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Free On Request: office@nlife.com.au

Three Million And Counting!

ON *Logos Hope's* second day in Puerto Princesa, the Philippines, crew and staff welcomed the three millionth visitor to the ship on Wednesday, 3 July 2013, after over 90,000 people had visited *Logos Hope* in 16 days in San Fernando, Philippines, in May/June. Locals in Puerto Princesa had eagerly awaited the ship's arrival, and the Mayor of Puerto Princesa, the Honorable Lucilo Bayron also paid a visit to *Logos Hope* the same day as the three millionth visitor.



Logos Hope's three millionth visitor Ms Cyrille Fernando (front, centre) with family members, Captain Dirk Colenbrander and Director Lloyd Nicholas.
© OM Ships International – Credit: Catherine Tse



Ms Cyrille Fernando, age 20, a Puerto Princesa resident and a student of Environmental Science at Palawan State University was welcomed on board by Captain Dirk Colenbrander, Director Lloyd Nicholas and crew members in international dress. 'I feel nervous and excited,' commented Cyrille, who visited the ship with her brother Irishtan and cousin Jhoshep after hearing about *Logos Hope* from a friend. 'This is my first time on *Logos Hope*!' Cyrille was presented with a picture of *Logos Hope*, a Bible, a book about the history of the ship and a gift voucher to spend in the book fair.

Director Lloyd Nicholas expressed the significance of this special event. 'Today we celebrate that three million people have so far visited *Logos Hope*. That's simply amazing,' he said. 'Even more amazing is that three million people have experienced a moment of respect, of friendship, of love, and of hope as they have been welcomed on board, walked around the deck, met a crew member and heard the message of God's grace and love for them.' *Logos Hope* remained in Puerto Princesa until 8 July when she sailed to Kuching, Malaysia, arriving on 11 July.

During the visit to the Philippines, crew members are inviting locals to experience the unique atmosphere and the diversity of over 45 nationalities represented on board in creative programs. Teams go out to serve local communities in practical ways – setting up libraries, providing hygiene instruction and helping with construction projects. Teams have also visited city jails to bring the message of hope in Christ to inmates. Gospel literature is available to all who visit the ship, and crew and staff share the Good News of God's love wherever they serve.

While the ship was in San Fernando, crew members travelled to the village of Coroay Santo La Union with a local pastor to share their cultures and faith. When locals expressed interest in the water purifiers often distributed by *Logos Hope*, crew members returned on their day off with 15 water purifiers and instructed villagers in their use. 'People get sick from drinking the water here because this place is very far from the city and the water is not pure,' said local lady Alma Qiñones, 'so we are very thankful for the water purifiers. They are very easy to use.'

To find out how you can help bring knowledge, help and hope to more ports through the ministry of *Logos Hope* by supporting OM Ships' non-profit work go to: www.omships.org



Will Bailey (USA) teaches a local woman how to set up a water purifier.
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Credit: Doseong Park

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'Pray That It May Not Be In Winter'

I'VE always said that the so-called 'Arab Spring' would soon turn out for Christians to be 'the Arab Winter'. Sadly, I was right. A Neronic persecution is breaking out in Egypt, with Christians being blamed for the downfall of the Morsi-led government and consequently suffering terribly at the hands of the Muslim Brotherhood, while in Syria the rebel forces have their hands covered in Christian blood.

It was perfectly clear from the very beginning that the Muslim Brotherhood and assorted jihadists were or would be using the 'struggle for democracy' as a cover for furthering their own purposes and pushing out undemocratic but secular governments, at least some of whom were either prepared to work with or at least tolerate Christian minorities. Whatever its faults might have been, the former Egyptian Government under President Mubarak had a Christian holding the rank of Cabinet Minister to represent the interests of the churches in that government.

Distressing stories of the persecution of Christians are constantly arriving here. Many originate in the countries which have already experienced 'the Arab Spring', others come from Syria, the present hot spot, yet others from countries which might be expected to be the next dominos to fall. Others, of course, come from places where other religions and ideologies prevail and place minority Christians under persecution. This issue of *New Life* has therefore been largely given over to telling a small part of the story, especially in Egypt.

'The Arab Spring'? More like the depths of winter if you ask me. So what can we do for our suffering brothers and sisters in Christ?

Prayer, public and private, is always the first thing that comes to mind. Faithfulness comes next, both in life and doctrine. Arising from this should be a clarification of the Being, Word and Works of the God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit as distinct from the gods of every other religion even if they use the same generic word to describe the one(s) in whose thrall they are. And along with this should be the realisation that the only thing we learn from a study of 'Comparative Religion' is that there is no comparison; coming to faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord remains the Pearl of Greatest Price. Naturally this should stir us to that kind of mission and evangelism which really is mission and evangelism: graciously, respectfully and lovingly, yet decidedly sharing our faith with whosoever will listen.

Oh yes, and we should encourage the Australian Government to deal expeditiously and sympathetically with *genuine* refugees who have escaped from persecution and arrived on our shores by whatever means.

— Bob Thomas

EGYPT: Islamic Wrath Falls On The Church

ON Wednesday 3 July the Egyptian military ousted the country's first democratically elected President, Mohamed Morsi, and placed him under 'house arrest'. Tanks moved into Cairo, the Parliament was dissolved and the Constitution was suspended. Whilst the military ousted Morsi in pursuit of its own interests, it did so under the cover of anti-Morsi protests, all but guaranteeing that Morsi's civilian opponents will suffer the reprisals. No soft target so clearly represents opposition to Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood as the Coptic Church, making it exceptionally vulnerable. The Coptic Pope compounded this vulnerability when he blessed the coup and supported the suspension of the Constitution.

On Friday 5 July MB leader Mohamed Badie addressed a gathering of tens of thousands of understandably enraged Islamists outside the Rabaa al-Adweya Mosque in Nasr City, Cairo. He slammed the Coptic Pope, condemned the coup and called on Muslims to rise up and not stop fighting until Morsi was returned to office.

