are often specifically directed and led to talk to individuals about Jesus.

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip: 'Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza'... The Spirit told Philip: 'Go to that chariot and stay near it.'

5. Evangelists are often itinerant.

Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and travelled about, preaching the Gospel in all the towns, until he reached Caesarea.

6. Evangelists need a home base Church to



Insight into Reality – Chesterton's Orthodoxy

GO into any bookstore and you are sure to find books that insist that 'religion poisons everything,' that faith is a 'failed hypothesis,' and that God is a 'delusion.' Readers are promised tools that will enable them to break the spell of religion, in particular Christianity.

What has been called the 'new atheism' has become an important publishing niche. These books sold more than a million copies in a single year, making their authors quite rich. But there is nothing really new here.

The only thing that has changed from a century or so ago is the calibre of the atheist. In G.K. Chesterton's time, the atheists included the likes of George Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells, and Clarence Darrow – men whose way with words matched their way with an argument.

In books like *Heretics*, and especially *Orthodoxy*, Chesterton more than held his own. He achieved his goal of demonstrating that 'the central Christian theology (sufficiently summarized in the Apostles' Creed) is the best root of energy and sound ethics.'

Needless to say, this is a book you ought to read. But it helps to have a guide

in your exploration of Chesterton's ideas – and I can't think of a better one than my friend Ken Boa.

Boa is correct when he describes Chesterton as an 'extraordinary man who defended ordinary things.' Far from being a dry tome filled with lofty ideas, *Orthodoxy* is as practical and down to earth as it gets.

That's because, Boa observes, Chesterton addresses the one subject most writers and thinkers avoid: that is, who God is. Because once you get your thinking straight about God, that illuminates our thinking about the rest of life.

That's why in Chesterton's famous mystery novels, Father Brown always could solve the mystery. He understood God and the way God created us.

By addressing what others have avoided, Boa tells us, Chesterton acquired the 'correct insights into reality' that made him a 'complete thinker' whose works almost constitute a complete education in themselves.

As Ken points out, Chesterton anticipated the bad ideas and false worldviews that eventually would come to hold our culture in their thrall – relativism and what he called the 'insane simplicity' of materialism.

He foresaw the weakening of the family, and that this weakening would pave the way for an ever-growing role for the state. He warned that the growing acceptance of birth control would inevitably lead to promiscuity and the widespread practice of abortion. He was right on both counts.

The alternative to all of this is Christianity, which Chesterton regarded as the religion most in tune with 'common sense.' It is the 'best root' of 'energy and sound ethics' because it sees the world and the people in it as they really are.

It was realism that was behind one of Chesterton's most famous writings. When the *Times* of London invited leading intellectuals to write about what was wrong with the world, Chesterton's contribution was a short letter that simply read:

'Dear Sirs: I am.
Sincerely,
G.K. Chesterton.'

It's difficult to imagine a more succinct articulation of the Christian worldview. Which is why *Orthodoxy* is one of the ten best books I've ever read and ought to be on your reading list – and why Ken Boa should be your guide.

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Christian Lobby Welcomes Moves To Abolish Refugee Detention Debts

THE Australian Christian Lobby has welcomed the passage of legislation through the House of Representatives to abolish charges levied on asylum seekers held in detention, saying this is a compassionate move which will remove a significant burden from refugees.

ACL Managing Director Jim Wallace said that the 17-year-old policy of charging refugees for the cost of their own detention has placed a heavy financial burden on former detainees already facing the challenges of building a new life in Australia.

'The Christian faith encourages its followers to care for the poor and needy, which includes hospitality for strangers and justice for the oppressed,' Mr Wallace said.

'Many Christians are rightly concerned that Australia should welcome and care for refugees, providing them with just and compassionate treatment to help them find their place in our community.

'To post an indiscriminate charge on refugees held in detention is not supportable. Most Australians wouldn't even have realised that this has been happening.'

Mr Wallace said the policy has also been shown to be unnecessary for economic reasons, with most of the detention debts accumulated in the past having to be written off because it has proved uneconomical to collect them.

'It is important that Australia does what it can to deter people smugglers, but this policy has been unnecessarily harsh and no doubt of little useful effect.

'I hope that the Senate will quickly pass the Government's bill to abolish detention debt when it sits again in August,' he said.

