

The Greatest Journey – New Samaritan's Purse Program For Children

SAMARITAN'S Purse Australia has announced the launch of a new discipleship program for children, called *The Greatest Journey*. Following a pilot this year in Fiji and Papua New Guinea which reached 1,500 children, *The Greatest Journey* is projected to reach a total of 21,000 children in 2013 in Thailand, Cambodia, Fiji and Papua New Guinea.

'Our vision is to eventually reach 150,000 children with *The Greatest Journey* every year in the South East Asia Pacific region,' said Jorge Rodrigues, Executive Director of Samaritan's Purse Australia/New Zealand.

'In the countries where we work, parents will be able to send their children to *The Greatest Journey*. Attendance is completely voluntary and children are not required to attend *The Greatest*

Journey in order to receive an Operation Christmas Child shoe box,' Jorge said. 'This program explains the Gospel of Jesus Christ so that children can make an informed decision about accepting Jesus as Lord and Saviour.'

The Greatest Journey material is printed in over 70 languages and contains colourful illustrations that explain the Good News of Jesus Christ in a simple, engaging style.



Children in Vietnam receiving their Operation Christmas Child boxes. Photo credit: Samaritan's Purse.

The 12-lesson program guides children through a study of who Jesus Christ is, what it means to follow Him, and how to share His message with others. Children who complete the program are given a Bible in their own language. All of the materials used for *The Greatest Journey* are provided at the request of local churches and ministry partners. For more information go to: www.samaritanspurse.org.au

Good News For School Chaplaincy – Romans 8.28 Rides Again!

IN the wake of the High Court decision re School Chaplaincy and resultant decisions by Federal Parliament, Evonne Paddison, CEO of ACCESS Ministries, writes:

Well what a result for chaplaincy! Chaplaincy was confirmed by both sides of politics as a result of the High Court ruling. The recent High Court decision was a defining moment for several reasons and understandably attracted widespread media, political and community interest. The High Court issue has resulted in:

- Confirmation that faith-based chaplains may work in schools and no constitutional matters relating to church/state relations have been breached.
- A Bill in parliament has been passed ensuring that the Commonwealth can continue to fund our chaplains.
- The program has overwhelming bi-partisan support and as one politician has said to me, with that kind of support it has ensured chaplaincy funding for another 10 years!

Of course, the passage of legislation ensuring continued funding by the Commonwealth of the National School Chaplaincy Program is not only a marvellous outcome for chaplaincy but for children, schools and local communities. We have much for which to be thankful.

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TO THE POINT ...

Moving With The Times – At 75

WHEN the London *Times* newspaper moved its advertising from the front page to the inside of the paper, and when later it changed format from broadsheet to tabloid, all sorts of dire predictions were forthcoming but largely unfulfilled. In Australia, Fairfax and News Limited have recently announced massive restructuring with similar (and predictable) nay-saying. Time will tell who is right.

Meanwhile, here at 'the little paper for the little people of God' we've been quietly moving ahead of the game. Seventy five years ago our Founding Editor, Eric Daley, launched this Christian newspaper under the name *The Edifier*. *Edifier* by name was edifying by nature – building up the Lord's people in their most holy faith by telling the story of His mighty deeds in all the world. At the end of the first year *The Edifier* merged with the *Bible Union Quarterly* and took on the rather snappy new name: *New Life*.

As the economics of print publication became ever more challenging, *New Life* moved to fortnightly publication before ceasing publication for a brief time on 25 November 2010. Then, acknowledging the loss many had felt and expressed, and after much prayer and planning, not to mention regathering of our strength, we re-emerged as a web and email publication on 2 March 2011, first on a monthly basis and now fortnightly.

We are grateful to God for His enabling and to you, the members of our growing new e-Family for your encouragement and support.

As we step over the threshold of our 75th year we rededicate *New Life* to the service of the Lord and His people as we simply try to tell the story of what He is doing through His people in His world today. And yes, we'll do whatever it takes under God to *Tell The Old, Old Story* in *The Brave New World*.

– Bob Thomas

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When you are finished there, click on the back button to return to *NEW LIFE*.

Burma & Sudan: Warfare Against Christians

EARLIER this month two horrendous wars marked one year since the breakout of hostilities. The Islamist Arab-supremacist regime in Khartoum, Sudan, began its genocidal campaign against the predominantly Christian Africans of the Nuba Mountains, South Kordofan, on 5 June 2011. The Buddhist Burman-supremacist regime in Naypyidaw, Burma (Myanmar), launched its military campaign against the Christian Kachin of Kachin State in northern Burma on 9 June 2011. In fact these are only the most recent episodes in two long histories of military brutality, ethnic cleansing and even attempted genocide. Despite the enormity of the human suffering, the 'international community' and the mainstream media are largely uninterested, for these conflicts – one a declared Islamic jihad, the other a blight on the Burmese fairytale – are just too hot to handle, too politically incorrect to touch. Furthermore their poor Christian victims are actually an inconvenience to those who make decisions based on economic and geo-strategic interests, as distinct from righteousness and justice. These 'inconvenient' Christians – victims of greed and racial-religious hatred – need our prayers.

