

## God Is Real @ Fed Square!



THOUSANDS of Christians converged on Fed Square, opposite St Paul's Cathedral Melbourne, on Sunday night 15 April for an exciting night of music and comedy, but most importantly stories of lives transformed through Jesus Christ.

A short introduction video powerfully captured the God factor in birthing this event, which from start to finish was a journey of only 24 days. The video also highlighted the significant role of *The Regal Standard* (newspaper produced by Pastor Dennis Prince) which provided inspiration for tackling the question of the reality of God, at a time when Melbourne is focussing on this very topic because of the recent Global Atheist Convention held there.

*Compliments Of Gus* rocked the stage with three original songs, setting the crowd alight!

Anthony Fernando (Southern Lights Church) shared frankly about his personal journey, from drug trafficking and addiction, to freedom and transformation in Jesus Christ.

Ben Price had the crowd in stitches with his clever comedy and amazing impersonations. And then switched gears to his own personal story of faith in God – unashamed and with conviction!

Peter McHugh (pastor of Stairway Church) shared his amazing and unexpected journey from being a Marxist/atheist to a believer in Jesus Christ.

Kris Vallotton (Bethel Church, California) also shared personal stories, followed by powerful

words of knowledge and a call to stand up for prayer.

The people responded and were prayed for by helpers dispersed throughout the crowd.

Helpers were wearing white t-shirts with the words 'ask me my story' printed on them. And many were asked their stories, as well as numerous questions. People were prayed for and we have received reports of people being healed, set free, repenting of drugs and alcohol issues, plus more.

*Compliments Of Gus* finished off the night with another awesome set, including *God Of This City* and *How Great Is Our God*. It was a worship party! We were delighted to have around 100 atheists come to the *Undeniable* event, including Richard Dawkins! And the conversations afterwards were plentiful and stimulating.

What was most exciting was the amount of churches and ministries represented at the event, who were able to gather at such short notice. God loves unity and this was wonderfully displayed amongst His people.

What a great God we have! What a brilliant organiser, director and provider! There is none as great as our God! He can do anything!

We all have a story to tell. Let's be bold. Let's proclaim the great things God has done in our lives. Unashamed! Undeniable!

– Kirsten Jack

For more information see:  
[www.undeniablemelbourne.com](http://www.undeniablemelbourne.com)

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## Giving An Answer For The Hope That Is In Us

'WHEN it's all said and done, there's a lot more said than done,' as they say in the classics, and Christians in Melbourne are now emerging from recovery mode in the wake of the Global Atheists' Convention held here a couple of weeks ago, when a lot was said and done in the Christian response.

Much has been said in and around the GAC talk-fest, which on its own admission majors on saying but is short on doing. Christianity compares more than favourably in putting faith into action beside the atheists' non-faith and inaction. Reports on pages 1 and 5 of this issue tell something of the Christian response to the GAC, while Robert Martin, Director of City Bible Forum, reports that some 900 people attended events associated with the *Reason For Faith Forum* which CBF ran in response to the GAC.

But unbelief has been around for a long time and shows no evidence of going away, so we can expect that the battle will go on to the end of time. Given that Christians are bidden in 1 Peter 3.15 to 'always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that you have, but with gentleness and respect ...', we have a responsibility we dare not shirk. So what can we do?

**First, focus on Christ.** Always. He is our hope. He is the ground of our faith. He is the source of our faith. He is the substance of our faith. He is the end of our faith. To us who believe, He is precious. And unbelievers generally hold Him in higher regard than they do His people!

**Secondly, maintain the reverence.** God is holy, almighty, loving, gracious, the One to whom we must give an account. In His Son He loved us and gave Himself for us. By His Holy Spirit He gives us gifts to use in His service and enables the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace ... ) to ripen in our lives. In short, we owe everything to Him. His gracious work in our lives should therefore be evident to all as we speak of Him with awe and reverence.

**Thirdly, put the boxing gloves away.** Our demeanor towards opponents is to be gentle and respectful. Debate, whether it takes place before a large audience or one-on-one, is not the best genre for advancing faith. If Almighty God's desire is that we should 'come and reason together' with Him, then a demonstrably calm, quiet, respectful yet confident tone is called for as we share our faith with others.

**Fourthly, live a genuine Christian life.** It has been said that a Christian should be 'a saint whose life makes it easier to believe in God.' Actions really do speak louder than words because what we do authenticates what we say, and the world looks with eagle eye to see if that is so with us.

May God loosen our tongues and fill us with grace as we seek to fulfil His mission to a lost yet seeking race.  
– Bob Thomas

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# AFGHANISTAN: Church 'A Smouldering Wick'

## (Isaiah 42.3 NIV)

ON Sunday 15 April the Haqqani network launched the Taliban's 'Spring Offensive' in Afghanistan. The Haqqani are an ethnic Pashtun network based in Pakistan's tribal border regions with ties to both the Taliban and al-Qaeda. In Mahmud-i-Raqi, the capital of the eastern Kapisa Province, the city's military chief was assassinated. Then at about 1.30pm simultaneous attacks were launched in the capital, Kabul, and three other major cities.

The US & NATO-led International Security Assistance Force, which is finalising plans for a transition to Afghan security control, has belittled the strikes as 'largely ineffective'. However, the insurgents have demonstrated their ability to stage complex operations inside Kabul's most secure areas. 'This is just the beginning,' declared Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, who boasted that the insurgents 'can attack anywhere we want'.

In Kabul the insurgents executed a sophisticated, well-rehearsed operation. They stormed and occupied an unfinished tower-block in the central diplomatic area of Wazir Akbar Khan, making it their base. From there they launched gun-battles and suicide attacks while firing rocket-propelled grenades into the German, British, US and Japanese embassies.

Before long, the newly built Kabul Star Hotel was engulfed in flames. Camp Eggers, the headquarters of the ISAF, came under rocket attack, while an attack on the Presidential Palace was foiled. On the western side of town, rockets were fired at the Russian Embassy and the Afghan Parliament. When militants subsequently launched a full-scale assault on the parliament they were fought off by some of the MPs who, being former warlords and military men, carry their own weapons. Camp Warehouse, the ISAF base on the Jalalabad Rd, was attacked with mortars. Governors' offices, police training facilities and military bases were attacked in Jalalabad to the east, at Pul-e-Alam in Logar Province and Gardez in Paktya Province to the south. An attack in the northern city of Kunduz was foiled.