Upper Egypt: On Wednesday 3 July Islamists in Minya Governorate attacked the Evangelical Church in el-Saleh, injuring two. In Delgia village dozens of Christian homes were looted at gunpoint and burned by Muslim rioters chanting anti-Christian slogans. Delgia's Coptic Church of St George was set ablaze. The priest survived only because his Muslim neighbours pulled him out of the inferno and gave him refuge. Most Christians have now fled the area. Further south in Qena, Islamic rioters attempted to attack the main Coptic cathedral but were repelled by the military. The rioters then looted and ransacked Coptic homes and businesses. Most Christians have now fled this area. On Saturday 6 July Christians in the village of Nag Hassan in Luxor Governorate came under attack from a Muslim mob; four people were murdered and three others injured while 16 Coptic homes and businesses were torched. The Church of the Virgin Mary was also attacked; most Christians have now fled this area too.

Mediterranean Coast: On 3 July the military repelled Muslim rioters who were stoning the Church of Holy Virgin in the coastal resort city of Marsa Matrouh, 240km west of Alexandria. On 9 July gunmen opened fire on the Mar Mina Church in Port Said (at the mouth of the Suez Canal); no casualties were reported.

Sinai: On 4 July at least two explosions were heard in the Israeli city of Eilat on the Red Sea. Remnants were found of a Grad rocket believed to have been fired by jihadists in the Sinai, Egypt. On 5 July the military opened fire on Morsi supporters who were demonstrating during Friday prayers in the coastal city of el-Arish, North Sinai, wounding at least 21. Jihadists immediately retaliated, expelling the military and raising the black flag of al-Qaeda. Salafi jihadist group, Salafiyya al Jihadiyya, slammed the 'crime' and announced the formation of a new group, Ansar al Sharia in Egypt, which it said was acquiring weapons and preparing to fight. The next day, gunmen on a motorbike shot dead a Coptic priest, Mena Aboud Sharoben (39), as he was walking through the Masaeed area in el-Arish.

Just The Beginning: Whilst the military may have ousted an Islamist President, dissolved a Muslim Brotherhood-dominated Parliament and suspended an Islamised Constitution, these actions have actually increased the risk to Egyptian Christians. Military violence – such as the army's firing on pro-Morsi demonstrators in Cairo on Monday 8 July, killing 51 and wounding more than 300 – is only further inflaming the situation. The coup will serve to radicalise many MB supporters, especially as Islamic groups from Tunisia to Somalia are citing the coup as proof that democracy does not work and that Islam can be established only by the bullet not the ballot. Al-Qaeda leader Ayman Zawahiri (an Egyptian) has ominously warned: 'The battle in Egypt is far from over, it has only just begun.'

– Elizabeth Kendal,
for Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty Commission

Please Pray That:

- God will pour out His Holy Spirit abundantly on the Church in Egypt, so that the fears of Christians may be calmed and so they will trust the Lord for their every need;
- shield, protect, sustain and deliver all who look to Him in faith.
- use the present troubles to awaken Arabs not merely to the fact that Islam is not the solution, but to the truth that the solution and empowerment for transformation are found in Jesus Christ.

'I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made Heaven and Earth.' (Psalm 121.1,2)

MATTERS FOR PRAYER

Violent Backlash Against Morsi's Ouster; Christians Endangered

By Patrick Sookhdeo, International Director of Barnabas Fund

AFTER the jubilant and triumphant scenes in Egypt on the removal of Islamist President Mohammad Morsi, the celebrations are now over and a violent backlash has begun. Morsi supporters, protesting against his ouster, have come under attack, and they in turn have been lashing out, targeting those who campaigned for his removal and venting their anger against the vulnerable Christian community. Amid the violence, the country is becoming increasingly polarised, and there are fears that it could potentially degenerate into civil war.

On the one hand, the Muslim Brotherhood is in complete disarray, shaken by Morsi's abrupt and decisive removal from power. The mass popular movement that resulted in the army's action to oust him was a crushing defeat for the arrogant Islamists, who had tried to make themselves virtually untouchable. That was how Syria's embattled president Bashar al-Assad read the situation, interpreting events in Egypt as a defeat for political Islam, saying: 'Whoever brings religion to use in politics or in favour of one group at the expense of another will fall anywhere in the world.' He of course has his own agenda for making such a statement; the Syrian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood has been one of the most powerful factions behind the uprising against him. And Morsi had backed the rebels' campaign in Syria, calling for foreign intervention against Assad. The week before Morsi's ouster, he had attended a hardline Islamist rally calling for holy war in Syria and for Egyptians to join the cause.

Several leading Brotherhood figures in Egypt have been detained and arrest warrants issued for hundreds more, sparking fears among the group's supporters that they have returned to the status they had under former President Hosni Mubarak, when the movement was banned and its members hunted down.

Fighting Back

On the other hand, the Brotherhood in Egypt does not seem to have been humbled by its very dramatic fall and is not bowing out graciously. And that is understandable. Morsi was elected in a fair vote, and the Brotherhood has been arguing for democracy and legitimacy to be upheld. This argument may prove persuasive to Western governments, which are yet to come out clearly in support of one side or the other. The killing of at least 51 people at a Muslim Brotherhood sit-in protest near a barracks in Cairo on Monday 8 July was a key event that is likely to influence how the Egyptian people and foreign governments respond to both sides. The Brotherhood said its members were fired on by the army as protestors were performing dawn prayers, while the army said it had responded to an armed provocation. Islamists often play the victim card as a means of gaining greater influence, and if they are perceived as the wronged, innocent party, they are likely to attract support both at home and abroad.

The Brotherhood's political wing, the Freedom and Justice Party, has called on Egyptians to stage an uprising in response to the killings, against 'those trying to steal their revolution with tanks'. It also called for international intervention to stop further 'massacres' and prevent Egypt becoming 'a new Syria'. The country is dividing sharply along Islamist versus non-Islamist lines, with one of the most prominent Sunni clerics in the Middle East issuing a fatwa saying that Egyptians should support the ousted president.

Senior Christian and Muslim figures have expressed support for the army-sponsored transition. The leader of the Coptic Church, Pope Tawadros, has been fiercely criticised by the Muslim Brotherhood for giving his blessing to the removal of the president and attending the conference at which armed forces commander General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi announced the suspension of the constitution.



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BIKE FOR BIBLES

Australia's Big Ride – Karratha To Coral Bay

AFTER 531 km in four days, the Australia Big Ride arrived in Coral Bay, WA, on Thursday 11 July for their second rest day. Riders had faced up to some tough days into headwinds that called on their strength and dropped the rider's average speeds by 4-5 kph. Everyone was pleased to be at beautiful Coral Bay for a break, some are trying to get out to the Ningaloo Reef for a break.



