

## Bringing The 'Forgotten Story' Back To Students

THE Bible Society reports that for many of the 2.3 million public school students across Australia, God's Story found in the Bible is, amazingly, a new story.

No-one has ever shown them how wonderful the Bible really is. In some public schools, religious classes or presentations have not occurred for decades.

Bible Society Australia is committed to bringing God's story in the Bible to the children of Australia, through relevant religious school-based programs.

You can join in this important work by supporting it in the following ways:

### Children's Programs

Bible Society's team of dedicated school workers bring the Bible to life through song, games, animation and story telling. They help children to see that the Bible is worth reading and make thousands of Gospels available for those who would like to read the Bible for themselves.

### Bible Distribution

Bible Society is continually encouraged at the teams of dedicated Scripture teachers who each week bring God's Story to public school children. But they are always in need of more Bibles. In 2013, they are looking to make available 200,000 Bibles and Gospels, their most ambitious target yet.

Some typical comments on Bible distribution are: 'It was hard to get my kids to form an orderly line to receive their Bibles today! I have never seen my class so excited!' (Jenny Flower, Pennant Hills); 'When we give these children Bibles we are giving them a life-long tool to know and love the Word.' (Scripture teacher Marguerite Martin).

Teachers of religious education in public schools can download, print and post your application form from the Bible Society website ([www.biblesociety.org.au/](http://www.biblesociety.org.au/)). Those wishing to help give Bibles in schools by making tax deductible donations may also do so through the website.



## WARNING: Christian Booklets Being Distributed Throughout Iran In A 'Wave of Evangelism'

ACCORDING to *Mohabat News, Fars*, the semi-official Iranian news agency, recently reported that Hojatol-Eslam Mohammad Hassan Akhtari, the General Secretary of a government-funded organization, 'Ahl Al-bayt World Assembly,' stated in a conference in Qom, the largest centre for Shi'a scholarship in the world, 'Christian booklets and brochures are being sent to people's doors for free in many areas.' He also claimed, 'This is not something new.' Stressing that Islam is under a broad and intense attack, he said, 'Christianity is being preached in many shops in the Islamic city of Mashhad. Also Christian booklets are sent to people's addresses without restrictions.' Some time ago, said *Mohabat News, Jomhuri-Eslami*, the regime-supported daily paper, published a report stating, 'House churches have grown in Mashhad over the past few months. Also, some reports indicate that 200 house churches are recognized in the Islamic city.' The *Mohabat News* spokesperson went on to say, 'Mashhad is an Islamic pilgrimage destination and the birthplace of Iran's Supreme Leader, Seyyed Ali Khamenei.'

– Dan Wooding, ASSIST News Service

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## Christianity Can Hold Its Own In The Market-Place Of Ideas

OS Guinness, the Christian apologist and social critic, recently wrote a book entitled *The Case For Civility And Why Our Future Depends On It*. In the book he raises the issue of how humankind can live together when there are such deep differences between us. He asserts that all faiths and no faiths should be free to engage issues from their own perspective and that what is a right for one must be a right for another, 'and we're taught to respect and to listen and how to debate each other persuasively and civilly.'

In *The Acts Of The Apostles* you will note the emphasis of the apostles on persuasion. Acts 18.4 tells us Paul's church planting method was built around persuasion, and in Thessalonica the Jewish converts were said to have been 'persuaded' (Acts 17.4); King Agrippa responds to Paul's testimony by recognizing Paul's persuasive intention: 'Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?' (Acts 26.28)

The Christian faith is historical, unlike other faith systems; it offers no escape from reality. Our Lord Jesus came to a Palestine in as much turmoil then as now. He lived a real bread and butter life and yet without sin. He died an agonizing death. He rose from the dead leaving a real, empty tomb.

We must seek to engage the world with this powerful message, for we believe that God is the persuader and that as we speak, write, testify and preach He will do His work of conviction. Physical and intellectual opposition is no match for spirit-empowered, persuasive Gospel testimony.

We make no threats, we do not abuse or bully, we invite people to consider Christ, the only way to God. With Paul 'we know what it is to fear the Lord and so we seek to persuade men and women' (2 Corinthians 5.11). Whatever the response, we are to respond with civility and respect.

By the way, Guinness nominates the three biggest issues to be faced at the present time:

- Will Islam modernize peacefully?
  - Which faith will fill the vacuum left by Marxism and be the majority faith driving China into the future?
  - Will the West recover or sever its Jewish-Christian roots?
- No great civilization survives if it cuts its roots ...'