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Rose, with her three brothers, grew up on a farm at Boweya near Wangaratta, Vic. She attended Melbourne Bible Institute (now BCV) and worked in a children's home for several years before needing to come home and care for her parents. Rose's life is significant for her caring ministry and her prayers for her family and for mission work.

She was greatly loved by family and many friends and will be sorely missed.

Rose is survived by one brother Don and his wife Joan, by two sisters in law, Una and Ethel, and by many nieces and nephews.

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'WITH CHRIST'

DOCTOR Sheela Gupta, author of *A Doctor's Search for Peace* went peacefully to her Eternal Home on 10 June 2009. Her body was laid to rest at the Pandita Ramabai Mukti Mission Cemetery on 13 June. Many Mukti married girls, past staff and contacts from her Bible teaching ministry, attended the service. During the funeral service a book on her life and ministry, titled *I Found Perfect Peace* was launched. The book can be ordered through the Mukti Australia office: admin@mukti.org.au; phone: 03 9890 0211.

Born in North India on 1 July 1923, Dr Sheela experienced disappointment and disillusionment at the age of 10 when her mother died. The gods she worshipped did not satisfy her heart's longings.

While on the staff of the Christian Medical College, Vellore (1954-57), Sheela wholly surrendered her life to the Lord Jesus Christ. When Brother Bakht Singh had a campaign in Vellore in April 1955, she was baptised. Very soon she made her hospital quarters available for a Bible study group. On one occasion Miss Janet Callan from Mukti Mission shared the Word and the need of a resident doctor in the Mukti Hospital.

In 1957 Dr Gupta became the first resident doctor to serve in Mukti. Her friend Miss Adrienne Mocatta, an Australian physiotherapist, joined Mukti staff at the same time.

Ever hungry for the Word of God, Sheela was granted leave to study at Moody Bible Institute in 1962. Doctor Gupta was increasingly given leave from the Medical Department of Mukti to accept invitations for Bible teaching in India and overseas.

In 1978 she came to Australia as guest speaker for Christian Women's Conventions International.

Officially retiring from the hospital about 1990, she continued to live in Mukti and travel to women's meetings and conventions.

In 1993 she was invited to New Caledonia (French Polynesia) and returned to India via Australia to thank prayer partners in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth; testifying that their support over 35 years had enriched her life and ministry.

She loved to portray the Lord Jesus Christ as the Great Physician, and humbly committed herself to Him daily, praying that others would see only the Lord Jesus in her life.

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Ralph Winter – Influential Missiologist Leaves Huge Legacy In Missions

WHILE family, friends and colleagues remembered evangelist Ralph Winter at his memorial service on 28 June, they also reflected upon the legacy he has left.

Winter, whose vision was to share the Gospel with the thousands of unreached people groups in the world, died on 20 May at the age of 84.

He first served as a missionary in 1956 in Guatemala, where he and his wife ministered to the native Mayan people for ten years. After this, he moved back to his hometown of Pasadena, California to work as a Professor of Missions at Fuller Theological Seminary.

In 1974 he gained global renown when he presented 'innovative analysis and advocacy that have redirected evangelical mission energies ever since,' according to the US Centre for World Mission, at the International Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne, Switzerland.

In his lifetime, he helped start Theological Education by Extension, founded the William Carey Library, co-founded the American Society of Missiology, helped start Advancing Churches in Mission Commit-



ment, launched the Summer Institute of International Studies, founded the US Centre for World Mission, and started the William Carey International University.

George Verwer with Operation Mobilization and a peer of Winter said his vision to reach people groups untouched by the Gospel and to establish a church within those groups spread long before Winter died.

'He has an entire younger generation of people that he's mentored. That younger generation is already mentoring another generation under them. So the mentoring, the passing down of this vision, has already taken place,' Verwer said. His death, Verwer believes, has simply propelled his vision for-

ward and has given the people under him a great sense of responsibility.

'Though many churches and missions groups might not have ever heard Winter's name', Verwer said, 'their mission policy, their mission thinking in their denomination, and their church is probably influenced somewhere, somehow by Ralph Winter. He was known as a person with one arrow – the unreached peoples of the world, but what an influence he was upon us to sharpen our strategy.'

John Piper, author, founder of Desiring God Ministries, and pastor of preaching at Bethlehem Baptist Church, shared similar thoughts.