Burma (Myanmar): Ethnic Cleansing Of The Kachin
UN figures put the total number of Internally Displaced People in Kachin State at over 62,000 with some 24,000 in camps in government-controlled areas. Another estimated 40,000 are in areas controlled by the Kachin Independence Army where government blockades ensure that humanitarian aid (including food and medical supplies) is scarce. The KIA puts the number of IDPs at closer to 100,000. Well over 7,000 refugees have fled across the border into China. Medics fear that without mosquito nets the rainy season will herald an explosion of malaria cases. Further to this, a Human Rights Watch consultant and Burma specialist, Matthew Smith, warns that 'the IDP camps are essentially pools of prey for human traffickers'. Military violence has left some of the IDPs severely traumatised (eg speechless, incontinent). Churches throughout the state, who are providing for and sheltering hundreds of IDPs each, are struggling greatly, especially as Burmese soldiers routinely intimidate pastors and attack churches. The Kachin are a Christian people with a distinctly Chris-

tian culture and Burma's Buddhist Burman-supremacist regime wants to exploit their resource-rich ancestral lands.

Sudan: Genocide Of The Nuba

Hundreds of thousands of displaced predominantly Christian Africans in South Kordofan are facing a slow and agonising death by starvation due to famine engineered with genocidal intent by the National Islamic Front/National Congress Party regime in Khartoum. The Nuba are a predominantly Christian

African people and the Islamist Arab-supremacist regime in Khartoum is in the process of annihilating them so it can control their resource-rich ancestral lands. In refugee camps in South Sudan, some of those who have survived the long trek from South Kordofan and Blue Nile State have been dying from dehydration, diarrhoea and sheer exhaustion. The Jamam refugee camp in South Sudan's Upper Nile State holds some 20,000 refugees. An aid worker from Oxfam, Peter Struijf, told Associated Press that children are already perishing and the camp will be out of water in a week. Whilst the impending rainy season will provide much needed water for refugees, it will exacerbate the plight of

'O LORD, You hear the desire of the afflicted; You will strengthen their heart; You will incline Your ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man who is of the Earth may strike terror no more.'
(Psalm 10.17,18 ESV)

the estimated 40,000 IDPs still trekking south.

'For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armour of God ... praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.' (Taken from Ephesians 6.12-18 ESV.)

Please Pray Specifically That:

- Jehovah-Jireh (the Lord who provides) will provide Kachin and Sudanese refugees with all their needs; may the Holy Spirit strengthen their hearts, keeping faith and hope alive, so they will seek the Lord and experience His grace and power.
- Yahweh Sabaoth (the Lord of Hosts/the Commander of Heaven's Angelic Armies) will intervene for His people to deliver vengeance to their enemies and recompense to the victims (Isaiah 35.4; 40.10).

– Written for the Australian Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty Commission by **Elizabeth Kendal**, international religious liberty analyst, advocate, and member of the AEA RLC team.

Chris And Judy Ayers – Off To Poland With Love

DURING the last four years Chris and Judy Ayers and their four children have been living in Opole, a city of 130,000 people, in the south west of Poland. Nine-tenths of Poland's 38 million are nominally Catholic and 60% of these people attend church regularly. But the whole country is heavily influenced by Catholicism. It is intrinsically woven into Polish culture. Only 0.1 % of Polish church-goers are evangelical believers. In Opole there are about 230 evangelicals who attend three small churches.

Opole is a university city, with 30,000 students in residence. This is a wonderful opportunity to present God's free gift of salvation to many young people who are searching for the meaning of religion in their lives.

Chris spent his childhood in Sydney, surrounded by a Christian family. He cannot pin-point the time of his conversion, as he gradually became aware of Jesus as his Saviour. Judy grew up in Wagga Wagga with no Christian influence. But her friends invited her to a Church of Christ meeting where she responded to the Gospel, aged 15.

They met during their first year at university in Queensland. Judy was invited to a Capernwray Conference and Chris was leading the worship. After graduating as teachers, they married and settled into a happy suburban lifestyle.

Then in 2000, Chris felt God's call on his life to formal ministry. In 2003 he started a correspondence course with Bible College of Victoria. Then 2005 saw the family relocate to Melbourne to enable him to complete his Master of Divinity degree.

Again the Lord burdened their hearts with Poland. After much prayer and many enquiries, they felt Send International was the mission to which God was leading them. Send International is a mission organization committed to mobilize God's people to engage the unreached and establish reproducing churches. Send Int plants churches where there is less than 2% evangelical believers. It was founded in 1947 by a group of World War 2

veterans who returned to America burdened with the spiritual needs of Asia. They formed Far Eastern Gospel Crusade. In 1971 they merged with Central Alaskan Mission. Then in 1981 the mission broadened its horizons to include Europe, and became known as Send Int. Today they have 600 missionaries serving in 20 countries.

In June 2008 the Ayers family, with three small children and a five month old baby left Australia for the eastern European country of Poland, bordering the Baltic Sea. As Send Int specializes in church-planting they were assigned to Opole where a small church had been planted by a Baptist group in a neighbouring city.

As the children attend the local government school, they soon learned Polish. Today the school is happy for Chris and Judy to conduct Christian children's clubs and other activities to help the pupils learn English. In the future, Chris envisages adult literacy classes in English at this same school.