Riding! Riding! Riding!
– through the Outback for Bibles

Unfortunately Colin from Maitland, NSW, had a fall and fractured his collarbone and shoulder blade on the first day out of Karratha. His best option was to pull out of the ride and return home. He's now mending and resting, and looks forward to riding in the *Blue Lizard Ride* in September. Please pray for his speedy recovery and return.

The riders are greatly encouraged and inspired by every donation that appears against their names on *Towards The Goal* website. They are receiving substantial donations daily and that is certainly spurring the riders to continue in this EPIC ride.

Key statistics so far: distance 531 km, average daily distance 133 km, longest day 157 km, shortest day 105 km, average speed 28 kph. Readers can follow the ride on <http://bikeforbibles.org.au>

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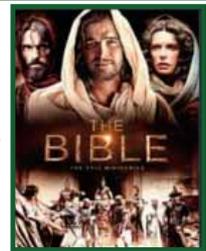
THE Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge Australia (SPCKA) reports that Dinka-speaking Sudanese Christians have traditionally transmitted their faith through liturgy and song. Congregations typically have a repertoire of hundreds of songs and prayers. The Revd Abraham Ayur Mayor Dit studied theology and was ordained in Khartoum. Before escaping Sudan's civil war, Abraham was a member of a committee working to update liturgical resources in Dinka. Since settling in Sydney he has completed the massive task of collecting new songs and digitising traditional material.

With the financial support of SPCKA supporters a trial copy of Abraham's new combined hymnbook and prayerbook was circulated to 20 Dinka-speaking congregations for testing and checking. The book includes 900 songs. Dinka-speaking Christians have raised and paid an \$8000 advance for the printing of this long-awaited publication. SPCKA has pledged to match their commitment and enterprise dollar-for-dollar and pay the balance. Anyone wishing to help can go to: www.spcka.org.au to make a donation.

Pray that this liturgical resource will be a blessing and encouragement to Dinka-speaking Christians in South Sudan and the diaspora in Australia and elsewhere in Africa.

Look Out For *The Bible*

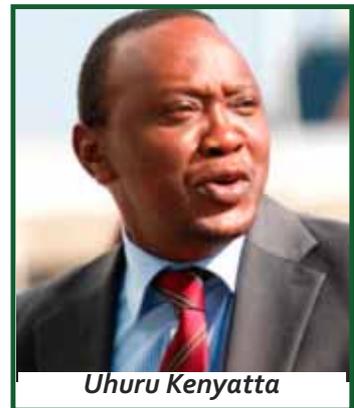
CHANNEL 9 will be premiering *The Bible*, a new 10-part television series, in a double episode tomorrow, Tuesday, 16 July, at 9 pm. It tells the great story from Genesis to Revelation at a time when many people have never opened a Bible. The series has been a huge success in the US, where 13 million viewers watched the premiere. *Family Voice* comments: 'This is a wonderful opportunity to show broadcasters that programs featuring Christian values rate well – do tune in, and encourage your friends to do so!'



KENYA: Christian President Seeks God'S Covering For Nation

KENYA has been a nation struggling with issues that have tried to divide it, with Islamic terrorists killing Christians with increasing frequency. Muslims have tried to shut down Christian gatherings and houses of worship, especially near the country's borders with Somalia.

Prior to the past presidential election, 4 March 2013, 'there has been great opposition from the Islamic agenda against the Christian Church,' says Dr Sammy Ngaho, founder and president of Ngaho International Ministries. 'Through much prayer and faith all over the country, all resistance is coming down,' Dr Ngaho says. 'The election in March was the first peaceful election in over 50 years – with no bloodshed,' he notes. 'This is all because of what God did to answer prayer as we had very organized prayer across the entire country. Every county was fasting and praying. Every county was formally dedicated to God and an altar to God was planted there as well. The President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta and the Deputy President, William Ruto, are both true believers,' says Dr Ngaho, 'and they declared that Kenya is a Christian nation one month ago in a speech at Kenya's 11th annual National Prayer Breakfast.'



Uhuru Kenyatta

– Mark Ellis & Melissa Nordell, ASSIST News Service

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CHURCH AND NATION

ACL Says Refugee Intake Should Give Greater Weight To Vulnerable Minorities

THE Australian Christian Lobby has renewed calls for Australia's humanitarian intake to give greater weighting to vulnerable minorities, particularly those displaced by the conflict in Syria and the wider Middle East. Managing Director Lyle Shelton said the debate opened up by the new Rudd Cabinet about the refugee program is an opportunity to again assess whether vulnerable ethnic and religious minorities were getting a fair go.

'A fresh look at our humanitarian program by the new leadership is warranted in order to ensure public confidence in it,' Mr Shelton said. 'ACL supports the Government increasing the intake from 13,000 per year to 20,000 per year. There are around 1,000,000 Syrian refugees in Lebanon including those from vulnerable Syrian minority groups such as Alawites, Christians and Druze. Many of these have lost confidence in the UNHCR processes and are not registering because it locks them into a slow and arduous process.'

'ACL would like to see some flexibility in our humanitarian program so that an allocation could be made for some of these people. ACL believes a greater weighting system should be applied to vulnerable persecuted minorities to ensure that they have a fair chance of being eligible for placement in Australia. It is important that our humanitarian program is calibrated towards people who are in the greatest need,' Mr Shelton said.

SA Premier's Leadership On Live Odds Ban Welcomed

'I CONGRATULATE South Australian Premier Jay Weatherill for implementing a full ban on live odds advertising on radio and television, and on ground signage during sporting events,' says FamilyVoice SA state officer David d'Lima. 'Premier Weatherill has rightly pointed out that gambling has no place in sport. Directly associating betting with sports (and often patriotism) normalises gambling. It teaches children that gambling is another safe way of having fun.'

Gambling puts many in our community at risk of addiction and serious financial loss. I hope the Premier will go even further and put a ban on all types of gambling promotion in public places. 'I encourage the Federal Government to follow suit!

Legalising Marijuana: Problem, Not Solution

'PROFESSOR Robin Room is right to be concerned about the harms of binge drinking (*Herald Sun*, 10/7/13), but legalising another poison is not the solution,' *FamilyVoice* research officer Ros Phillips says today. 'Has he chosen to ignore the serious mental health and other risks linked to cannabis use?'