'Ralph Winter was probably the most creative thinker I have ever known. On any topic you brought up, he would come at it in a way you never dreamed of. This meant that stalemates often became fresh starting points,' Piper said.

A colleague of his at Fuller Seminary, C. Peter Wagner, said: 'History will record Ralph Winter as one of the half-dozen men who did most to affect world evangelism in the 20th Century.'

Good News From The Fellowship Of Congregational Churches

On 7 June at the Waterloo Chinese Congregational Church, NSW, Rev Graeme Lee was ordained with much celebration. He and his wife Eileen and family have been serving in the church for several years and there was much excitement as Rev Fred Nile, President of the FCC, conducted the ordination service.

On 21 June the induction of Pastor Peter Atkins took place at Hunters Hill Community Church where a challenging message was brought by his father, Rev Peter Atkins of Tasmania.

The FCC also reminds readers of the ReachOut Missions Conference at Katoomba Christian Convention Centre from 14-16 August, when the speakers will be Joseph D'Souza, John Fain and Andrew Sloan. Registration forms are available from www.reachoutmissions.com.au or by phoning 02 9697 0313.



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Church Leaders Fired Up At Caleb Leadership Training Course

ON 23 February a group of 24 pastors, missionaries and lay leaders met at New Hope Baptist Church, Blackburn North, for the first week of the Caleb Institute and some of them have since admitted to being nervous and even apprehensive about what they might experience.

Fast forward to 1 June when the same group met for the third five day block of training at Adanac Christian Camp in its beautiful and tranquil location at Yarra Junction and see the difference in their faces, the excitement and enthusiasm.

Mark Young the CEO of Caleb observed that 'as participants have gained in the key skill areas of ministry especially in relationship building, communication and management the group dynamic changes dramatically'. The following are typical of some of their comments after graduation:

Lou Di Lorenzo (Families and Young Adults Pastor) 'It was great, very practical so I can immediately apply it where the ministry hits the road. It gives me a good structure to hang onto while putting the other facets of what I know and do on it.'

Gwyn Milne (Associate pastor for pastoral care and small groups.) 'Caleb training gave me a framework which affirmed many of my hunches about successful ministry. I did consider perhaps I was getting too old to benefit from the course but I



(Left to right) Sherri Gray, Nicole Watson and Gwyn Milne

was deeply encouraged to be learning with people of all ages, from first year out of school to people who have been in various ministries for many successful years.'

Daryl Murdoch (Associate education director) 'I was looking for a leadership program that was inclusive of Christian principles and values. I was not disappointed, and will certainly be encouraging prospective leaders in our schools to participate in Caleb training. The course

proved to be a fantastic time of personal challenge and reflection. I will be using many aspects of the Caleb course in my role both at a personal level and at a corporate level. At a personal level I am already utilizing the communication, public speaking and workshop training skills to great effect. The Caleb instructors are very professional and supportive. Their modelling and enthusiasm for Christ is contagious. The course also provides opportunity to network with peers who are committed to Christ and have a passion for serving Him. Further, the course challenges each individual to consider how they may be more effective for Christ by encouraging them to develop a personal mission statement and a long term plan of action for using their skills and talents in His service.'

For further information on Caleb Leadership Ministries and their courses and dates for the 2010 Caleb Institute please check out the website: www.caleb.org.au or email caleb@caleb.org.au or phone 1300 767 444.



Lou Di Lorenzo and Leilani Wallace

Top Bands Rock Out On GOD TV For Clean Water

Israel Houghton, Leeland, Vicky Beeching, Press Play, The Afters and Live Out Loud to appear direct from the USA at Angel Mission Benefit Concert on Saturday 4 July at 19.30 (EST) on the GOD Channel Australasia

GOD TV will be screening its first Angel Mission Benefit Concert in the first weekend of July as the network joins forces with one of the USA's largest Independence Day celebrations, 'I Love America', to present six leading Christian bands rocking out for a cause – that of helping to alleviate poverty by providing clean water in Africa.

The 'I Love America' Celebration has grown from a local church gathering in 1997 to a regional event that attracts crowds of over 100,000 people, who gather annually in Springfield, Missouri to honour the founding of the USA and celebrate God's faithfulness to America. Organised by James River Assembly, it offers an all-day line-up including an evening celebration, which will once again be broadcast LIVE on GOD TV – this year in the form of the LIVE Angel Mission Benefit Concert.