Chris and Judy have been concentrating on mastering the Polish language during the last four years. The policy of Send Int is for their workers to be fluent in the language before commencing ministry. At first this caused some conflict with the local Christians, who expected them to assume leadership roles immediately. But in the last year, Chris has been able to start preaching, leading Bible Studies, mentoring and discipling new believers as he has become fluent in Polish.

He is now the leader of Send Int in Opole. When they return to Poland, Chris and Judy aim to help the believers grow into independence and eventually plant a church in another small community.

For more information on the Ayers family and Send Int check the website www.send.org

– Barbara Prout ('Mrs DP')



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Campsie Chinese Congreg'l Church's New Home

AFTER completing the settlement on its new (South Croydon) property in June 2009 and submitting its Development Application in August of the same year, the members and adherents of Campsie Chinese Congregational Church are eagerly looking forward to the completion of their new church, hopefully by mid-August.

Three years of prayer, waiting for DA and building approvals and sacrificial giving have reached their fruition. The internal reconstruction is well under way and will see the provision of undercover car parking, a pastor's office, library, kitchen, toilets, foyer and a soundproof worship hall. Conversion of the former Presbyterian Social Services Welfare Depot has been a huge undertaking but the vision of what it might become is finally being realised.

Please pray for: the safety of the workers; the reconstruction work to be completed according to the requirements of council so an occupancy certificate can be issued without delay; the provision of necessary funding to complete all necessary work.

New Worship Venue For Waterloo Chinese Congregational Church

Waterloo Chinese Congregational Church (in inner Sydney) is changing its name and meeting place. In recent weeks it has been worshipping in the Leichhardt Congregational Church building at 4.30pm, for which it is very thankful, but from 8 July, it will meet in the Newington Community Centre at its former meeting time of 2pm.

It will also adopt a new name—the Living Water Chinese Congregational Church. Please pray for the church as it adjusts to these significant changes.

Interesting, Isn't It?

FAMILY Voice Australia reports that a study published in Melbourne's *Herald Sun* newspaper shows that children with straight parents are wealthier, healthier and happier than those with gay parents, according to a major study of 3,000 young adults. Children with gay parents tended to end up with less money, poorer mental health and were more likely to be on welfare. The study found children 'appear most apt to succeed well as adults ... when they spend their entire childhood with their married mother and father (*Herald Sun* 12.6.12 p11).

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'... 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)

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- Tay Plain - TRIBAL

"We were so blessed by this seminar in 2011. It was an answer to our prayers as we got so much practical information out of the day and were able to meet many inspiring people. Thank you! Blessings" - Susan Jo

We would like to thank all our sponsors



New Wesley Mission Centre Is One Stop Shop For Community And Aged Care Services In Newcastle And Hunter Region



A NEW centre bringing together the multiple services of Wesley Mission under one roof was officially opened in Newcastle on 28 June 2012.

Wesley Mission CEO, the Rev Dr Keith Garner, and State Member for Hunter, Tim Owen, opened the new Wesley Mission Centre Newcastle. The centre covers a precinct from Denison Street to Wood Street in West Newcastle. Dr Garner was also joined at the event by the Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Councillor John Tate, and Minister at Hamilton-Broadmeadow Uniting Church, the Rev Amelia Koh-Butler, as well as Wesley Mission managers and staff.

The service hub will provide the people of the Hunter Region with a one stop-shop in the heart of the city of Newcastle.

'The centre will deliver a wide range of community services that address the changing needs of people in the city and the region,' Dr Keith Garner said. 'When a person comes to Wesley Mission with an issue we often find that they or their family require other forms of counsel and support. This new centre will make it easier for people to access multiple services under one roof. It is an integrated approach which will achieve better outcomes for those we serve.'

'For example, when a homeless person comes to the centre looking for accommodation they may also need general or financial counselling support, emergency relief and vocational training,' Dr Garner said. The premises on the site have undergone a restructure and refurbishment costing \$358,000.

The Centre Will Provide:

- Youth services and counselling.
- Financial and gambling counselling.
- General counselling.
- Carer support services.
- Aged care services.
- Home and Community Care.
- Vocational training.
- Family services.
- Emergency food and cash relief.
- Homeless services.
- Chaplaincy.

'The centre creates the opportunity to link up services and work on creative new ways of servicing disadvantaged people,' Dr Garner said. 'It is a common sense approach for both clients and Wesley Mission.'

'Clients will no longer have to travel between our services. This is especially important for people travelling from regional communities in the Hunter. It will cut down on time and cost, and provide better outcomes.'

'Wesley Mission seeks to develop new models of caring and to work at enduring, long-term solutions, so that wellbeing is translated to independent living and to fulfilling and sustainable relationships which make for healthy communities.'

State Member for Newcastle, Tim Owen, said Wesley Mission played a significant role in the Newcastle community and that the new centre was a superb initiative.

— Graeme Cole

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FROM ALL QUARTERS ...

A Royal Gift: Bibles To Celebrate The Queen's Diamond Jubilee



Eternity Newspaper's Karen Mudge reports:

ENGLAND is celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth in oh so many ways, but amidst the cake, pomp and circumstance, the Queen has made requests that may surprise and encourage her Christian constituents at home and abroad. In celebration of her 60-year reign, the Queen has requested that the Bible be distributed to the people of the United Kingdom. Her Majesty is specifically interested in distributing New Testaments through churches and schools, and her request has resulted in 675,000 copies to be placed in the hands of people as they celebrate her 60 years of service.