— David Cook, Principal Emeritus of Sydney Missionary & Bible College

**COMING SOON:**  
**ROMANS: Momentous News**  
by David Cook  
Serialised in *New Life!*



# CHINA: New Leadership And Promised Reform

THE first session of the 12th National People's Congress, held in the Great Hall of the People in the heart of Beijing, concluded on Sunday 17 March and with it, the once-a-decade transfer of power. Named as Communist Party General Secretary in November 2012, Xi Jinping has been installed as President of the People's Republic of China and Chairman of the Central Military Commission. Communist Party deputy leader Li Keqiang has been installed as Premier. In his address to the Congress, President Xi spoke much of the 'Chinese Dream'. Promising to deliver national rejuvenation, he called on China's 1.37 billion citizens to 'unite as one, and gather into an invincible force with wisdom and power'. He said the Chinese dream must be realised in the Chinese way through a fostering of the Chinese spirit. What this actually means remains to be seen, although Xi seems to have established that unity or conformity of thought and purpose be the means if not the goal. Steve Tsang, an expert in Chinese politics at Britain's University of Nottingham, believes that Xi's over-riding priority is 'whatever it takes to keep the show on, the party in power and (make) China more powerful and influential'.

On 7 January 2013 Meng Jianzhu, China's most senior law enforcement official, hinted on CCTV's Sina Weibo that China may abolish the controversial system of 're-education through labour' established by Mao in the 1950s. However, the posting was quickly deleted and replaced with one saying that the system would be 'reformed' (as distinct from abolished). 'Re-education through labour' is a system of 'administrative discipline': no charges or trial are necessary. Anybody local police consider a problem – whistle-blowers, protesters, political or religious dissidents – they may be sentenced to up to three years of 're-education through labour'. Modelled on the Soviet gulag, China's network of labour camps is known as the 'laogai'. Conditions are appalling, with prisoners working long hours in unsafe conditions, subject to cruel, brutal and inhumane treatment. Whilst the government maintains that 190,000 prisoners are detained in some 320 prison labour camps, expert and laogai survivor Harry Wu has documented the existence of nearly 1000 camps housing up to five million prisoners.

Generally the labour camps have both a prison name and an industry name. For example: Huashan Prison is also Huashan Farm; Hegang Prison is also Qingshishan Stone Quarry; Qingyuan Prison is Shanhe Sulphur Iron Mine; Yingde Prison is Yingde Tea Farm; Quanzhou Prison is Quanzhou Shenghua Knit Clothing Factory; and so on. Indeed the laogai gives 'Made in China' a whole new meaning. Considering that laogai slave-labour forms an integral part of the Chinese economy, abolition of the laogai is unlikely while the Communists are in power. Consequently, most analysts believe any reforms will be purely cosmetic and that problematic dissidents may instead 'disappear' into secret prisons. The laogai will be reserved for certified criminals, of which there will be many more. Reforms might mean that house-church Christians, whose meetings and ministries are illegal, will have to be charged, tried in the courts and incarcerated as criminals rather than just thrown into the laogai on administrative sentences for 're-education through labour'. What impact this has on persecution remains to be seen.

Corrupt local officials have long used the system to silence those who dare speak out against corruption, repression, cruelty and injustice. Increasingly, however, corruption, repression, cruelty and injustice are being exposed – and as knowledge spreads, discontent rises. Sensing this, Beijing's new leaders will be keen to pacify the masses by convincing them that their concerns are being addressed, even if they are not! Zhong Weiguang, a researcher based in Germany believes, 'The form and name of re-education through labour might be removed, because it doesn't look good. But their goals, their control, monitoring, intimidation, and persecution of the people under the dictatorial rule of the Party will be the same.'

– Elizabeth Kendal,

author of *Turn Back The Battle: Isaiah Speaks To Christians Today*  
(<http://turnbackthebattle.com/thebook.html>).

Elizabeth is Adjunct Research Fellow in the Centre for the Study of Islam and Other Faiths at the Melbourne School of Theology.

### Please Pray That The Lord Will:

- make Himself known to China's new leadership team, especially President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang, so that even if they reject Him, it will not be because they have not heard the truth or seen the living God in action;
- shine His light on the Chinese legal system, especially the corruption and injustice of the 're-education through labour' system of administrative discipline, and the cruel and inhumane state-run slave-labour in the laogai; may it reach into the darkest corners and deepest shadows behind China's facade of progress and development;
- continue to bless and build His Church in China, in numbers as well as in grace, knowledge and fortitude, preparing her for the day when she is free to witness openly across the whole nation and the wider region.