A new study by scientists from Melbourne and Wollongong universities last year showed significant brain damage in long-term cannabis users – especially those who started using in their teens, the age when binge drinking also begins. More recently, UK statistics show that hospital admissions for mental disorders linked to cannabis use have risen by half in four years. A *British Medical Journal* study has shown a clear link between regular teen cannabis use and increased rates of depression and anxiety.

'The combination of alcohol and marijuana is particularly harmful, since alcohol magnifies the negative effects of marijuana,' Ros Phillips said. 'Binge-drinking and pot-smoking teens are more likely to experience psychotic symptoms, with the mindless violence that often accompanies such episodes. Legalising a new poison does not reduce the harms of an old one. Prof Room's proposal would put Australia's young people at greater risk. Hospitals already coping with alcohol-related admissions would then have to cope with more cannabis-related ones as well!'

Zimbabwe Council Of Churches Calls For Prayer For Approaching Election

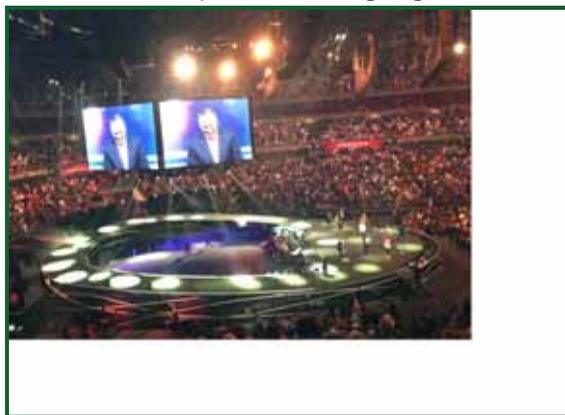
THE Zimbabwe Council of Churches has called for prayer for their nation as elections draw near, saying: 'Our message to all Zimbabweans is that as we approach the elections, let the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: "You are the salt of the Earth and the light of the world", (Matthew 5.13) ring in the mind of every citizen. Consistent with this message and inspired by "...faith working through love" (Galatians 5.6), let us all seek and work together to offer the fruits of that love, which are, among others: transparency, reconciliation, tolerance, peace, justice and fairness (Galatians 5.22).'

THE HILLS ARE ALIVE ...

... With The Sound Of Hillsong

CAN you imagine Sydney's Allphones Arena filled to its 22,000 capacity with mostly young people singing a blend of new and old Christian hymns and songs; a week-long conference where not a single motion was moved, seconded and carried – or not – except for hearty applause given to preachers earnestly proclaiming the whole counsel of God and applying God's Word to daily life; where prayer for Holy Spirit-led revival was offered frequently and heartily; where Christians were stimulated to encourage one another in the bonds of love and fellowship? Well, that was Hillsong 2013. Senior pastor Brian Houston's expressed desire and fervent prayer was that the Lord would move mightily in the lives of those tens of thousands of people for His own glory and the blessing which would flow to and through those people. Can you imagine that? Surely we should all join in such prayer.

Brian and Bobbie Houston, their family and close associates gave a press conference prior to Hillsong 2013. It was a remarkable event. While Brian tended to dominate to some degree, he passed numerous questions on to other members of the team, who all exhibited a spirit of camaraderie through which it was evident that they were 'striving together for the sake of the Gospel' or as people say these days, were 'all



on the same page'. The hyperarticulate senior pastor placed a strong emphasis on the sovereignty and grace of God, while his son Joel said that as a team of Christian leaders they were 'always cheering one another on, getting each other across the line' and that their heart was always for others.

'We're just pointing people to Jesus,' said Brian in closing, 'and the Lord will only take us as far in this as we are faithful to Him.' This little scribe has been to a lot of press conferences over the years, but it was the first time he's ever witnessed the target wind up a conference by praying for the ladies and gentlemen of the press!



Hillsong Senior Pastor Brian Houston

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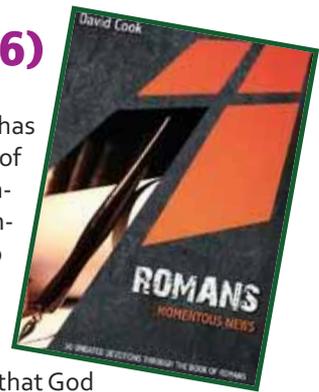
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Only The Gospel (Read Romans 2.5-16)



ALTHOUGH Paul doesn't mention the legalistic Jew specifically until 2.17, he probably has such a person in mind from 2.1 as he addresses the hypocritical, self-righteous attitude of the moralist. God does not show favouritism (2.11). When judgment comes, it will be impartial (2.6). In these verses, Paul echoes Peter's conviction at the time of Cornelius' conversion as to God's impartiality (Acts 10.34,35). Paul stresses God's impartiality in 2.9,10 with his repetition of Jew and Gentile.

So, those whose hearts are set for glory, honour and immortality (2.7) will be given eternal life, whether they are Jew or non-Jew. Similarly, those who live for self, reject truth and follow evil, will know wrath, trouble and distress (2.9). In 2.12-16, Paul shows that God will judge people not only by their actions. They will also be accountable according to the truth they possessed. All people (Jew or non-Jew) know something of God (1.19,20) and therefore all people have a sense of right and wrong.

FOR REFLECTION:

THERE are those who say that the pagan is better off without the Gospel – let the pagan stand before God to be judged in the light of what he or she knew, for if the pagan hears and rejects the Gospel, he or she will be condemned for that.

*Do you agree?
What part are you playing in seeing the Gospel taken to the world? How does it affect the way you give, pray and live?*

Such truth as people possess will provide their definition of sin. People will be judged for sin, either sin as defined by Moses' law or sin as defined by conscience. Paul shows that an inner morality is evident in the Gentiles who, without having Moses' law, often do naturally the things required by that law (2.14,15). At judgment day (as Paul indicated in 2.16), their thoughts will accuse and excuse them when they realise it was God's law they were disobeying and obeying.

Remember, Paul is showing here how people are lost, not how they are saved. We will be judged by what we do in the light of what we know, whether it is Moses' law (as in the case of the Jew) or the law of conscience (as in the case of the Gentile). Universally, we will be found to be sinners who have acted contrary to the standard we possess.