Produced by the Church of England, HOPE and Biblica, the souvenir Diamond Jubilee edition of the New Testament was created to be given away by local churches in schools, at street parties and other Diamond Jubilee events and initiatives.

Once Biblica made churches and schools aware of the opportunity to distribute Bibles in honour of the Queen, the response was overwhelming. 'We could never have imagined the response to the Diamond Jubilee New Testament offer when the idea was first discussed,' said Mark Finnie, Church and Bible Engagement Director at Biblica. The original goal was 250,000 units, which was considered a very high goal for the UK. With the current figure at 675 000, Finnie notes that, The New Testament will reach over one in 100 people in the UK.'

The New Testament includes eight pages of images from the coronation and the Queen's life, linking her 60-year reign and her Christian faith. There is a suggested reading section with Bible references on various topics and a clear guide to help readers understand the significance of Christ's birth, life, death and resurrection.

As well as initiating the distribution of the Bible, the Queen commissioned a prayer to mark her Diamond Jubilee. Churches across the UK will use the prayer during the celebrations, which thanks God for His blessing and for the Queen's reign, and asks on her behalf that God would, 'In this year of Jubilee, grant her Your gifts of love and joy and peace as she continues in faithful obedience to You, her Lord and God, and in devoted service to her lands and peoples, and those of the Commonwealth, now and all the days of her life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.'



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Australia Rallying To Support School Chaplaincy

SCRIPTURE Union Queensland has thanked both the Federal Government and Opposition for their immediate and emphatic support of school chaplaincy, after the recent High Court decision. Incoming CEO Peter James said the ruling that the current Federal Government funding model was unconstitutional has produced a massive outpouring of support for school chaplaincy from across the nation.

'Chaplains provide such an important role to so many school communities, and while the court's decision is a speed bump, it is also an opportunity for the public to understand more about chaplaincy,' he explained.

Attorney General Nicola Roxon, Education Minister Peter Garrett, Opposition Leader Tony Abbott and Opposition Education Spokesperson Christopher Pyne are among a host of MPs from both sides of parliament that have voiced their support for the National School Chaplaincy Program and their determination to resolve the funding issue quickly.

However Mr James pointed to the groundswell of public support as the most pleasing result of the decision. 'People are calling talkback radio sharing stories of how their kids have been helped by their local "chappy" and many are making the point that they are not religious themselves. This is a vote of confidence in the professionalism of our chaplains, who focus on the welfare of all children and youth irrespective of background or beliefs.'

Mr James said some people still believe that chaplains are involved in religious education, but this is not correct. 'The Federal Government's guidelines are crystal clear about that. Those that have seen the results of chaplaincy first-hand really understand and appreciate their support role,' he said.

Mr James said that all chaplains were encouraged by the commitment of the Federal Government and Opposition to work together and also by the support of State Government MPs including Queensland Premier Campbell Newman, adding, 'We now need the political process to happen quickly so we can settle any uncertainty.'

'Time's Up' – ACL Renews Call For Same-Sex Marriage Debate To Be Brought On

WITH debate now seemingly concluded on same-sex marriage in the Federal Parliament, a vote should immediately be brought on according to the Australian Christian Lobby.

It is understood that all the speakers who wished to put their name forward did so for the final day of debate on Stephen Jones' private member's bill to redefine marriage. Of eight speakers, five opposed changing the definition of marriage. An equal number spoke from Labor and the Coalition. A Greens/Independent Bill was also debated in Parliament.

ACL Managing Director Jim Wallace said that with three bills in the Parliament and three parliamentary inquiries into same-sex marriage held over the past two years, there had been more than enough parliamentary time spent on this issue. 'It might suit supporters of redefining marriage to keep dragging this out, but I think most people have well and truly had enough of this debate and wish for it to be speedily resolved,' Mr Wallace said. 'The Government should bring on the vote before the winter recess so that the Parliament can get on with other important business facing our nation.'

The latest debate follows a House of Representatives inquiry report released recently where same-sex marriage was opposed four-two, with one uncertain. 'No one disputes that the Parliament has made up its mind to support marriage remaining as it is,' Mr Wallace said.

Several of the speakers in the latest debate expressed their unhappiness at being labelled 'homophobic' or 'bigot' because they supported marriage as being between a man and a woman.

ACL Renews Call For Bi-Partisanship On Asylum Seekers As New Disaster Unfolds

THE latest unfolding humanitarian disaster in the Indian Ocean underscores the urgent need for a bi-partisan solution to stopping the dangerous people smuggling trade, according to the Australian Christian Lobby. ACL Managing Director Jim Wallace says that both sides have played politics over the asylum seeker issue and lives are being lost as a result. 'It is now time for a bi-partisan solution, even if it is an interim solution,' Mr Wallace said, adding: 'ACL has long advocated that Australia raise its humanitarian intake and that a clear message should be sent that UNHCR-designated refugees would be preferred over those paying for passage on a people smuggler's boat. We must break the criminals' business model.'