## REACHING A MILESTONE

# Lifeline Turns 50, Looks Back And Forward

## – Counselling Service Grew Out Of Clear Christian Vision

'THE 50th anniversary of Lifeline provides an opportunity for the telephone crisis counselling service to recommit its vital work to God,' the Superintendent of Wesley Mission, the Rev Dr Keith Garner said at an anniversary function at Government House, Sydney. Dr Garner said it was time to offer the work of Lifeline to God again, to face future challenges unafraid and to believe that listening and caring 'still constitute the heart of the secret which is Lifeline.'

'Lifeline grew out of a clear sense of Christian vision,' he said. 'It was initiated by a remarkable man, the Rev Dr Sir Alan Walker, and was consistent with the Mission principle of reaching out to those on the parameters of the community.'

The 13 March event was hosted by Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, Governor of New South Wales and Sir Nicholas Shehadie, and attended by several NSW Government Ministers, Jillian Skinner, Chair of Lifeline Australia, John Brogden, CEO of Lifeline Australia, Jane Hayden and approximately 100 Lifeline Board members, Wesley Mission Board members, volunteers, and supporters, including some of Wesley Mission's Lifeline foundation counsellors.

Mr Brogden and Dr Garner thanked the Governor for her kind hospitality, and she spoke warmly of the significant work of Lifeline, which she knew of first hand.

'Wesley Mission has always been in the ministry of caring for the most marginalised and isolated,' Dr Garner said. 'It shouldn't surprise anyone that Lifeline's origins are from Wesley Mission. Since its earliest beginnings with the work of the early Methodists from 1815 on the streets of Sydney, Wesley Mission has responded to community need in pro-active ways, often breaking convention and stepping out to meet need – despite the risks. The thought of a telephone counselling service for people in crisis was revolutionary for its time. The establishment of Lifeline was a response to a changing city and culture. Post war prosperity also brought with it greater isolation as old suburbs changed and new suburbs developed.

'Throughout his ministry with the Central Methodist Mission (now Wesley Mission), the Rev Dr Sir Alan Walker would refer to what he saw as the growing and dangerous effects of isolation occurring in modern society at the time, or, as he frequently referred to it, "the lonely crowd". Alan Walker had great compassion for the isolated and he believed that through the establishment of Lifeline the mantle of Christianity would cover "a lonely crowd of the modern city".'

Dr Garner said the establishment of Lifeline was a call to action for the church and 'a reminder to all that in the depths of despair and the messiness of life there is God who cares for the whole person ... and caring people who are ready to act upon such truth.'

'We are glad to recognise the work of Lifeline across Australia and throughout the world, but at Wesley Mission we are proud to be the parent body of the birth that has made such a difference,' Dr Garner said.

Since its beginnings in 1963 Lifeline has been established in 19 countries around the world. In Australia, Lifeline centres across the country answered 541,450 calls in 2012. Lifeline Sydney and Sutherland, which is run by Wesley Mission, answered more than 23,000 calls last year.

To celebrate Lifeline's 50th Anniversary a thanksgiving service was held at the Wesley Mission Auditorium on Sunday 17 March 2013 beginning led by Wesley Mission Superintendent, Rev Dr Keith Garner.



### Visiting WA? Perth?

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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)

## RIDING, RIDING FOR JESUS

### Cycling To Smash Cycles Of Poverty – Christian Cyclists Pedalling 2,500K Between Sydney And Queensland To Raise \$1m For World Poverty

A TEAM of Christian cyclists started pedalling 2500 km between Sydney, Brisbane and Noosa on Monday 25 March in an attempt to raise \$1 million to help smash the devastating cycles of poverty overseas and in Australia.

CEO of Anglican Aid, David Mansfield, said his small band of cyclists were making the massive one month trek to Noosa Heads and return to Sydney in order to raise \$1 million for the more than 1.3 billion people in the world who live on around \$1.00 a day.