### Remember The Church

Back in May 2010 a privately-run Afghan television station, Noorin TV, broadcast video footage reportedly showing Afghani converts being baptised and participating in Christian worship. Angry Muslims protested, demanding the expulsion of foreign 'missionaries'. MPs called for the Afghan converts to be

murdered or publicly executed as apostates. To appease the Islamic fundamentalists President Karzai ordered that measures be taken to prevent apostasy. More than 20 Afghan Christians were subsequently arrested and tortured, triggering a retreat underground and an exodus to India and beyond.

In January 2012 Open Doors CEO Carl Moeller wrote, '... after the nationally televised exposure of Afghan Christians on the internet, it became widely known that Afghan Christians actually exist. Though many were angry about this revelation, others started to ask questions and began to seek. In recent years a number of well-educated and skilled Afghans have become believers and begun participating in underground Christian activities' [confirmed by Mohabat News in a 27 March report which added that even some MPs had embraced Christianity.]

'Although the complete lack of religious freedom for Afghan Christians makes gatherings of believers dangerous and difficult,' continues Moeller, 'family and friend groups have started to meet together. There is a growing awareness among Afghan believers that they are not alone.'

The principal Gospel witness and Bible teaching comes via Afghan Christian radio, satellite TV and internet ministries (see <http://www.afghanhost.com/>). The Afghan Church might be very small in number and profoundly imperilled, but God has promised: 'A bruised reed He will not break, and a smouldering wick He will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice. (Isaiah 42.3 NIV)'

### Please Pray Specifically That God Will:

- give His profoundly imperilled Church refuge, security and comfort in the shadow of His wings until the storms of destruction pass by. (Psalm 57:1b ESV.)
- prepare the hearts of the longsuffering Afghans and empower every word of Gospel witness from courageous local believers and from radio, satellite and internet ministries, so that the harvest might be a hundredfold (Matthew 13:8).
- meet the needs of all Afghan Gospel ministries for funding, equipment and workers (Psalm 24:7).
- frustrate the plots of those who would like to eradicate the Church (Psalm 146:9) and direct the government to see that without religious freedom Afghanistan will never recover (Proverbs 21:1).

— Elizabeth Kendal, for the Australian Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty Commission

# Will Graham Steps Up To 'Reality' In Lithgow, Orange and Bathurst

WILL Graham, grandson of world-famous US Evangelist Billy Graham, is making his second visit to Australia in May to speak at *Reality* – a series of outreach meetings organised by churches in Orange, Bathurst and Lithgow.

On his first visit in 2010, Will spoke at meetings in the north west of NSW, focusing on Tamworth, Gunnedah and Moree. The success of those meetings has led to this second visit.

'Like his grandfather, Will only comes at the invitation of local churches,' said Jorge Rodrigues, CEO of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association's Australian office.

Billy Graham's first visit to Australia in 1959 is recognised as one of the most successful of his preaching career, with 3,362,240 Australians attending a service or relay of a service during his four month evangelistic campaign, a third of Australia's then population of just over ten million.

*Reality 2010* in the state's north west was a great success, with the majority of churches involved and over 12,000 people hearing Will Graham speak about faith in Christ. Pastors from Bathurst visited Tamworth to see for themselves. They were so impressed that the churches in the central west are now hosting 12 meetings over a two week period,' said Jorge.

Key to the success of *Reality* is preparation by local churches. Ambassadors for Christ International's John North, who worked with churches in the north west two years ago, has just completed six weeks of teaching the *Christian Life And Witness Course* in the central west.

'My job is to help believers connect with the people in their lives to the point that *Reality* can help



those people cross the line and put their faith in Christ,' said John. 'I've been preaching in local churches throughout January, February and March this year to get their hearts ready. Then I spent six weeks training these churches in effective evangelism – how to build redemptive relationships and share their faith – through the *Christian Life And Witness Course*,' he said.

'It's about the man and his message, not the nationality,' said John Anderson, former deputy Prime Minister and chairman of *Reality 2010*. 'Like his grandfather, Will faithfully preaches the real Gospel and has an anointing from God that means that people respond,' he said.

*Reality* meetings are being held in Orange, 4-6 May; in Bathurst on 9 May and Lithgow, 11-13 May.

Mr Graham will also speak at a breakfast for friends and supporters at 7.30am (registration 7am), at the Wesley Mission Conference Centre, 220 Pitt Street, Sydney, Monday, 14 May.

Bookings are essential and can be made online at: [www.billygraham.org.au](http://www.billygraham.org.au) or by telephone on 1300 799 727.

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## VISITING MELBOURNE?

Join us at  
St Kilda Presbyterian Church,  
Cnr Alma Rd/Barkly St  
Every Sunday 11am and 7pm;  
St Margaret's, Balaclava, cnr Hotham St/Denman Rd  
Every Sunday, 9.30am.  
Rev Bob Thomas. Phone: 0417 592 646  
You're welcome at 'The Faith Factory' – a Friendly,  
Caring, Bible-Believing Christian Fellowship

## SCREWTAPE WRITES AGAIN ...

*New Life* has gained access to a leaked Krisileaks memo from Screwtape to Wormwood covering his involvement in the Global Atheist Convention held in Melbourne 13-15 April 2012.

*New Life* cannot validate the source of the leak, but can confirm the accuracy of the report ... \*

### Demonmail File Services: 'Screwtape Reviews Global Atheist Convention 2012'

**From:** Screwtape, on behalf of the infernal father.

**To:** Wormwood

**Subject:** GAC 2012.

My Dear Wormwood,

I acknowledge receipt of your report on the recent GAC and the attached expense claim.

What were you thinking? Fancy allowing the GAC to be held just across the road from Crown Casino! It was too visible a reminder that there are more losers than winners in the cosmic lottery – which is all we can offer in an 'accidental' universe.

How could you allow people who are consistent atheists and clear communicators to be on stage? The last thing we want is for people to actually understand the truth of our position. I remind you that our infernal father rejoices to be the father of all lies and master of underhand ways. We want speakers who disguise our grim message by wrapping it in lamb's wool.