Hosted by GOD TV / Angel Mission co-founder Rory Alec and Angel Mission president John Bongiorno, viewers will be encouraged to support the cause by donating \$5 or more towards Angel Mission's projects in Africa which provide clean water to the poorest of communities by drilling wells and various water purification projects. With the ongoing threat of cholera in Africa, and especially in Zimbabwe, Angel Mission also provides water purification tablets to make infected water safe for drinking. Viewers can participate by logging on to: www.5dollarwater.com.

The Angel Mission Benefit Concert will feature: worship leader Israel Houghton and the band, New Breed from Joel Osteen's Lakeland Church in Houston, Texas; popular Christian youth band Leeland, from Baytown, Texas; and Press Play from the Dream Center in Los Angeles, who are climbing the charts with their album, 'Life is Beautiful'.

Also appearing are Dove Award winning rock band, The Afters, famous for the song 'Never Going Back to OK'; and anointed UK worship leader Vicky Beeching who wrote the beautiful hymn: 'The Wonder of the Cross'. Live Out Loud, aka The Zimbabwe Boys will bring the sounds of Africa to the Angel Mission Benefit Concert.

'It's a huge privilege to be able to combine the most incredible artistic talent with the cause of transforming communities and touching nations, said Rory Alec. 'This concert will help us increase our humanitarian relief and development work in places like Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and other African countries where people desperately need help.'

'Music is such a powerful way to make a deeper connection with God, said GOD TV co-founder and director of television, Wendy Alec. 'so we encourage everyone to participate in this special Angel Mission Benefit Concert.'

One of the USA's premier Independence Day events, 'I Love America,' is an annual celebration sponsored by the mega-church, James River Assembly, which draws more than 120,000 for food, games, an airshow and fireworks. This year, organisers are expanding the focus from reaching the local community to helping needy people in African nations with access to clean, safe drinking water.

Angel Mission is a Christian international development organisation, bringing help and hope to poor communities. Partnering with the Church and other local organisations, it seeks to find sustainable ways to alleviate poverty and share God's love with all people.

The Angel Mission Benefit Concert will be broadcast on the GOD Channel Australia, via the Optus D2 satellite in Australia and New Zealand or online at www.god.tv/stream. or www.5dollarwater.com

For more information visit: www.god.tv or www.angel-mission.org.

About GOD TV: www.god.tv

GOD TV was founded in the UK in 1995 by Christian media pioneers Rory & Wendy Alec and in 14 short years has become a global phenomenon. Today it beams a broad cross section of cutting-edge programs, including many life-changing LIVE broadcasts, into millions of homes worldwide. The only broadcaster to transmit globally from Jerusalem, GOD TV's powerful signal is carried via multiple satellites providing free viewing to almost half a billion people. The 24-hour GOD TV Australasia Channel can be seen throughout this region via the Optus D2 satellite. GOD TV also helps people in charitable ways by supporting feeding schemes, orphanages, water drilling projects and disaster relief funds. funds.ustralia

Fore more details phone: 1300 368 311



Colson: Music In Utero – The Smiling Unborn Child

IN 1984, a video called *The Silent Scream* helped change the way people think about the unborn child. The footage of an actual abortion and the fetus's reaction reminded us that abortion involves the death of a real person.

A recent bit of footage has similar potential, only it couldn't be more different from *The Silent Scream*.

The footage was part of a recent PBS special, *The Music Instinct: Science & Song*. The program was an exploration of, among other things, music's 'biological, emotional and psychological impact on humans.'

Part of this 'exploration' included how music affects babies. If we are, as some scientists believe, 'wired for music,' then babies are ideal test subjects since their reactions are, by definition, instinctual.

Part of this research involved the effect of music on fetuses. While we knew that mothers often sing to their unborn children, we weren't sure that the unborn child could hear them.

We are now. A segment of *The Music Instinct* featured Sheila C. Woodward of the University of Southern California, who has studied fetal responses to music. A camera and a microphone designed for underwater use were inserted into the uterus of a pregnant woman. And then Woodward sang.

The hydrophone picked up two sounds: the 'whooshing' of the uterine artery and the unmistakable sound of a woman singing a lullaby.