Steve Saint Suffers 'Paralyzing Injury' Testing New Missionary Technology

STEVE Saint, the 61-year-old son of martyred MAF missionary, Nate Saint, has been seriously injured in Gainesville, Florida, while testing new missionary technology.

According to an e-mail sent out by his company, I-TEC (www.itecusa.org), Saint sustained a 'paralyzing injury' on Tuesday 12 June at around 10.15am while testing 'an experimental wing mounted to a vehicle.'

The message continued, 'Right now, Steve has no control of feet or hands, but his mind is clear and he does have some motion and sensation in all four limbs.'

'Steve's ministry theme for the last decade has been *Let God Write Your Story*. Shortly after being flown by helicopter to Shands Teaching Hospital at the University of Florida in Gainesville, Steve told his family, 'Let's let God write this chapter, too.'

Uganda's Anglican Bishops Elect Orombi's Successor

ANGLICAN bishops in Uganda announced on 22 June that they elected the Rt Rev Stanley Ntagali as Archbishop and Primate. He succeeds the high-profile Henry Orombi, described by many as charismatic but criticized in the Anglican Communion for his stance on homosexuality. Ntagali, the Bishop of Masindi-Katara and former provincial secretary, was chosen at a House of Bishops' meeting at St Paul's Cathedral in Kampala. He will be installed as the eighth archbishop on 16 December.

Clarification: Baptist Church Comes Out In Support Of Marriage

A SYDNEY Baptist pastor said to have been advocating for same-sex marriage has reiterated his position disapproving of sexual intercourse outside of heterosexual marriage, and says his church supports the official Baptist understanding of marriage and that he would never conduct a same-sex marriage.

Pastor Mike Hercock, senior minister of the Surry Hills Baptist Church, also known as *Imagine*, had been quoted in the gay press and in major newspapers as supporting same-sex marriage.

On the issue of church and state, Pastor Hercock indicated that he believed the state should not be compelled to legislate in favour of a Christian view of marriage, and was therefore free to allow same-sex marriages. The Association of Baptist Churches in NSW & ACT disagrees with Pastor Hercock on this understanding of the role of the state.

Association President Mr John Brew said he was pleased to learn that the Surry Hills Baptist Church affirmed marriage as an exclusive lifelong covenant between a man and a woman, a view reflected in current federal marriage legislation.

The Surry Hills Baptist Church is a member of the Association of Baptist Churches in NSW & ACT, formerly known as the Baptist Union of NSW, whose constitution specifically rules out member churches or pastors conducting same-sex marriages.

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Email: mdonnan@heathdale.vic.edu.au

'Bloodiest Month Yet' – Boko Haram Threatens Nigerian Churches

CHRISTIAN Solidarity Worldwide is calling for an increased security presence in five northern and central Nigerian states following a threat by Boko Haram to quadruple attacks on churches to make June 2012 'the bloodiest month yet.' This threat follows attacks by gunmen and bombers on churches in northern Nigeria on three consecutive Sundays and an armed raid on the Yobe State capital that occasioned many casualties.

On 20 June, a spokesperson from Boko Haram told *Sahara Reporters* news agency that the group had around 300 suicide bombers ready to attack churches in predominantly Christian Southern Kaduna and Plateau State. The group claims to have recruited the sons and daughters of Muslims killed during past sectarian conflicts, who have received arms and bomb-making training in Mauritania and Somalia.

Boko Haram also announced plans to attack or take over government buildings in Kano, Kaduna, Yobe and Gombe states, adding that a major attack on the Federal Capital territory, namely, the capital Abuja, was planned before the end of June as a show of strength to prove that the Nigerian security

agencies could not contain them.

CSW's Advocacy Director Andrew Johnston said, 'Boko Haram has made its deadly intentions clear and the authorities must respond by stepping up security in targeted areas, both to protect innocent civilians and to defuse any likelihood of reprisal attacks. Once again Boko Haram has articulated its links with Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Al Shabaab in Somalia. The security implications of this co-operation go beyond Nigeria's borders, and international co-operation is vital to disrupt the organisation's funders, backers and training network.

'Unfortunately, the recent decision by the United States to only designate three Boko Haram members as terrorists, as opposed to the entire organisation, will not address the scope of the problem posed by Boko Haram and will therefore be of limited use in disrupting its networks. Its stated links to international terrorist networks urgently require a far more comprehensive approach, especially since the de-facto state created in part in northern Mali by a group sympathetic to AQIM now raises the possibility of an Afghanistan-style base for Al Qaeda in West Africa.'

Azerbaijani Church Faces Shut-Down

A CHRISTIAN congregation in Azerbaijan is waiting to see if a judge will uphold a court order banning its right to meet and 'liquidating' the church. Judge Tahira Asadova of Baku's Administrative Economic Court on 25 April ordered the Greater Grace Church to be 'liquidated' after the State Committee on Work with Religious Organizations filed suit against it for failing to register. The liquidation rendered all activities of the church illegal. The church appealed the decision on 24 May and is waiting for another ruling, scheduled for 17 July, from a judge at the Baku Court of Appeals. 'If the court upholds the decision, we will have no right to assemble,' said Mechti Suleymanov, an elder at Greater Grace Church in Baku. 'If we continue to meet, then they will come and start harassing us.' The Greater Grace Church registered with the Justice Ministry in 1993 and gave copies of its registration papers to the SCWRO. Forum 18 News says the committee never sent the church a request to re-file a registration with the committee. Church leaders said they were informed of the need to register only after a committee-set deadline had already passed. – *Compass*