Only the Gospel, which Paul comes to in 3.21, will be able to give relief to all of us who are under the threat of God's wrath because of our sin.

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PERSECUTION WATCH

Pastor Of Tehran's Central Assembly Of God Church Conditionally Released From Prison

ACCORDING to *Mohabat Iranian Christian News Agency*, Pastor Robert Asserian (pictured) was arrested by security authorities in the middle of a worship service on 21 May. *Mohabat News* said it's not clear exactly how Asserian was released. However, it appears he was temporarily freed on bail on 2 July. The report said that Iranian security authorities have asked Asserian and his family not to give any media interviews about his case, release or trial, which means that in one sense, silence is a condition of his release. The same standard has previously been applied to other Christian prisoners. Commenting on the requested silence, *Mohabat News* said this means that Iranian authorities want to portray actions like releasing prisoners as 'human rights improvement,' and don't want anything said to contradict this.

Responding to the news of Asserian's arrest, George Wood, General Superintendent of the General Council of the Assemblies of God in the US, released a statement expressing his concern over the pastor's arrest and ongoing pressure on Farsi-speaking churches. He also called on Iranian authorities to stop Christian persecution in the country. Wood also mentioned the closure of the Central Assemblies of God Church as a starting point to shut down all Farsi-speaking churches across the country, and put an end to the public proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Iran.

Mohabat News said for a long time Christians have been arrested and imprisoned in Iran just for sharing their faith or having house churches, and pointed out that the newly elected Iranian president, Hassan Rouhani, promised in his second statement that he will preserve the rights of religious and ethnic minorities and respond to their legitimate demands.

– *Jeremy Reynolds, ASSIST News Service*



CAR Morphing Into Another Somalia?

REBELS have a tight grip on the Central African Republic and several nations have cut off aid. This no-man's-land could attract terrorists for refuge. Sound like Somalia? Open Doors USA has workers in the CAR who are seeing the country follow Somalia's model since the CAR government was overthrown by Seleka rebels in March. A new government was established, mostly controlled by Seleka. Jerry Dykstra with Open Doors says, 'We hope this does not turn into a wild state, a gangster state, a jungle, another Somalia.' International and Christian aid groups in CAR are pulling out for safety. The same thing happened in Somalia. 'Many Christian aid workers in Somalia have been killed over the years, and that hurts the people who need the relief products the most.' Open Doors says Christians feel targeted by rebels. Full story: www.MNNonline.org/article/18719

Ivory Coast Church Reviving

THE Ivory Coast has a history of civil war and Muslim uprisings. The major rebellion was ten years ago and it tore the country apart at the seams. Things have settled down on the surface. But David Shibley with Global Advance says churches in the Ivory Coast tend to feel the backlash. 'Many of the churches are far smaller than they were ten years ago. There's been a great amount of despair and disappointment in the nation.' Pastors in the Ivory Coast have an exhausting task to encourage believers in their walk with God. That's why Global Advance is going in next month to run a four-day Pastoral Training Conference. This is a critical time and church leaders there are seeing revival. 'There have been open evangel-

istic meetings in recent months where many people have made professions of faith in Christ. And so we believe the tide is turning and that it's now time for us to strengthen the hands of those who are in charge of the movement of the church in that very important nation.' Please pray for the pastors training in the Ivory Coast.

Full story: www.MNNonline.org/article/18709

Buddhists Close Churches, Threaten Pastors

CHRISTIANS in Sri Lanka continue to endure pressure from Buddhist extremists, with churches in Hambantota district in particular experiencing intensifying harassment. At a meeting of local officials, senior police officers and Christian and Buddhist leaders on 10 May, Christians were effectively told that they must provide proof of the legality of their churches or face closure. By the time a follow-up meeting was held on 17 May, Buddhist monks had already closed down 18 churches, and they demanded that those still open also be shut.

Various accusations have been levelled at pastors in the area, and they have also been threatened. Buddhist monks have warned local church leaders, 'If you don't stop your activities your destiny will be like Lionel Jayasinghe,' referring to a pastor who was martyred in Hambantota in the 1990s.

Pray that the Lord will strengthen and uphold the congregations of the 18 closed churches at this distressing time. Pray that they will be able to find ways to meet to worship Him safely and without harassment. Ask the Lord to protect vulnerable church leaders from attack and that the growing tide of anti-Christian hostility will be held back.

– *Barnabas Fund*

Benevolent Ministry To The Jewish Community

TIKKUN Olam is Hebrew for 'repairing or changing the world'. It was a term coined by the early rabbinic movement but through the ages has been applied to many areas of Jewish belief. Reformed and Liberal congregations often apply it to helping the poor, and in that sense it is used for Celebrate Messiah's benevolent ministry.

A study of poverty and emergency assistance in the Jewish community found substantial inequality. Several indicators point to a level of poverty and near poverty which is above 20% of the Jewish population. Since the CM program started a little over two years ago more than 1,000 food hampers have been given out to those who are physically and spiritually poor. Over 250 volunteers have so far been involved in purchasing, packing and distributing the hampers in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Perth. In addition to food hampers, the team has recently begun distributing care hampers, specifically for Jewish men, women and children in hospital or those going through difficulties with their health.

It has even been recognised by some leaders in the traditional Jewish community. A volunteer involved in Tikkun Olam recently had a knee replacement. While convalescing in hospital he was visited by two leaders of the local Jewish community, one of whom was a rabbi. 'I really see so much of God working behind the scenes in this encounter,' said Barry who manages the program. For enquiries or to volunteer, email tikkunolamau@gmail.com



Lutherans Welcome First Australian Bishop

On Sunday 14 July the Lutheran Church of Australia welcomed its first bishop, Rev John Henderson, 56. His five predecessors as leader of the Lutheran Church were titled 'President', but the office has been renamed 'Bishop' in line with most Lutheran churches worldwide. Mr Henderson brings to the office of bishop broad pastoral and leadership experience within the Lutheran Church and beyond.

New Anglican Bishop To The Forces

BISHOP Ian Lambert was officially commissioned as the new Anglican Bishop to the Australian Defence Force on 5 July in St Paul's Chapel, Duntroon. Before entering the ministry in the 1990's, Bishop Lambert was a Lieutenant in the Royal Australian Corps of Transport. He well knows the value of armed forces ministry, having been converted and disciplined by his local padre, Chaplain Royce Thompson. The bishop takes up his role immediately. 'I look forward to my new ministry in support of those that serve their country so selflessly,' Bishop Lambert said.