Then something extraordinary happened. Upon hearing the woman's voice, the unborn child smiled. It was one of those moments that makes you catch your

breath. The full humanity of the fetus could not have been clearer if he had turned to the camera and winked.

Apparently, fetal responses to music aren't limited to smiling. They have been observed moving their hands in response to music, almost as if conducting. They have been soothed by Vivaldi and disturbed by loud tracks from Beethoven. They have even responded 'rhythmically to rhythms tapped on [their] mother's belly.'

Perhaps understandably, the connection between fetal responses to music and abortion weren't mentioned in the show. What is not so understandable is that the program's website contains no mention of Woodward and her findings. It's as if someone realized the implications and hoped nobody would notice.

I don't think that there's some kind of conspiracy afoot. I just think that the PBS people's worldview won't allow them to make the obvious connection. Abortion on demand is only possible if people minimize the similarities between the fetus and us. That kind of denial is hard work because what we have learned in the past 25 years makes any denial of the fetus' humanity absurd. So instead of looking at the evidence, many people don't see it. Call it 'worldview-induced blindness.'

In other words, they have eyes but cannot see, ears but cannot hear.

Humans, we are told, are a 'musical species' whose brain devotes more to the appreciation of music than even the processing of language. That makes someone who smiles and moves his hands in response to music undeniably human, whether we notice it or not.

To view the complete text of Mark Durie's address at the Family Voice meeting (p.1) go to www.smac.org.au then to Vicar's Blog.

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‘MUST-READ’ BOOKS

One. My last two articles have been reviews of important new books on Islam. Both involve Muslims from the Middle East who later in life came to Christ and now warn of the extreme dangers of global Islam. The first book by Darwish I mentioned in my previous email.

The second book is the incredible story of Daniel Shayesteh, a former Iranian Revolutionary Guard who eventually converted to Christianity. He underwent horrible persecution, imprisonment, torture and attempts on his life. He now lives in Australia and warns the West about the imminent danger we are in. I know Daniel and he is a wonderful, godly, humble and passionate lover of Jesus. You all should read his book. My review of it is here: <http://www.billmuehlenberg.com/2009/06/26/a-review-of-islam-the-house-i-left-behind-by-daniel-shayesteh/>

See his website for contact details: <https://www.exodusfromdarkness.org.au/>

Two. Recall that there is a very real threat to the expression of Christianity in Victoria. The government wants to remove religious exemptions to its equal opportunity laws. A great website with lots of helpful info on what we can do about this is found here:

<http://www.free2believe.org.au/index.php>

Please, every single one of us must put in a submission. See the website for details.

‘The love of Christ not only opened my eyes to the problems of Islam, but to the problems of my heart.’ – Daniel Shayesteh.

Bill Muehlenberg, CultureWatch
<http://www.billmuehlenberg.com>

British Doctors Want Right To Talk About Faith With Patients

DOCTORS in the United Kingdom are demanding that National Health Service staff be given a right to discuss spiritual issues with patients as well as being allowed to offer to pray for them.

Medics will tell the British Medical Association conference that staff should not be disciplined as long as they handle the issue sensitively, according to a story by Nick Triggle, BBC News Health reporter, which states that the doctors say recent cases where health workers had got into trouble were making people fearful.

But atheists said it was wrong to mix religion and health care, Triggle explained. He points out that the General Medical Council code suggests that discussing religion can be part of care provided to patients – as long as the individual's wishes are respected – but at the start of this year the Department of Health issued guidance warning about proselytizing.

He says the Department of Health guidelines say that discussing religion could be interpreted as an attempt to convert, which could be construed as a form of harassment.

The ‘faith talk’ debate comes as NHS trusts have taken a hard-line in a number of recent cases, the BBC reporter says. Last year community nurse Caroline Petrie was suspended by North Somerset NHS Trust after offering to pray for a patient, although the 45-year-old was later allowed to return to work, the BBC said.

Triggle reports that recently a Gloucestershire nurse said she had left her job at a local hospital after being told she could not wear a crucifix – although the hospital said it was because of health and safety rules, not religion. Cancer specialist Dr Bernadette Birtwhistle, who works in hospitals across Yorkshire, in the north of England, and is a member of the Christian Medical Fellowship, said: ‘I think it is getting to the point where many of us feel we cannot talk to patients about their spiritual or religious needs or ask them about praying.