#### **The following were among your mistakes with the speakers:**

- 'Life has no purpose' (said by Dan Barker, a former pastor). Don't you realise that that will make people ask whether life *does* have a purpose? It is not a question that helps us! And then you let Dan go over the top and pillory the enemy as someone keeping a torture chamber to which he sent his son so that others don't have to go there. Such overstatements draw sympathy for the enemy and prompt sensitive people to go and read what he actually says in his book. I remind you that we want people to think that we are the reasonable and harmless ones.
- 'Why is there something rather than nothing?' asked Lawrence Krauss. You should know that this too is a dangerous question because it easily leads to the enemy. But then you also allowed him to say: '... cosmology tells us that we are far far more insignificant than we thought'. And again: 'it's all an accident'. And then his all-too-honest conclusion that people are to create their own meaning in life. I sometimes wonder whose side Krauss is really on.
- And why did you allow Richard Dawkins on stage with his aggressive call for ethics and intelligent design to be taken back by our forces and then to pillory the enemy with his foolish remark about the 'odious doctrine of redemption.' Dawkins is one we need to control. Once he slips the leash he is too stridently honest about our real position.
- Then why, oh why, did you let Sam Harris change topics to talk about an atheist view of death? Death is a topic we try to avoid at all costs (the distractions of the casino are a good ally here). Sure, he said that Christianity was untrue in its message of hope, but then you let him talk about the comfort that religion gives in death and suffering. But worse was to come. This was a convention that extolled thought and reason, but then you allowed him to give an atheistic suggestion that people suspend all thought and give themselves to some meditative mindfulness to relieve death's pain. Did you really mean to give such a thoughtless exposure of atheism's emptiness? Surely you could manage a foul-up with the sound system when such things were being said!
- Another blunder concerned the Islamists. How could you allow their noisy protest on the Sunday, including announcements of hellfire on Ayaan Hirsi Ali? Yes, I know you thought that would make all religions look venomous. But it gave an opening for our enemy to be well spoken of. Hirsi Ali had already noted how it was conservative Christians, not atheists, who stood up for persecuted Islamic women! And as if that wasn't bad enough, some of our speakers conceded that Christianity was more friendly to science than Islam. My blood pressure went diabolical when I heard about this.

Between that and Eugenie Scott's remark about some Christians doing evidence-based science, I wondered whose convention it really was!

As I said to the infernal father, it was always a risk allowing the Global Atheist Convention to go ahead, for it exposed our cause far too openly. Our only consolation is that the Victorian and Melbourne government authorities helped defray some of our costs.

Oh yes – your expenses claim is refused!

Infernally yours,

*Screwtape*

\* Intrepid *New Life* reporter David Burke went undercover to the GAC.  
We publish his report with apologies to C.S. Lewis

## Chuck Colson Called Home

EVANGELICAL Christianity lost one of its most eloquent and influential voices on 21 April 2012 with the death of Charles W. 'Chuck' Colson. The Prison Fellowship and Colson Center for Christian Worldview founder died from complications resulting from a brain hemorrhage. He was 80.

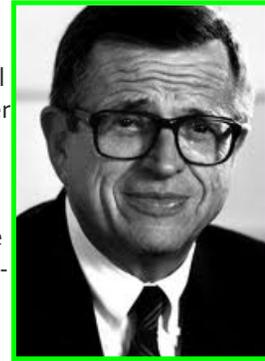
A Watergate figure who emerged from the USA's worst political scandal, a vocal Christian leader and a champion for prison ministry, Colson spent the last years of his life in the dual role of leading Prison Fellowship, the world's largest outreach to prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families, and the Colson Center, a teaching and training center focused on Christian worldview thought and application.

Chuck's life is a testimony to God's power to forgive, redeem, and transform in his pilgrimage from 'Nixon's hatchet man' to evangelical Christian and social activist – showing that grace really is amazing.

Chuck Colson was speaking at a Colson Center conference when he was overcome by dizziness. Quickly surrounded by friends and staff, Colson was sent to the Fairfax Inova Hospital in Fairfax, Virginia. On 31 March, he underwent two hours of surgery to remove a pool of clotted blood on the surface of his brain. At times, Chuck showed encouraging indicators of a possible recovery, but his health took a decided turn and he went to be with the Lord. His wife, Patty, and the family were with him in the last moments before he entered Eternity.

Revered by his friends and supporters, Colson won the respect even of those who disagreed with his religious and political views thanks to his tireless work on behalf of prisoners, ex-prisoners, and their families. Colson maintained that the greatest joy in life for him was to see those 'living monuments' to God's grace: prisoners transformed by the love of Jesus Christ. And thanks to the work of Colson and Prison Fellowship volunteers in the USA and beyond, there are thousands of those living monuments among us today.

Chuck Colson's regular *Breakpoint* column in *New Life* was widely appreciated by readers for its clarity, incisiveness and Gospel faithfulness. He will be greatly missed for his unashamed testimony to God's grace and his application of biblical principles to every area of human life and endeavour.



## OMF To Hold Interesting Seminars In Vic and Tas

OVERSEAS Missionary Fellowship is set to hold an interesting series of meetings:

**TARGET ASIA**, will be held on Saturday 19 May (date changed from 26 May) from 9.30am-12pm at the OMF Office, 44 Rutland Rd, Box Hill (Melbourne).

Simon and Meg Crittle will be sharing about Japan (the one over there and the one here). Come at 9.30 for a 10am start. Lunch will be provided for a donation of \$4. RSVP beforehand if you can. For more information and lunch RSVP email: [au.vic.pa@omfmail.com](mailto:au.vic.pa@omfmail.com) or phone (03) 9898 9922. **HEART4ASIA**, will be the subject on Thursday 17 May from 6.30pm onwards at the OMF Office, 44 Rutland Rd, Box Hill. Have you ever considered using your profession in one of East Asia's megacities? Come and hear from someone who did for a while and is now going back with his family long-term. If you can make it, come for dinner beforehand at 6:45pm (bring something to share!). Discussion will start at 7:30pm. For more information contact: [vic@omfmail.com](mailto:vic@omfmail.com) or phone (03) 9898 9922

**THINK GLOBAL, HOBART MISSION NIGHT** will be held on Saturday 5 May from 7pm-9.30pm at

Hope Christian Centre, 25 Tasma St, North Hobart. This will be an opportunity to hear God's Word, meet experienced practitioners, learn about different mission agencies, and get involved! Gold coin donation at the door.