Christians Arrested In Laos

LAO officials arrested two Lao and two Thai Christians in Luang Namtha Province earlier this month, seizing them from a private residence in Long district, according to Human Rights Watch for Lao Religious Freedom. Officials also arrested a pastor in Luang Namtha and dismissed two civil servants in Savannakhet for converting to Christianity. An HRWLRF source told *Compass* that officials have charged the two Lao and two Thai Christians arrested on 16 June in Luang Namtha with 'spreading the Christian faith without official approval.' Thai brothers Jonasa and Phanthakorn Wiwatdamrong, along with two local residents, one identified as Chalar and the other as yet unidentified, were taken directly to Luang Namtha provincial prison. Under normal procedure, detainees would be held in a village or district prison for 36 hours during a preliminary investigation before transferring to provincial facilities. Elsewhere, the military commander of Phin district, Savannakhet Province, on 14 June discharged two members of the Alowmai village security force, identified as Khamsorn and Tonglai, for converting to Christianity. – *Compass*

trypraying – The Story Rolls On

Further to our story about 'try praying' (NL 2012-06-15, p.2) the following news has arrived:

EASTER in Edinburgh was exciting this year with generous giving by so many people and churches, making an outstanding story of God's provision. We raised the full £18,000 needed for booking 40 bus advertisements for 4 weeks. The large 'T sides' on the Edinburgh double-decker buses simply said '*trypraying*'.

The bus campaign was also accompanied by 40 days of prayer during Lent by believers across Edinburgh. Churches all over the city signed up for this, taking on a 24 hour slot each. Hundreds of *trypraying* booklets were handed out to friends and family members with the challenge to try praying for a week.

Controversial! Hyper Vague! Detrimental! Irritating!

It was to be expected that the simple statement '*trypraying*' would provoke a response. So what was the reaction? The Edinburgh University *Satire* magazine branded *trypraying* as a 'hyper vague advertising campaign' and 'ridiculous'. The Advertising Standards Authority in London received a complaint that our bus adverts were 'detrimental to the psychological wellbeing of people by giving them false hope.' Nevertheless the complaint against *trypraying* was overruled and the file closed. We have also received emails from irritated atheists concerning our website content. It's a reminder that in secular Britain our message, that there is a God who cares and rescues, is utterly controversial.

A Lot Of Positive Reaction Too

This email into the *trypraying* office was greatly encouraging: 'I saw the advert on the Lothian Buses on Southbridge (in Edinburgh) and it was such a clear and simple message that both my friend and I have actually started to pray! I want to commend you all for an excellent campaign! It is the most relevant and modern campaign for God that I have ever seen. It had a big impact on me and I am sure it will on others. Thank you for doing it and reminding us all about God in this very materialistic world. Please keep going with the campaign. It is very important.'

And Now Australia

There have been over 12,500 visits to the website trypraying.co.uk; 100+ requests for a free booklet; and requests for booklets from churches around the UK. There is also interest from New Zealand, Canada and now Australia: in a town called Merredin plans are to use our resources for an initiative uniting local churches in prayer for the community. A central part of their plan is handing out *trypraying* booklets to friends and neighbours.

USA

During the 40 days the logo *trypraying* was displayed on the side of 40 buses in the city we received a call from a Professor from Yale University. While sitting in the Sheraton Hotel dining room he had watched the buses passing on Lothian Road. He was also chaplain at the university, and he felt that the *trypraying* campaign seemed like a great idea to use on the campus to stir students to think about prayer and God.

Anyone Coming To The Edinburgh Festival?

The Edinburgh Festival Prayer Room looks set to happen. Titled as *Try Praying At The Festival* this 24/7 prayer room will run on Friday 17 and Saturday 18 August. There will be creative prayer throughout. The day will end with an open air prayer event on the Royal Mile! More information:

<http://edinfestpray.wordpress.com/>

Ministry Celebrates Milestone In Zambia Biblestick Need Soars

KIDS Alive Zambia is celebrating their first-ever graduate from their program. It's a big deal because 15 years ago, Mushaukwa lost both parents and found himself on the streets. Eventually, he found his way to the ministry and a sponsor. The sponsorship provided safe haven, food, education, and an introduction to Christ. He has a brighter future now because of Kids Alive's intervention. They're helping 450 kids in similar situations. Full story:

<http://www.MNNonline.org/article/17361>

US military chaplains are gearing up for 4 July by requesting tons of *Military BibleSticks*. Faith Comes By Hearing has been making these mp3 players which contain the *New Testament* for five years. They had the positive dilemma this month of too many requests and not enough *BibleSticks*. 5,000 churches came together to meet this need and give spiritual encouragement to US troops. They will present the project on 4 July. Please pray for troops, for their salvation and protection.

UPCOMING EVENTS ...