‘Christianity is being seen as something that is unhelpful,’ she said, adding: ‘Freedom of speech is being curtailed too much and I don’t think that is always in the benefit of patients.’

However, according to Triggle, the Department of Health said it was the responsibility of the NHS Chaplaincy Service to meet the spiritual needs of patients.

A DOH spokeswoman said: ‘We are committed to the principle of ensuring that patients and staff in the NHS have access to the spiritual care that they want, whatever faith or belief system they follow. Although all staff should be sensitive to religious needs and preferences of patients, the delivery of spiritual care should be provided by the hospital chaplaincy service.’

Michael Ireland
Chief Correspondent, ASSIST News Service

North American Anglicans Reaffirm Traditional Mission

ORTHODOX Anglicans from the United States and Canada, meeting on 23 June at Christ Church, Dallas, celebrated the creation of a Christ-centered, missionary Church – the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA).

‘It is a great day because working together, we have been able, by God’s grace, to reunite a significant portion of our Anglican Church family here in North America,’ said Bishop Robert Duncan of Pittsburgh at a news conference before his installation as the ACNA’s first archbishop. ‘We are uniting 700 congregations, and more importantly, committed Anglican believers in the north and in the south, on the west coast, and the east coast.’”

The ACNA held its first Provincial Assembly earlier in the week, working to ratify the constitution and canons drafted by their bishops, clergy and lay leaders at a meeting in suburban Chicago last December when they announced they were forming a new ‘province’ – a large regional Anglican jurisdiction in North America.

Grieved By Brokenness

The preamble to the constitution says that orthodox Anglicans are ‘grieved by the current state of brokenness within the Anglican Communion prompted by those who have embraced erroneous teaching and who have rejected a repeated call to repentance.’

Many ACNA officials say the formation of a new province is a re-affirmation of the traditional values of the Anglican Communion.

‘The teachings we hold to are the teachings that have governed the Anglican branch of Christianity for decades,’ said Bishop Martyn Minns of the Convocation of Anglicans in North America. ‘So in that sense we’re not doing anything particularly new, but what we are doing is establishing that we want to stay within the [Christian] mainstream.’

Emphasis On Evangelism And Mission

Bishop Jack Iker of Fort Worth said that the central theme of this new Provincial Assembly was an emphasis on evangelism and mission. ‘What I think is significant about that for Anglicans and Episcopalians in North America is that this is the beginning of the recovery of confidence in Anglicanism as a Biblical, missionary church,’ he said.

ACNA officials said that formal recognition as an Anglican province will take time. Duncan said he is in

regular contact with the Archbishop of Canterbury, the principal leader of the Anglican Communion.

World Wide Support

Nine Anglican provinces, representing the vast majority of Anglicans from as far away as Africa, Asia and South America, sent official delegations to the ACNA Assembly, indicating their support.

‘We are in the process of being recognized by and partnering with churches around the world,’ Duncan said. ‘Just the other day, the Church of Uganda recognized our new province.’ Earlier this year, the Anglican Church of Nigeria also recognized the ACNA. Together, these provinces represent the Anglican Communion’s two largest provinces and tens of millions of Anglicans.

Re-Embracing Scripture

Duncan went on to say that Anglicans are part of a worldwide movement. ‘We are part of something big,’ he said. ‘God isn’t just bringing Anglican Christians together. Across the Church, people are re-embracing Scripture’s authority. Christians are once again discovering the beauty, wisdom and grace of our 2,000-year-old tradition.’

Jurisdictions that have joined together to form the 28 dioceses and dioceses-in-formation of the Anglican Church in North America are: the dioceses of Fort Worth, Pittsburgh, Quincy and San Joaquin; the Anglican Mission in the Americas (including the Anglican Coalition in Canada); the Convocation of Anglicans in North America; the Anglican Network in Canada; the Reformed Episcopal Church; and the missionary initiatives of Kenya, Uganda, and South America’s Southern Cone. The American Anglican Council and Forward in Faith North America also are founding organizations.

The Anglican Church in North America unites some 100,000 Anglicans in 700 parishes into a single church.

‘The events of this week and the months leading up to it represent the answers to decades of prayer,’ said Dr Michael Howell, executive director of *Forward in Faith North America*, ‘and, I am fully convinced that only God could have brought this about.’

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