### Visiting WA? Perth?

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Mount Magnet	(08) 9963 4125
Bassendean	(08) 9477 4249
Bicton	(08) 9339 3542
Clarkson	(08) 6201 3794
Fremantle	(08) 9398 1304
Hillarys	(08) 9562 7263
Mandurah	(08) 9319 2208
Melville	(08) 9417 1976
Peppermint Grove	(08) 9384 9186
Southern River	(08) 9332 1829
West Leederville	(08) 9310 5935

*'...We...know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.'* (Galatians 2.16)

## Affirming Creation Over Evolution

CONGRATULATIONS to Gary Baxter for his Viewpoint, *Where Atheism Falls Over* (NL 2012-04-15). Well done! Unfortunately, too many apologists are falling over themselves to agree with the atheists over their creation myth, shooting themselves in the foot in doing so. If God used evolution to make everything, a process of survival of the fittest, of 'nature red in tooth and claw' (Tennyson), then He is not a God worth knowing, as many atheists have pointed out. He is certainly not a God of love.

Furthermore, in discounting Genesis as real history, Adam did not usher in death and suffering with his rebellion and so this undermines the Gospel that the last Adam came to undo the work of the first Adam (1 Corinthians 15, Romans 5). Why did Jesus suffer and die if Adam did not bring suffering and death because of his sin? Talk of the Resurrection is fine, but what does it mean apart from the real history in Genesis? The connection between the enemy death (1 Corinthians 15.26) and sin depends on the real events of Genesis.

Dr Clifford Wilson's passing (thank-you for the tribute to him in NL) is a loss for those who stand on the Bible's historical authority in Genesis. He contributed much in that area and stood fearlessly for the historicity of the Bible from the beginning. Oh that there would be more workers in the mould of Clifford Wilson!

*Every blessing in Christ, Don Batten, scientist, speaker, writer,  
Creation Ministries International (Australia)*

### Protect Shared Leisure Time For Workers

THE NSW Council of Churches has unanimously called on the O'Farrell Government to cease moves to deregulate restricted retail trading hours in NSW, which would threaten the rights of retail workers to shared leisure time with their family and friends on major NSW public holidays.

We are particularly concerned about proposed amendments to the current Retail Trading Act that considerably widen the number of businesses that can operate on restricted trading days, and also allow for the stocking of shelves on major religious holidays.

We are not convinced that leisure and family time for workers, together with their freedom to worship, will not be abused by the proposed changes to the law.

The NSW Council of Churches opposes any changes to current NSW legislation with respect to retail trading on Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Christmas Day and Anzac Day. The council expresses serious reservations regarding any changes to current legislation with respect to retail trading on other public holidays including Boxing Day. Council supports moves to ensure that the rights and freedoms of workers are not eroded by any changes to legislation.

The Council made its decision on the basis of widely agreed and biblically informed principles of

justice: that all persons are created equal and should be treated with dignity and respect; that workers have a right to adequate rest from their employment; that a healthy work-life balance delivers benefits to workers, their families, their employers and the whole community and employers should take care not to impose responsibilities on their employees which lead to a deterioration in work-life balance.

The council does not believe that the number of restricted trading days in NSW should be reduced.

The state has a responsibility to serve and protect the interests of its citizens with respect to employment conditions and entitlements. These are easily eroded or removed by commercial and corporate pressures, and once reduced are difficult to reinstate.

*– Revd Dr Ross Clifford, President.*

### Remembering The Wilsons

IT was a reminder of times past to read Cliff Wilson's obituary. My father, Eric Daley, was Cliff's mentor and friend. I also reflected on Avis Wilson – Cliff's partner in most of the ventures you mentioned. Also beloved of him, and a great stabilising presence. She went to the four corners of the Earth with him, and was the mother of his five children. Let's remember all those women who form such important partnerships and raise children in such complex situations.

*– Susan Watts (nee Daley).*

**Read: *Can The Theory Of Evolution Survive The Attack Of Science?* by David Holden.  
Free at [www.defenceofthefaith.org](http://www.defenceofthefaith.org)**

# What the Media Doesn't Tell You: The Gospel is Bearing Much Fruit in Muslim Lands

## Islam In Crisis

FROM Arab North Africa and the Middle East to Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Indonesia—all that the media presents is turmoil, hatred, and violence!

Yes, Muslim regions are in crisis, with native Christians often targeted by Islamic extremists. These Islamists are often heralded as 'liberators' by Western diplomats and media. For example, Western media ignored that these Islamic 'liberators' recently brutally attacked Christians in Syria. In the Syrian town of Homs, hundreds of believers were attacked in their homes, some murdered, others kidnapped and raped by Islamic opposition leaders. Tens of thousands fled for their lives. Islamists are also calling for attacks on churches and Christian families in Nigeria, the Arabian Gulf, Pakistan and beyond.

The Book of Acts tells us that the Christian Church faced similar opposition and persecution from religious fanatics from the very beginning. Tribulations, persecutions, and all forms of sufferings go hand-in-hand with the advance of the Gospel, just as the Saviour Himself experienced and promised His followers.

## Disenchantment

Ironically, however, the Islamists are actually accelerating the growing disenchantment with Islam, especially among young people. Muslim youth are

searching desperately for safer and more appealing worldviews for themselves and their families. A growing number are attracted to Christ's message of reconciliation, peace, and love.

Over the airwaves and through the Internet the Gospel of God's grace is daily reaching millions of Arabic-speaking people from Morocco and Mauritania on the Atlantic Ocean, across North Africa and the Middle East to Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula. Middle East Reformed Fellowship maintains speedy contact with hungry souls through telephone text messaging and radio broadcasts.

## Christ's Victory

Again and again, Satan is losing out! The gates of hell are forced open by the voice of the Good Shepherd. Individuals are coming to faith, and churches are growing in Muslim lands. From Egypt, a young high school teacher writes: 'Thanks for guiding me to your daradash7 website. There is a goldmine for meeting the needs of the human soul...' From Yemen, a university student writes: '...I am still very new to the faith and I am extremely happy to know that 'Allah' (God) has made me His son through 'Isa' (Jesus)...'

Learn more about how God is using MERF's endeavors in Muslim lands at [www.merf.org](http://www.merf.org) For donations phone: Mrs Jan Flanagan (MERF Australia Correspondence Secretary) **1300 509 502**.