MST Mini-Conference: *Recapturing Evangelical Identity*

RECAPTURING Evangelical Identity is a two day mini-conference for pastors, teachers, students and engaged Christians in late July at Melbourne School of Theology featuring guest speakers from North America, Dr Carl Trueman and Dr Darrell Bock. The Conference is an attempt to rearticulate the core of Gospel conviction that has historically identified evangelicals. This articulation will squarely face some challenges presented by current debate in order to forge a new appreciation of these same convictions as the Church sets its face to serve Christ faithfully before the watching world.

Carl Trueman and Darrell Bock are both eminently qualified to address these concerns and will deal with two current stress points: the historicity of the Gospel records, and the response to the competing authority claims of the evangelical vision among the wider church. Further details and registration:

recapturingevangelicalidentity.com

150th Anniversary

MANLY Congregational Church will celebrate its 150th Anniversary on Sunday 9 September 2012 at 2pm. The service will be led by Rev Hon Fred Nile MLC (President of the Fellowship of Congregational Churches) and the speaker will be Rev Alan Best (FCC General Secretary). The following Sunday, 16 September, at 2pm there will be a *Hymn-a-Thon*. All are welcome.

Understanding The *Qur'an* Course:

BERNIE Power will be teaching this 15 week course at Swanston St in the City (Melbourne) from Wednesday 1 August to Wednesday 7 November from 7.15–9.30 pm. A free *Qur'an* is included. The cost will be \$400 (extra if doing it for a degree credit). The course takes a thematic approach, looking at the *Qur'an's* teaching on Allah, Humanity, Sin, Salvation, Jesus And The Prophets, The Holy Books, Jews And Christians, Women, Jihad And Science, and Using The *Qur'an* In Evangelistic Witness To Muslims. Contact the Melbourne School of Theology on 03 9881 7800 for further details.

Writer's Conference

WOMBAT Books will hold a *Word Writers' Getaway* from 12-14 October 2012. So many Christians have the desire to write to share their faith or communicate truths to others, but they don't know how to get started. The Getaway will feature two full days of workshops, panels, seminars and master classes.

Speakers include Mary Hawkins, author of 19 books, Paul Clark, author of the popular Car Park Parables series, Jo Wanmer, who attends a Baptist Church in Brisbane.

The Getaway will be held at Alex Park in Alexandra Headlands on the Sunshine Coast, Qld, and will include the launch of several new publications. There is an option available for day visits if people are unable to come for the whole weekend. The CALEB Award will be decided on Saturday night.

Some of the featured workshops include: *How To Write Great Point Of View*, *Writing Faith In Children's Fiction*, *Novel Structure*, *Educational Market*, *Self-Publishing Discussions*, *Design Your Marketing Plan*.

For more information visit www.thewordwriters.com or phone 0430 544 482.

Biblical Counselling Course

BIBLICAL Counselling Australia will hold their Inaugural Melbourne Network Day on 21 July 2012 at South Yarra Presbyterian Church, 621 Punt Rd, South Yarra. This will be an opportunity to find out more about Biblical Counselling Australia, meet other people interested in biblical counselling, share what you have been doing, ask questions, hear Darren Farrell from Anglicare Sydney talk on addictions and learn in small group case study discussion – if time permits! The cost will be just a gold coin donation for afternoon tea. Contact Karl Hood on 0417 144 765 or email: karl@biblicalcounselling.org.au

Crossway's Missions Conference

AS part of Crossway's (formerly Queensland Bible College) ongoing commitment to cross-cultural mission, the college will be hosting the inaugural Missions Conference, called *Gen12*, on Saturday 14 July, from 9am to 4.30pm at the Toowong campus, 1 Cross Street, Toowong. It will follow on from the annual Eric Liddell lecture, on Friday 13 July, with international speaker Rev Dr Graham Cole. The topic of the Eric Liddell lecture will be: *A Churchless Engagement With A Christless World: 1 Peter And Mission*. *Gen12* is being hosted and sponsored by Crossway College with the support of several mission agencies in Queensland. The purpose of the one-day conference is to engage, educate and excite 18-35 year olds about cross-cultural and world mission. The day will consist of teaching, music and prayer, as well as seminars led by specialists.

To register go to: www.crossway.edu.au

HERE TO HELP ...

An App To Help Your Prayer Life

City Bible Forum has developed EPT, a really useful android app to help Christians pray for each other and for their non-Christian contacts. It records prayer notes and tracks progress in sharing Jesus. It can be purchased from the Google Play Store for \$1.99.

It enables users to set up multiple teams (for work, church, ...). *Action Steps* offer suggestions for making progress in evangelism. Use the app when praying with your team and in private. It contains helpful articles on evangelism and running a Prayer Team for evangelism.

CBF expects to finish an iPhone version by the end of the year. For more details go to:

info@citybibleforum.org

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All New Growing Faith Kids! Website Launched

GROWING Faith is very pleased to announce the launch of their brand new interactive website specifically for young children – *Growing Faith Kids!*

Fully developed in Australia, the tablet and iPad friendly website brings together engaging, age-appropriate content coupled with a fresh and clean interface. The website is uniquely 'one page', enhancing the speed with which the user explores the site.

Completely free from third party advertising, *Growing Faith Kids!* is themed around the publications *Growing Faith* have published to date – *Fiz the Flying Fox*, the *Colour Worms* series and *Panda: Home*. Each segment of the website has its own unique content: a video related to the book, a craft or activity, and an online game utilising characters from each publication (two, in the case of *Panda: Home*).