Significant Anniversary

'LADIES and gentlemen – this is the initial broadcast of KZAS, the new Call of the Orient station, located in Manila, Philippines.' With these words FEBC's first broadcast was launched 65 years ago. The announcer continued, 'At this hour of 6pm, on 4 June 1948, the Far East Broadcasting Co lays before you the foundation for that which we believe to be the challenge of this generation – the challenge to do a work for God, the challenge of faith. If the peoples of the Orient have need of anything in this day and time, it is faith – faith in yourselves and your ability to rise above the problems of this chaotic age, but more than that, faith in an eternally wise and loving Heavenly Father. 'To this end we of FEBC have dedicated ourselves. We will serve you to the best of our ability with whatever knowledge we may

have or whatever wisdom we may glean from those of richer experience. We of FEBC pledge ourselves to the highest ideals of culture and dignity. In all phases of broadcasting we shall endeavour to bring to you that which will lend a very real assistance to the threefold nature of man – physical, mental and spiritual.' Thus began a ministry that today can reach 3 billion people through radio, internet and mobile devices, broadcasts the message of the Gospel in around 130 languages and receives 3,000 responses a day. – *Skywaves, July-August 2013*

Ghost Town Being Transformed

AT the beginning of 2012 Juarez was not on a list of places to be pursued for Every Home For Christ ministry. Although EHC's work in Mexico was advancing significantly, ministry in that area seemed impossible – even unthinkable. Several years ago Juarez was overrun by drug cartels, gangs and criminals as a wave of sustained violence swept the city. At its worst Juarez was the site of nine homicides every day. With encouragement from a pastor in El Paso, Texas, just across the border, EHC decided to send a team of leaders from their international office to meet with a group of pastors in Juarez. To their surprise they found 100 local pastors waiting expectantly for them. When the EHC leaders presented the systematic home-to-home strategy of personally delivering a piece of Gospel literature to every home in a particular area, the pastors did not hesitate despite the danger involved. Today, just one year later, hope has returned to Juarez. While still high on the list of dangerous cities, it is no longer considered the most violent city on Earth. The homicide rate dropped by over 50% in 2012 compared to 2011. Businesses are returning and churches are reopening. Traffic has returned to the streets during the day. 'Our town is no longer a town of ghosts,' the mayor of Juarez said.

– *Every Home For Christ, July 2013*

(Continued on Page 12)

HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE ... *With Barbara Furman*

Training For Cross Cultural Ministry

DO you have an interest in cross cultural ministry? The Worldview Centre for Intercultural Studies, a WEC Int training college in Tasmania, is running two Preview Weeks this year: 5-11 August and 25-30 November. These unique courses, at Higher Education level, include a smorgasbord of teaching, practical ministry, team work, worship and community life. They are prepared and delivered by specialists from among WEC's workers on the ground, and students come from all around the world. Contact them on enquiry@worldview.edu.au

Solar Powered Dental Chair

YWAM Medical Ships-Australia has just returned from the Baimuru District, Gulf Province, Papua New Guinea, where they have been working alongside Gulf Christian Services Rural Hospital in Kapuna. A portable dental chair donated by the *Townsville Bulletin* just weeks ago has now been put into operation there. The chair assisted 426 patients in the first 14 days of operation. It is part of the I-Dent kits distributed by YWAM-MSA which also includes a hand drill, pneumatic foot-operated speed control pedal, instrument tray, and solar panel. The entire kit folds into a 15kg backpack and can be taken down in just over a minute. Kapuna Hospital is the only hospital within paddling distance for 30,000 locals

in the Gulf Province and the chair is being operated by Morea Joseph, a local community health and dental worker who has been receiving training and support from YWAM MSA for the past four years. Morea shares his excitement about receiving the chair, 'Normally patients travel very far, maybe one day travelling for their teeth problems. With the chair we can just go with it wherever we want to go and set it up somewhere around the village and help people in their very own homes!'—*jennifery*, www.ywamships.org.au

The Pocket Testament League Appointment

FOR some time the Executive Board of The Pocket Testament League of Australia, in reviewing the work of field worker Stephen Downie, felt a strong need for an associate officer. Since his appointment 11 years ago, Stephen has travelled extensively within Australia promoting PTL ministry and sharing the Gospel. After much prayer God led Fred Strong, accompanied by his wife, Ruth, to take up the position from 1 July. Many Victorians will remember Fred who was a popular soloist at numerous Christian gatherings in the '60s, and led and conducted The Proclaimers for 15 months. Initially the Strong's will be based in Melbourne, and Victoria will be Fred's area for ministry, with the possibility of extending to Tasmania and South Australia. —*TPTL News Flashes*

Barnabas Fund Announces *Suffering Church Action Week*

CHILDREN Of Courage – Raising Tomorrow's Church is the theme for Barnabas Fund's *Suffering Church Action Week*, 27 October to 3 November 2013. Christian children are facing hostility and discrimination in places where Christians are a persecuted minority. As the next generation of the Church, they desperately need our prayers and support. Barnabas Fund is urging believers to remember Christian children living in contexts of persecution as part of this special week dedicated to the Suffering Church and including a worldwide Day of Prayer on Friday 1 November to pray for the next generation of courageous Christians.

When Christians are persecuted, it is often children who suffer most acutely being easy targets for violence or injustice. Persecuted Christian children are often subject to aggression at school, discrimination in exams and pressure to convert to the majority religion. Barnabas Fund is helping in a variety of ways. Their school-place sponsorship program funds places for impoverished Christian children at Christian schools, provides food packages for needy Christian families so they can afford to send their children to school. Barnabas Fund also supports refuges for Christian girls who are in danger of forced marriage and conversion to Islam, and supplies Christian magazines for children in the Middle East and Central Asia.