## BUSY TIME FOR FELLOWSHIP OF CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

**Revesby Congregational Church** is pleased to invite all friends to the Induction Service for Pastor Michael Hunt at 2.30pm on Sunday 6 May. The church address is 82 The River Road, Revesby.

**The English-speaking congregation of Padstow Chinese Congregational Church** is arranging a *Praise Night* to be conducted in English and Chinese on Saturday 12 May, commencing at 7.30pm. This will also be a fund-raising event to assist five young people who are preparing to participate in a ministry trip to China in July. All are most welcome!

**Padstow Chinese Congregational Church** is also pleased to invite all friends to Pastor John Yao's Ordination Service at 7.30pm on Saturday 26 May. The church address is 14 Enterprise Avenue, Padstow.

**Manly Congregational Church** will celebrate its 150th Anniversary in September 2012.

## Prayer Request For Rev Fred Nile

The President of FCC, Rev Hon Fred Nile MLC, has spent several weeks in hospital suffering from a severe foot and leg infection. He is on the road to recovery but presently remains in hospital to undergo necessary physiotherapy treatment. Please pray for him as he seeks to overcome this debilitating illness so he can return to his position in the NSW Parliament and participate in upcoming FCC activities.

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TRAINING CONFERENCE

Sydney Missionary and Bible College will present a Children's Ministry Training Conference on Saturday 12 May. The same program will be conducted on the College's two campuses Croydon and the Roberts-Dale Campus. There will be three Teaching Sessions and two Seminar Electives. For further details and to register on-line, phone (02) 9747 4780 or go to: [www.smbc.com.au](http://www.smbc.com.au)

**International Day Of Prayer To Proclaim Jesus Christ Is Lord To The Arab World**

THE Lebanon Prayer Group ([www.LebanonPrayer-Group.org](http://www.LebanonPrayer-Group.org)), a California-based Christian ministry, held its 22nd International Day of Prayer for the Arab World and the United States, on 28 April at Biola University, La Mirada, California.

'This is an opportunity for the community of born again Christian believers to unite in worship of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and for prayer on behalf of the Arab World and the United States,' said Dr Ray Sleiman, Pastor of Grace and Truth Gospel Church in Long Beach and founder of The Lebanon Prayer Group. 'Our prayer is to reach the almost 400 million Moslems in the Middle East with the

Gospel of Jesus Christ. We pray for the evangelical churches in the region and for God's opening of the door in order to reach so many Moslems with the Gospel. For the last 21 years we have seen the Lord answer our prayers in a dramatic way. We believe strongly that the hundreds of thousands of new Christian converts in the Arab world this past decade are a direct answer to these prayers.

'This is an opportunity for the community of born again Christian believers to unite in worship of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and for prayer on behalf of the Arab world and the United States.'

– Dan Wooding, ASSIST News Service

**AZERBAIJAN: Court Liquidates Church**

A COURT in the Azerbaijani capital Baku has ruled to liquidate the Greater Grace Protestant Church, the Judge's assistant told Forum 18 News Service. At a 15-minute final hearing on 25 April in the Church's absence, Judge Tahira Asadova upheld the suit lodged by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organisations.

Asked how the Judge could have taken a decision which means that any activity the Church engages in would be illegal and subject to punishment, Judge Asadova's secretary Sevinj Ahmedova told Forum 18: 'The court has decided.' She said the decision will enter into force a month after the written verdict is issued, unless the church lodges an appeal. Church members told Forum 18 they intend to challenge the decision through every court, even to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. Ilya Zenchenko, head of Azerbaijan's Baptist Union, says he is troubled by the decision. 'I protest against it – it is not just,' he told Forum 18.

**KHARTOUM: Severe Attack On Christians**

CHRISTIANS have faced increased hostilities in Sudan over the past few weeks, culminating in an attack on a Christian compound in Khartoum by a throng of Muslim extremists armed with clubs, iron rods, a bulldozer and fire. The assailants on 21 April set fire to the Gerief West Bible School and the Sudanese Presbyterian Evangelical Church building; they also damaged three other places of worship and other buildings in the same compound, sources told Compass by telephone. Also damaged were a clinic, a home for the elderly, classrooms and living quarters. Christian support organization Open Doors reported that authorities held the mob back about a kilometre from the compound, but the assailants dispersed and found their way back early in

the afternoon.

All the Bible school's office equipment, library books and students' personal belongings were destroyed by fire, according to Open Doors. Some students, staff and members of some of the churches were beaten, according to Philip Akway, a pastor and former general secretary of the Sudanese Presbyterian Evangelical Church; SPEC clergyman John Tau's right hand was wounded, while deacon John Bouth sustained a chest injury.

In addition, last week three churches in Khartoum were warned that their buildings would be demolished if they continued services, according to Open Doors. Previously hostilities against Christians had flared on 6 April, when police rushed into a Sudanese Church of Christ compound in Omdurman, outside Khartoum, and forced the congregation to stop worshipping, Christian sources said. Police said that it was Friday and therefore only Muslims could pray, and that the mosque service must not be interrupted by the 'songs and praises of the infidels,' a source said.

– Compass Direct News

**HORN OF AFRICA: Grandfather Steals Children From His 'Infidel' Christian Son**

A GRANDFATHER recently stole his grandchildren away when he found them reading a Bible. The International Mission Board says the family is from a mostly-Muslim area in Africa's Horn. The grandfather claimed he didn't want his grandchildren raised by his son who is a Christian and considered an 'infidel.'

It has now been three months since the believing Father has seen his children. Despite that, the man and his wife are still preaching the Gospel. Pray for their safety and the safety of their kids. Full story: <http://www.MNNonline.org/article/17120>

## **How A Gideon Bible Literally Saved My Life – Berni Dymet**

IT'S early Saturday morning as I peck away here at my keyboard. I'm about to head off to the NSW State Conference of the Gideon's to share my testimony with the delegates. It's something that I just am so delighted to do ... because back in February 1995, it was a Gideon Bible that God used to save my life. Quite literally.

I was standing on the 8th floor balcony of a Brisbane hotel, wondering whether to jump, and ...

Well, let me start back at the beginning:

I used to be a tough, hard-nosed businessman, happy to tread on anyone to get where I was going. Right from the beginning, I was programmed for success.