Growing Faith Kids! is free to use and does not collect any information of the user (ie you do not need to register to use it).

Growing Faith Kids! supports the mission and goals of *Growing Faith*, a Youthworks initiative. Visit www.growingfaith.com.au/kids

PLEASE PRAY FOR US (OMF WORKERS) ...

John and Nuch McPherson, Thailand

Pray for refreshment and rest for John and Nuch as they travel, study, and preach. Continue to lift up the local believers for growth in Thailand. John and Nuch plan on staying in Australia until late November and return with full support needed for a further two years of service in Thailand. Please pray that they will clearly sense the LORD's leading about their future ministry and the timing of their return. Please also pray for their level of support that will be needed for returning to Thailand.

David and Tina Cannon, Thailand

David and Tina will be spending six weeks in Australia after arriving back in June. They are here to help Frances settle in Australia before she begins university next year. Pray that they would get all that they want to do in the time they are here, in particular finding a job for Frances. They are also looking for adequate time for rest, fun activities, as well as catching up with people. David and Tina will be sharing at the OMF Box Hill prayer meeting on 6 July.

Jim and Linda McIntosh, Mekong

Term 3 has begun, and the Mac's are in full swing for another season of ministry among the Lisu. Pray for more Lisu people to come to faith. Please pray for the McIntosh's Thai learning, that they will have the time and energy to commit to study. Pray for JOF's ongoing need, and for the Lord's provision to print the Lisu revised Bible.

BOOKS WORTH READING ...

UNDERSTANDING SCRIPTURE: AN OVERVIEW OF THE BIBLE'S ORIGIN, RELIABILITY AND MEANING, Ed Wayne Grudem, C. John Collins And Thomas R. Schreiner, Nottingham: IVP, 2012 – Reviewed By Greg Goswell.

WHAT were originally 19 articles in the *ESV Study Bible* has been turned into the ideal book to read before beginning biblical studies at Bible College, or for a minister to read as a refresher after years away from college, or for a Bible study group leader to use for self-directed learning. I heartily agree, however, with what is stated in the opening chapter about the usefulness (and limitations) of a book like this, namely that 'interpretation is an art, mastered not by rigid adherence to procedures but by long practice conducted under tutors' (p. 12).

This book will not turn anyone overnight into an exegete, but it will alert its user to pitfalls and priorities when reading and studying the Bible – pitfalls like ignoring context and genre when interpreting a particular verse.

We are given the healthy reminder by John Hannah that we are not the first generation to read the Bible. We must not be so proud that we fail to ponder what early church writers and the Reformers said about the Bible. Jim Packer explains that reading the Scriptures 'theologically' means recognising the Bible's focus on God, His being, character, purposes and will. To ignore that would be to trivialise its content. Leland Ryken helps us to get a handle on the Bible as literature. Its literary form is not a husk to throw away; rather its stories and poetry embody God's truth in real (and typical) human experience.

John Piper reminds us that the aim of reading the Bible is communion with God (who shares Himself with us) and our proper response is prayer (wherein we share ourselves with God). Unless it fosters fellowship with God, the study of the Bible is an exercise in futility. David Powlison assures us that the Bible, though written to other people living long ago, speaks to us and is meant to shape our ideas, actions and attitudes. Those passages that directly apply to us without adjustment, as well as those that apply more indirectly, are intended by God to change our lives.

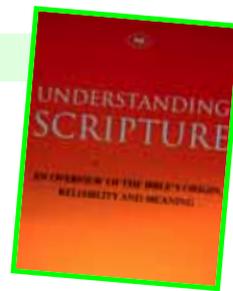
Roger Beckwith shows that we can be confident

that the books of the Old Testament are those accepted as the canon of Scripture by Jesus and the apostles. Charles Hill traces the history of the church's acceptance of the 27 books that make up the New Testament. The reliability of the texts of the Old and New testaments is discussed, with the result that the reader of the Bible can be assured that it is to all intents and purposes identical to what came from the hands of the original authors. There are no textual variants that cast doubt on any biblical doctrine.

Archaeology as the handmaid to biblical studies throws light on events, persons and customs associated with the Bible. The incomplete nature of archaeological evidence means that it should not be used as a basis of our faith in the truth of the Bible, and it certainly should not be used by sceptics in an attempt to debunk the Bible. This is a timely word of caution about what archaeology can and cannot do. There are two remarkably clear chapters that provide simple explanations of how the Hebrew and Greek languages work, and they show the value of a knowledge of these languages for the study of the Bible.

Studying the Bible is hard work, but it is rewarding work, both for the person doing the study and for those hearers who will listen to the fruit of that study in sermons and through discussion groups. A chapter is devoted to the Septuagint, the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament, which was the form of the Old Testament most used in the early centuries of the church. Vern Poythress shows that the unifying thread running through the Old Testament and into the New is the divine plan of salvation leading to Jesus Christ. C. John Collins provides examples of how the New testament authors quote and interpret the Old Testament, showing that the Bible is indeed one book in two parts.

Here, then, is a book that a Bible study group could work through, taking their understanding of the Bible to a new level. It is highly recommended.



Read: 'The Objective Evidence For The Christian Faith'
by David Holden at:
www.defenceofthefaith.org