As conditions worsen for persecuted Christian minorities, especially in the wake of the growing strength of Islamism since the 'Arab Spring', Christian children will need to be courageous in the years ahead. In many ways, this is also true of Christian young people in the West, who need to stand firm in their faith at a time when it is being publicly undermined and marginalised. They too need our prayer and support. Dr Patrick Sookhdeo, International Director of Barnabas Fund, said: 'Christian children need protecting, teaching and strengthening in their faith to stand amid persecution. By providing for children's spiritual and material needs, supporting suffering families and resourcing the persecuted Church today, we are helping to raise a new generation of courageous Christians. Please make a note of the dates for our *Suffering Church Action Week* and start to think about how you and your church can get involved in this important campaign.'

A free *Suffering Church Action Week* resource pack will include materials for a church service and children's ministry, a prayer guide for the Day of Prayer and further information about how to support Children of Courage. For more information, please visit www.childrenofcourage.org

GOOD NEWS FROM ABROAD

New YWAM Vessel Outreach To Pacific Islands

MARINE REACH New Zealand is based in beautiful Tauranga and has been serving the Asia-Pacific rim since its inception in 1990 with a vision of showing mercy and compassion to the most isolated, remote and forgotten communities of the South Pacific, using medical ships and land based teams. Across two decades of ministry, Marine Reach has served over 340,000 people with free medical services.

Island Mercy Teams

Throughout the year, ship and land-based outreaches bring primary healthcare, dental, optometry, ophthalmology and community development projects to those in need. Volunteers from all over the globe join short term outreaches working alongside the long term staff. See *Island Mercy* teams link for more details: <http://marinereach.com/>

– National Association of Christian Leaders www.nacl.com.au



Waterproof Bibles To Fortify Tribe's Faith

THE Siawi tribe in Papua New Guinea has their sights on a new Bible translation project. They recently got the New Testament converted into their heart language with the help of New Tribes Mission. Linda Kreig, a missionary with New Tribes Mission, is going back to Papua New Guinea in a few weeks to start translating portions of the Old Testament. 'We will work on the *Exodus* portions that we have in teaching drafts, and *Jonah*, and get those ready; then [we'll] print a waterproof Bible.'

Why waterproof? 'It rains almost every day. Everything moulds and mildews. Cockroaches eat paper. This waterproof Bible is printed on a plastic-based paper. If you drop it in a river or a water puddle, if it rains on it, it doesn't damage it.' The Bibles are already funded, but here's what you can do: 'I would really appreciate people praying for the Siawi believers as they have the Bible, that the Lord would enable them to really take these truths and stand on them.' Full story: <http://www.MNNOnline.org/article/18740>

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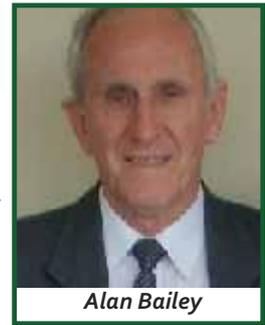
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Presenting The Case For Theism



Alan Bailey

THE New Atheism of recent decades has sparked a chorus of response by an array of Christian writers. We can indeed be thankful for the clear thinking and spiritual wisdom of men like Alister McGrath, Ravi Zacharias, John Lennox and many others. Most have responded with rigorous logic and yet with grace.

But as I see it, there are major limitations in the defence Christians make against the attacks of anti-theists. As did Aquinas and Paley in the past, we still follow the path of Natural Theology in an attempt to 'prove' –but not quite – the existence of a Supreme Being. Science has set the agenda and we have largely adhered to it. This is understandable. You meet an argument on the same level that it is delivered to you. Thus we have arguments from design, cosmological arguments revamped, the wonders of biological complexity displayed and the mathematics of probability invoked. We read it all with wonder, and rightly so. The lines of debate are expertly set out by authors such as those mentioned above. Some of the assertions they make in the scientific realm seem to be irrefutable. But just where do these arguments lead us?

Scripture gives us assurance that God uses creation to convince mankind about His presence and power. Romans 1.19,20 famously tell us that 'the eternal power and Godhead of God' are discernible, leaving the race without excuse. But think of the context. The passage goes on to show how the concept of God has become utterly distorted, that fallen man has sunken in depravity, his unbelief leading to idolatry and reprobation. Even so, God in His grace has opened eyes to show Himself to many through the wonders of what He has made, but it is by no means His chief method.

Natural Theology has a serious deficiency. We may argue the likelihood of the existence of a Supreme Being. Keith Ward states that his arguments point to the probability of God's existence. (*Is Religion Dangerous?* and *Is Religion Irrational?* Lion Hudson 2011.) When we reach that conclusion, whom or what do we have? He? She? It? Spirit? Personal? Good? Evil? Knowable? Baal? Dagon? A Dualism? A Life-Force? Obviously, we need much more vital information.

We must see that Natural Theology is in fact philosophy (as is all speculative theology). Here is the vital point. God has revealed Himself in what might be termed a radical way: the Incarnation. This is His primary revelation to mankind. No argument about

that. Now I know that our sceptical scientists have no time for revelation and dismiss the Gospel records with a wave of the hand, or, like Dawkins, with a loquacious burst of bluff and scorn. But why do we so readily allow them to get away with this? Why do we retreat as though facts of history are not compelling? Surely it is of paramount importance that the Father sent the logos to us, the only begotten Son who has declared Him? Why do all our arguments claim that He is there, when He has been here? Are we somehow ashamed to declare that Jesus is God? References to Him so often give the impression that Jesus was some kind of agent of God. Yes He was, but more, so much more. He showed us the nature of God because He was God. 'I and the Father are one' (John 10.30); 'He who has seen Me has seen the Father' (John 14.9).

Imagine this scene: a group of aliens visiting Earth from another planet are being lectured by a Christian about the existence of a Supreme Being. After some hours of scientific argument about the mighty cosmos, the speaker lets slip his belief in the Incarnation. An alien cries out 'What! You have taken hours to tell us of the probability of someone somewhere and now you say that God came here and spoke! Why didn't you say that before?'

Now I know that the atheists have trouble with all this. They doubt the authenticity of Scripture. Anything that smacks of miracle is unthinkable. Their world view disallows any kind of entry into their closed universe. Too bad. God has His own plan for making Himself known. It was and is this: 'This is My beloved Son. Listen to Him' (Luke 9.35).

I give credit to John Lennox for his excellent section on the claims of Christ in his book *Gunning For God*, Lion Hudson 2011. Also, John Blanchard deals well with the Gospel records in his *Does God Believe In Atheists*, Evangelical Press, 2003, though he leaves it until the final chapter of a rather long book. We have no need to be coy about declaring the credentials of the One we may reverently call Christianity's trump card. The church needs to re-discover the greatness and grandeur of its Saviour.