As a partner in a successful IT firm, I travelled all over the world – especially in Australia – so I stayed in many, many hotels over the years. Hundreds. But something was always missing in my life. All that I had – my career, my financial success – never satisfied me.

### **How God Started Speaking**

And every now and then, when there was nothing on TV in my hotel room, I'd pull a Gideon's Bible out of the top drawer of the bedside table wherever I was staying. That's how God started speaking to me – it's how He grabbed my attention.

I remember one time in a Brisbane hotel, standing on the 8th floor balcony looking down at the concrete driveway below, being pulled in two directions. My loss and grief and desperation were calling me over the edge. And somehow, through what I'd read in that Gideon's Bible the night before, God was calling me back inside to pray.

### **Back From The Brink**

I went inside, knelt down at my bed – just as I had done as a child – and said, 'Lord if You're out there, now would be a really good time.' Those were my exact words. That's all I had. And that's all it took for God to wrap His loving arms around me.

Within just a few months of giving my life to Christ I found myself at Bible college studying a Bachelor of Ministry degree. And through that, I became involved as a student volunteer in the Aus-

tralian media ministry of *Christianityworks*.

Today I'm the CEO and Bible teacher of what's become an organisation with a global media footprint.

Every time I sit down in the studio behind that microphone I'm sharing the good news of Jesus with a weekly audience of over 15 million people through 1,050 radio stations in 160 countries around the globe. God is so amazing.

And very shortly, we'll be going to air on a government owned radio network across India, Bangladesh and Nepal on Sunday nights in a time slot that, according to the network, has over 30 million listeners each week! That just does my head in.

### **The Ripple Effect**

Through *Christianityworks*' radio ministry, we're seeing countless lives changed – like the guerilla commander in the RDC Congo who after 13 years of killing people – 'I don't know how many have died at the end of my gun' – heard one of our Australian produced radio programs, laid down his arms and gave his life to Christ. Like the woman in Europe who wrote to me just recently about how, through one of our radio programs, the Lord pulled her back from the absolute brink of suicide! Don't you just love that?

And that's the ripple effect of those Gideon's Bibles tucked away in the top drawer of the bedside table of so many of the hotel rooms around this country and around the world!

### **Looking Back In Wonder**

When I think back to that turning point in the Brisbane hotel I just shake my head in wonder. And I want to tell you that those simple, unassuming little Gideon's Bibles played such a crucial role on my road to Damascus, in bringing Christ to me.

Without them – I don't quite know where I'd be right now. There's every chance I wouldn't be here at all and certainly, I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing – that's for sure. To God be all the glory!

Go to: [Christianityworks.com](http://Christianityworks.com) to learn more about Berni Dymet's ministry today. – Ed.



*Berni Dymet*

**WHO CAN YOU FORWARD  
NEW LIFE TO?**

# Turkey's Religious Freedom Record Slides

COMPASS Direct News is reporting that sentiment against Christians in Turkey has persisted long enough for a US religious rights monitor to recommend it as a 'Country of Particular Concern,' and pastor Orhan Picaklar knows such anti-Christian hostility first-hand. Picaklar, of Agape Church in Samsun, lives in the Black Sea region, a bastion of Turkey's unique Islamic-imbued nationalism.

'We have been here for 10 years, and people here still treat us like cursed enemies,' Picaklar said. Picaklar's son received death threats on Facebook last September, and a man in his early 20s caused minor damage to Picaklar's church building last month.

The report cited the government for 'systematic and egregious limitations' on religious freedom, stating that Turkey, 'in the name of secularism, has long imposed burdensome regulations and denied full legal status to religious groups, violating the religious freedom rights of all religious communities.'

CDN added that restrictions that deny non-Muslim communities the rights to train clergy, offer religious education and own and maintain places of worship have led to their decline and in some cases their disappearance. Religious restrictions in Turkey have not increased in the last year, but continued legal discrimination against non-Muslim groups is a dangerous trend.

## Believer Awaits Appeal Decision After 'Shaking The Faith' Of Muslims

JUDGES are making a decision on the appeal of an Algerian believer to a five year prison sentence. The *Voice of the Martyrs*, ([www.persecution.com](http://www.persecution.com)) Canada says the believer regularly shared his faith with Muslims. Last May he shared Christ with a man who then accused him of insulting Muhammad. The believer was arrested and sentenced to five years in prison for 'shaking the faith' of Muslims. Pray for a positive outcome to the appeal and for this brother to keep sharing the Truth either way.

## Sudan Declares War On South Sudan

AFTER an amicable cease-fire and secession vote in 2011, tensions have again reached boiling point for Sudan and South Sudan. Lee DeYoung with *Words of Hope* ([woh.org](http://www.woh.org)) says Sudan has declared war on South Sudan after the South captured oil-rich Heglig. DeYoung says, 'Words of Hope broadcasts into both Sudan and South Sudan, especially in the indigenous languages of Dinka, Nuer, and Bari. We are concerned about the recent escalation of ten-

**The Malatya Murders**  
Compass Direct News also said that five years after the murder of Turkish Christians Necati Aydin, Ugur Yuksel and German Christian Tilmann Geske in Malatya, no verdict has been issued due to Turkey's slow judiciary. This has not helped Turkey's religious rights image.



Pastor Picaklar

The Malatya Third Criminal Court is making some progress in shedding light on a shadowy group that was allegedly behind the murders, experts said, but the process has been painfully slow.

Commenting on the slow proceedings of the Malatya trial, researcher Yildirim of the ABO Academy said that the judiciary and Turkish 'problems of rule and law' were partially to blame, but that the forthcoming new indictment would be a positive step. 'For Malatya, if you put aside the slowness, now finally a new indictment is being prepared to find the instigators,' she said. 'So this is a positive effect. It's not what we expect from justice, but even though it is slow, this is a positive outcome of the trial.' For more information, please go to: [www.compassdirect.org](http://www.compassdirect.org) – Dan Wooding, ASSIST

sion between Sudan and South Sudan.' DeYoung says this war is different to the 20+ years of civil war. 'This would be an international conflict. Already, military leaders in neighbouring Uganda would back South Sudan. It is speculated that other neighbouring countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia might also be sympathetic to the plight of the South Sudan people.' Funding is needed to help *Words of Hope* continue broadcasting the Gospel in the area.