'We will be talking about our campaign and the issue of world poverty at public forums at churches on most nights of the journey and this will be an ideal time for people not only to hear about poverty here in Australia and overseas but also to make a donation,' Rev Mansfield said. 'With over 20,000 children under the age of five dying every day from preventable causes, such as hunger, *Smashing Cycles Of Poverty* is a race against time as we try to save as many people in the developing world as possible. One of our many aims through our *Smashing Cycles Of Poverty* initiative is to raise enough money to rebuild 100 flood-proof homes which were destroyed in the Indian village of Vizag district of Andhra Pradesh, southeast India during devastating storms and floods in 2012. Local people are building the homes, which provides employment and injects a little life into the local economy. Each single room home has a concrete slab floor with brick walls and an external concrete apron for cooking washing and provision for a pit toilet.

'Another popular overseas project is *Projek Bali Kids*, where funds are raised to support seven orphanages in Bali which care for 400 orphans and vulnerable children from some of Bali's poorest and most remote areas. If people can help us reach the target they can call Anglican Aid on 1800 653 903, visit [www.anglicanaid.org.au](http://www.anglicanaid.org.au), or send a cheque to Anglican Aid, PO Box Q190, QVB Post Office, NSW 1230.'



David Mansfield (centre), David Langley and Ron Balderston.

### Baptist World Aid Australia Changes Response To Global Disasters

BAPTIST World Aid Australia has announced a historic shift in the way they plan to respond to global disaster relief. They have committed to increase program focus and funding that will prepare communities for the impact of disasters before they happen whilst continuing to support partners during and after disasters. A new campaign called *Disaster Plus* has been launched to raise the \$600,000 needed to fund the disaster management activity over the next 12 months.

Disaster relief efforts in the past have been focused on response and recovery. With *Disaster Plus*, Baptist World Aid Australia are moving preventative disaster management to the centre of their development activity. Projects such as building riverside embankments, establishing dry climate farming, securing clean water supplies and setting up early warning systems build resilience in communities impacted by disasters and help to end poverty.

Baptist World Aid Australia will still be there when disaster strikes – responding urgently with rescue, food, shelter and clothing. In fact, their recent alliance with Integral, an international coalition of 18 Christian relief and development agencies, means that Baptist World Aid will be able to respond even more quickly and efficiently in the event of disaster as a result of working collaboratively. The difference is that *Disaster Plus* will equip some of the world's most vulnerable communities to minimise the effect of disaster. It is the smart way to maximise support of people impacted by disaster in areas of extreme poverty.

[www.baptistworldaid.org.au](http://www.baptistworldaid.org.au)

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Only a minute to read, but food for  
thought for the whole day!  
Short devotional blogs at:  
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## SUPPLYING THE DEMAND

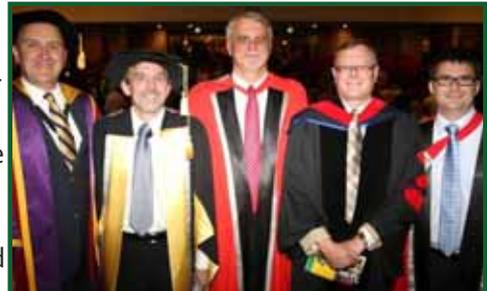
# 190 Graduate From Morling College

ON Monday 18 March, Morling College celebrated the graduation of 190 students who had completed courses in Bible, Ministry, Theology, Counselling, Education, and Plunge (Morling's gap-year program), including the first Greater-West-For-Christ graduate, Joshua Duncan. The annual Commencement and Conferral service was held at Futter Hall, The King's School in North Parramatta.

Graduates trained in preparation for work in schools and church-based ministries, army chaplaincy, clinical counselling, and other vocations. The graduating men and women received their awards from Rev Dr Mark Harding, Dean and CEO, Australian College of Theology, and Rev Kel Willis, Chairman of Morling College Board. Keynote speaker for the evening was Dr Edwin Boyce, Principal, Pacific Hills Christian School, whose message, *Let Us Be Learners*, from 1 Corinthians 8.1-6, encouraged the pursuit of life-long learning.

Principal Ross Clifford interviewed four graduates about their experiences and future plans: Grant Jones (MDiv), Diane Porter (MCounselling), Christine Owen (GradDipEd), and Sarah White (Cert IV in Ministry). The doctoral graduates for 2013 were Rev Dr Ian Duncum, Rev Dr Grenville Kent and Rev Dr Tim MacBride.