(Continued on Page 15)

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH ...

Presenting The Case For Theism

(Continued from Page 14)

How do we present Christ as God? The apostles did it. Throughout *Acts* the message was about Jesus – rophesied, crucified, raised. Peter at Pentecost cried, 'This same Jesus, whom you crucified, God has made both Lord and Christ' (Acts 2.36). Paul's emphasis is unmistakable, though he was very capable of reasoned debate and used it. Many unbelievers have been struck by the multiplicity of prophecies regarding the Messiah which all undeniably were fulfilled in one person. The great passages, Isaiah 53, Psalms 22 and 69 and all other references combine to make a formidable case for the incarnation. Christ, as a prophet, foretold the desolation which came in 70AD and Israel's subsequent history. C S Lewis said in some private correspondence that we have not made enough of the fulfilment of prophecy as an argument for Christi-

anity. We could add that we also have a large field in the area of Christian experience – answers to prayer and testimonies of God's dealings with us which occur outside the realm of coincidence.

In summary, Christ is God's message to mankind. He spans all of history, not just a small part. He is the Alpha and Omega (Revelation 1.1:17). He is our best argument. This is not to rule out scientific debate. It is a necessary part of our apologetics. But let us not forget that God has given us, along with the Gospel, abundant evidence to support our faith and the Holy Spirit 'to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment' (John 16.8).

Alan Bailey has spent 45 years on the staff of OAC Ministries. He has been involved in evangelism, Bible teaching and lecturing, and special interest in apologetics. He is now retired. He and his wife Lorraine live in Adelaide. They have three children, all involved in missionary work.

Calling On Manly Men: Ministry Finds Unique Way To Reach Shepherds In Africa

AFRICA Inland Mission is looking for rugged guys. Next August they're hoping to launch an outreach to the shepherds of Lesotho. The team will consist of two team leaders and up to eight single young men. Shepherds represent the least-reached group, and they're also the most marginalized. Many live lives in complete isolation from the rest of Lesotho's society. AIM hopes to reach them with the Gospel through an upcoming two-year outreach team. Interested? Check 'Featured Links' at MissionNetworkNews.org



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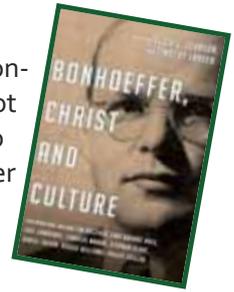
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BOOKS WORTH READING

BONHOEFFER, CHRIST AND CULTURE, Ed Keith L. Johnson and Timothy Larsen, Nottingham: Apollos, 2013, ISBN 978-1-84474-627-9

THE figure and thought of 20th-Century martyr, Lutheran pastor and teacher, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) continues to fascinate, challenge and inspire the church. One does not have to agree with everything he did and write to be able to see the benefit of listening to and interacting with his penetrating thinking on Christ, the Gospel and society. Bonhoeffer is not likely to slip into obscurity, for the example of his radical discipleship and his profound thought speaks to our current situation and contemporary problems.



Though not an 'evangelical' in the modern sense of the word, Bonhoeffer was a theologian of the Word, which he saw as the true Jesus Christ revealed in the Scriptures. It was his thoroughgoing commitment to the Word that led him to reject and resist the philosophy and claims of Nazism. In our context, the seductive temptation to which Evangelicals have often fallen prey, is to see relevance as the thing that matters most. Too often other voices are allowed to drown out the living voice of the Risen Christ heard in Scripture. Bonhoeffer's life and writings alert us to this danger.

Timothy Larsen surveys recent Evangelical appreciation and use of Bonhoeffer, with his books *The Cost Of Discipleship*, *Life Together* and *Letters And Papers From Prison* widely read and valued. The 10 chapters that make up this book began as papers given at the 2012 Wheaton Theology Conference. That conference at a leading Evangelical college is another sign of just how popular he has become. Certainly one of my all-time favourite books is *Letters And Papers From Prison*. I remember reading it in Year 12 (post-HSC), and I reread it only a few years ago and yet again enjoyed it immensely. Like C.S. Lewis, Bonhoeffer has become a hero within Evangelicalism, without subscribing to all its tenets, and it is right and proper that we should be willing to read and learn (with discernment) from those who are different from us but with whom we still have much in common.

In his essay, Reggie Williams shows that Bonhoeffer's encounter with the race divide in Harlem, New York City, prepared him to speak out on the Jewish Question in Germany. Stephen Plant explores the political theology behind Bonhoeffer's involvement in the (failed) plot to assassinate Hitler. Bonhoeffer foresaw the dangers of technology and the machine age in which we live, though he did not totally reject modernity or even secularism, and Daniel Treier sees Bonhoeffer's views as being in line with the earthly anthropology of the Old Testament and the authentic freedom and suffering service of others on display in the person and work of Christ. Bonhoeffer envisaged the post-war church as one that 'was there for others', just as Jesus Christ was 'the Man for others' (supremely in His self-giving at the cross).

Joel Lawrence tries to show how the church could become what she should be, with Bonhoeffer teaching that this happens as Christians confess their sins to one another, leading to humility, openness and forgiveness. Charles March, who is presently writing a new major biography of Bonhoeffer, gives a fascinating sketch of Bonhoeffer's activities between his return from America in 1931 and when the Nazis came to power in 1933.

Keith Johnson tries to express what Bonhoeffer might say to the Christian Academy if he was alive today, believing he would challenge Christian scholars and teachers to see everything through a biblical lens (namely to look at all reality in the light of the crucified Christ), and to see their work as intrinsically connected to the church and serving the church, particularly by helping the church's engagement with and mission to the world, rather than opt for withdrawal and self-preservation in our Christian bunkers.

Lori Hale interacts with Bonhoeffer's view of vocation as responsibility in response to God's call in Jesus Christ. Lastly, Jim Belcher tries to uncover the secret of Bonhoeffer's ability to survive, even thrive, in prison. Here, then, is an inspiring book about an inspiring man of God. Bonhoeffer is a Christian who belongs to all the churches. He is one of the heroes of the faith, though he would not think of himself in those terms, and it is little wonder that a number of his books have become modern devotional classics.

—Greg Goswell

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