## 'Glorious Things - A Protestant's Guide To London'

What to look for and how to find places associated with people and events which shaped Protestant Church History, compiled by Rev Bob Thomas.

**Available from:** PTC Media, 684 Elgar Rd, Box Hill North 3129.

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**Flash Mob Shares Christ In Russia**

RUSSIA celebrates Easter more than a week after it is celebrated in most parts of the world. Paul Tokarchouk, with Russian Ministries, says they celebrated in Russia with outreach. First, they read Scripture over a loud speaker on Old Arbat Street in Moscow. 'People were standing, stopping, and the youth from the church would start to talk to them to share the Gospel and give them New Testaments which Russian Ministries published recently called, *Discovery*.' They also handed out hundreds of New Testaments over the week-long event. Then, Tokarchouk says, a flash mob in a downtown mall was another tool. 'In an open area for shopping and dining, they started to sing Christian Easter Songs. A kind of flash mob took place, was followed by the distribution of New Testaments.' More than 400 more people received New Testaments there. Pray for God's Word to bear fruit. Full story:



<http://www.MNNonline.org/article/17084>

**7.5 Million People Could Be Hearing Scriptures For The First Time**

THE Gospel is now available to 7.5 million more people. Faith Comes By Hearing recently completed eight new audio Scripture recordings. The eight languages covering Mexico, Peru, Myanmar, Cameroon and more represent 7.5 million people. These recordings are vital for people who can't access the Scriptures in their heart language due to illiteracy, poverty, and many other obstacles. To help Faith Comes By Hearing send audio players to these new groups, visit:

<http://www.MNNonline.org/article/17082>

**Christians Welcome**

**The Bible In Burkina Faso**

BELIEVERS in Burkina Faso gathered recently for the dedication of God's Word in Cerma, finally fully translated, printed, and available. Wycliffe Bible Translators says there are roughly 60,000 speakers of heart language Cerma, although most also know the trade language. Since only a fifth of the population is literate, the people are also very receptive to literacy efforts. The new Bible will be a great tool to support the small but growing church in this tribe. Full story:



<http://www.MNNonline.org/article/17080>

**Despite Turmoil In Afghanistan, Ministry Brings Hope And Peace**

AFGHANISTAN is reeling from a spate of insurgent attacks against Western targets. The terror has given rise to a search for escape, but more often, a search for truth. Growing numbers are finding hope and encouragement in the Gospel programming aired on SAT-7 PARS. It's the Farsi arm of SAT-7, a Christian satellite television ministry to the Middle East and North Africa. It seems a virtual church is emerging. Keep praying. They're hoping to expand soon.

**Christian Acquitted Of 'Blasphemy' Charge In Pakistan**

A PAKISTANI Christian falsely charged with 'blasphemy' after rescuing his 8-year-old nephew from a beating at the hands of Muslim boys has been cleared of the charge. Dildar Masih, a 27-year-old father of two young children, was acquitted on 26 March after prosecutors failed to produce any evidence against him, he said. 'I was produced in court three times during the case proceedings, but not one accuser ever turned up at the hearings,' Masih told Compass by phone.

His nephew, Ihtesham (also known as Sunny), had gone out to fetch ice when Muslim boys from a nearby madrasa (religious school) beat him for refusing to convert to Islam in village No 68 AR Farmwala, in Khanewal District's Mian Channu area in Punjab Province, on 10 June 2011. Seeing the attack from a distance, Masih shouted and rushed to the scene, rescued his nephew and then went to his work as a painter. Soon after the incident, a Muslim mob of about 55 led by village prayer leader Qari Hasnain besieged Masih's house and ordered his father, Yousaf Masih, to hand over 'the blasphemer' to them. Masih said that during his imprisonment, he stood by his faith that Jesus would free him from the false charge and that he would be able to return to his family. 'I prayed a lot ... This was the only other thing I did in prison besides having food and sleeping,' he said.

– Murad Khan, *Compass Direct News*

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# Tim Meyers – New Principal Of MST

IT seems to me that Tim Meyers, the new Principal of Melbourne School of Theology, has experienced more in 50 years than most people would dream possible in a lifetime.

## The Early Years

Born in 1962 in Wewak, Papua New Guinea, Tim was the second of five boys the Lord gave to Max and Jo Meyers. Max was a pilot with Mission Aviation Fellowship and the Meyers family lived in various parts of Papua New Guinea.

The boys' schooling was a mixture of home schooling, correspondence courses and the local mission school. Tim said the jungle of PNG was a brilliant home for five energetic Aussie kids. He loved accompanying his father on flights through the Highlands. As a small child he remembers joining his father on the MAF mission display at Belgrave Heights Convention.

Tim spoke with great fondness for the young PNG lad who led him to the Lord, at the age of 10. He said, 'I was the product of indigenous witness, and attended Bible Studies with the Papuans.'

In 1973 the family returned to Melbourne for secondary education at Blackburn High School, where he became friendly with Kathryn. She was saved through a God Squad Outreach with John Smith at the high school. But it was not until she started to attend Blackburn Baptist Church that he realised she was a Christian. He had been asked by Robert Coleman to join the music team at that church. That was when their friendship started to develop into something more.

After graduating from Melbourne University in 1983, majoring in English and Music, Tim worked as a musician and occasional secondary teacher.

In 1985, Tim had the opportunity to study at Moody Bible Institute for 12 months. On returning to Australia he obtained his commercial pilot's license with thoughts of following his father into MAF, but the Lord had other plans.

Kathryn and Tim were married in 1986. They spent three years (1988-1991) in Texas where Tim studied for his Masters in Theology at Dallas Theological Seminary. Their first of five children was born at this time.

## Australian Website Nominated For The Internet's Highest Honour

IN a classic David versus Goliath battle, youth website **Fervr.net** competes with the likes of CNN for best Religion and Spirituality Website in the 16th Annual Webby Awards. Hailed as 'the Internet's highest honour' by *The New York Times*, The Webby Awards, presented by the International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences, is the leading international award honouring excellence on the Internet. Fervr.net is a Christian youth website by Youth-

## The Full Harvest

On returning to Australia he worked as a Baptist minister in Queensland for 10 years, as associate pastor with Graeme Smith at Ashgrove, then at Helensgrove, on the Gold Coast.

Asked who his mentors have been over the years, Tim straightaway named his father, that great MAF pilot.

Secondly, he nominated Howard Hendricks, (Dallas Theological Seminary) followed by Graeme Smith (Ashgrove Baptist). These men of God have guided and encouraged Tim in his Christian walk.

When Asia Pacific Christian Mission and South Seas Evangelical Mission were discussing amalgamation they approached Tim Myers to lead the new mission named Pioneers. He became Director in 1998 and was instrumental in accomplishing this radical mission reorganization. Later Sudan United Mission, then AWM joined Pioneers. From 2007-2011 Tim was International Director of Pioneers.

In late 2011 he was asked to become Principal of MST. This is another challenge he has accepted with great enthusiasm and humility. He is passionate about investing in the training and equipping of young people in the local church and globally.

He loves reading. Some of his favourite authors are John Piper, Francis Shaeffer and Mark Twain. Music is another of his interests. He plays a number of instruments. And he enjoys the outdoors – running, bike riding, kite surfing!

Concerning MST, Tim Meyers says, 'Theological education and spiritual formation are as vital and relevant in today's church and world mission as at any time in church history. I am very privileged and excited about my new role.'

Tim asks that readers will pray for him, especially for growth, grace and increasing impact.

– Barbara Prout ('Mrs DP')



works that publishes daily articles, reviews and videos for 13 to 18 year olds. Its goal is to provide easily-accessible content that is engaging and relevant for teens.

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# Conference For Ministry To Australian Muslims

THE purpose of this conference is to help those actively ministering to Muslims in Australia to network, shape a common vision for Muslims in Australia, encourage each other, learn from each other, receive teaching by Joy Loewen (Canada) and Bernie Power (Melbourne).

The conference will commence at 7pm on Friday 6 July and run until 8 July. (On Friday 6 July at 3pm there will be a special meeting for ex-Moslems).

It will be held in Adelaide, at Kings Baptist Grammar School.

The cost will be approximately \$120, kept low so that as many people as possible can attend. The fee will cover meals, home-stay accommodation and conference materials. It will also help to cover other costs of the conference. The final fee will depend on the number of participants. Payments should be made upon arrival. In case of financial difficulties please contact the registrar to discuss further options. Participants may make their own arrangements for accommodation (there are motels in the area.)

To register for the conference email the following information to [tillmann.klein@om.org](mailto:tillmann.klein@om.org) before 8 June 2012: Full Name; DOB; Gender; mobile phone number; medical or special dietary needs.

**'Don't ask for the task to be made equal to your power,  
but for your power to be made equal to the task.'**  
– Rev Dr John Flynn ('Flynn Of The Inland')



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## **Ramon A Williams** – Worldwide Photos –

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Baptist pastor, currently Australian Director of MECO Australia (Middle East Christian Outreach).  
Richard has travelled extensively in the Middle East for the past 21 years and is an adjunct lecturer in Early Church History at Melbourne School of Theology



**OLD TESTAMENT WISDOM LITERATURE: A THEOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION, Craig G. Bartholomew and Ryan P. O'Dowd, Nottingham: Apollos, 2011.**

THIS is an up-to-date survey of Old Testament wisdom literature, with an emphasis on theological engagement and its message that is rooted in the world as created and ordered by God. The authors identify reverence of ('fear') and obedience to God as being at the heart of what the Bible views as true wisdom. They situate Old Testament wisdom within the context of wisdom thinking and writings of Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, noting both continuity and discontinuity between what we find in the Bible and the surrounding cultures of the time.

The authors make the valid point that biblical poetry is today little focussed on, perhaps in part because poetry generally has been driven to the margins in modern society. However, seeing that much of the Old Testament wisdom material is in the form of poetry, we need to understand how poetry functions, and Bartholomew and O'Dowd provide a helpful explanation of the workings of biblical poetry in chapter 3.

In their exposition of Proverbs chapters 1-9, the metaphor of house-building is highlighted, applied both to God's creation of the world and the construction of our lives following the dictates of wisdom. A whole chapter is devoted to the heroic woman of Proverbs 31, for it is a rich source of theological reflection and social critique.

The book of Job is seen as a reminder that bad things can happen to good people, and the authors explore what the book means for 'theodicy' (holding on to the goodness of God in a world infected with evil). Certainly the book of Job rebukes our tendency to give too-easy answers to suffering people. Again, one particular chapter is expounded in depth, Job 28, which is understood as placed in Job's mouth. On this interpretation, Job in chapter 28 mocks the overconfidence of his know-all friends and their claim to dispense true wisdom. It is a re-

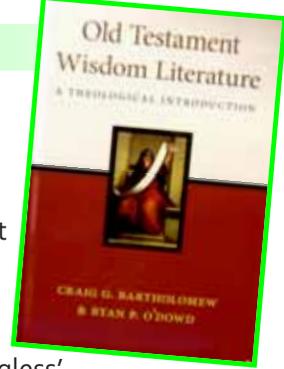
buke to us all not to think that we know more than we do (a very common problem!).

In Ecclesiastes, life is seen as enigmatic but not 'meaningless' (making the NIV translation of the book's motto extremely unfortunate). I find Bartholomew and O'Dowd's assessment of Solomon's study of life unnecessarily critical and negative, for they are constantly wanting to point to supposed tensions and contradictions in his argument. They devote a chapter to the discussion of the famous poem about time in Ecclesiastes 3. There is an appropriate time for different actions (a time for this, and a time for that), but unfortunately human beings cannot discover what the time is. We regularly misread situations and so act inappropriately. Certainly this unique Old Testament book is the closest we find in the Bible to (inspired) philosophical reasoning, and that is its appeal to university students!

Bartholomew and O'Dowd show how the New Testament writers take up and adapt Old Testament wisdom themes and thinking in their explanation of Jesus as the 'Wisdom of God' and of the Christian life as the way of wisdom. They also try to show that a coherent theology of wisdom is provided by the Old Testament as a whole. This is done in a superb way, for the authors are not only accomplished Old Testament scholars but have the theological and philosophical depth to integrate the Old Testament with the ethical and intellectual questions of the present time.

The ambitious aims of this book are largely achieved, namely of reviving the Old Testament wisdom tradition as a resource for the theology and ethics of the church today.

— Greg Goswell

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