The Morling community welcomed some 500 new full-time and part-time students, some studying by distance, in Bible, Ministry, Theology and Education. Morling remains committed to training men and women from certificate to doctoral levels in Bible, Ministry, Theology, Mission, Education, Chaplaincy and Counselling. Students have the opportunity to be trained and equipped for a variety of vocations and can study full-time, residential, part-time and by distance. For further information about the Commencement and Conferral service, Morling College, or the courses on offer, go to: [www.morlingcollege.com](http://www.morlingcollege.com)



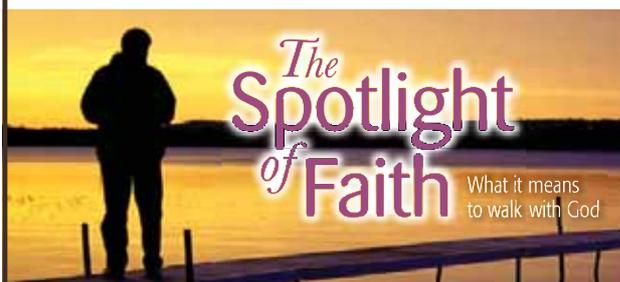
Pictured left to right: Rev Dr Grenville Kent, Rev Dr Ian Duncum, Rev Dr Ross Clifford (Principal, Morling College), Rev Dr Mark Harding (Dean & CEO, Australian College of Theology) and Rev Dr Tim MacBride.



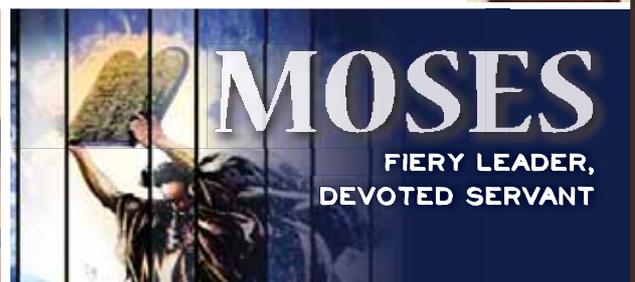
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## CHURCH AND NATION

### ACL Welcomes Government's Decision To Delay Anti-Discrimination Legislation

THE Australian Christian Lobby has welcomed the announcement by Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus to rework the consolidating of anti-discrimination laws. Managing Director Jim Wallace said that what had started as a sensible consolidation of anti-discrimination laws into one had gone well off track, threatening freedom of religion and other fundamental human rights.

'ACL denounces the overreach in this exercise and particularly the uncertainty around religious freedom exemptions and the proposal to review them every three years,' he said. 'Christian schools, charities, hospitals and churches should always be free to positively discriminate in the hiring of staff in order to protect their ethos and in determining what services they deliver. It is the shared faith ethos of an organisation's people that make it an attractive charity or service provider and our society would become sterile if this diversity was lost,' Mr Wallace said.

#### Background

The ACL made a submission to the government's consolidation of Anti-Discrimination laws in December 2012 calling for the religious freedoms to be protected <http://www.acl.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/121221-ACL-Submission-on-the-Human-Rights-and-Anti-Discrimination-Bill-2012.pdf>

## Time To Be Radical: Easter Challenges Our Indifference

THERE is a real cry in our community for correcting social evils and inappropriate personal behaviour evident in recent sports betting excess, alcohol related violence, and the violation of human dignity and human rights that occurs every day. Our community needs people of clear moral persuasion and political will to acknowledge our social sins and the factors contributing to them, who will take responsible action for reform. At the same time, we each need to look at our own personal lives, and take the courage to change, get our lives right, and make a more positive difference in our world.

Are Australians tired of indifference? Easter platitudes present the danger of missing the shocking central message of Easter: everything depends on the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the humble carpenter's son who is the Son of God.

The early church championed this radical message. Today we struggle to accept the need for rich words like 'sin' and 'repentance,' but look how alcohol abuse and problem gambling destroys people, families and communities. And then there is personal sin and accountability to God. Who among us can 'cast the first stone?' We are at a moral crossroads as individuals and as a nation. This Easter, I urge each of us to face up to our responsibilities.

The message of Easter is to people of faith, radically committed to the Christian way of forgiveness and new life through Jesus.

The message of Easter is also to the wider community, warning that if we continue to go our own way, without conviction to acknowledge the sins of our age, we will be diminished as a community and nation, and miss the blessings of what might have been.

The message of Easter challenges our indifference and our self-sufficiency by showing us what we lack and pointing to the risen Jesus as the answer to the urgent needs of our time. — Rev Dr Ross Clifford

### Events at PTC Victoria

 <p><i>Immerse yourself</i> in Church History with Rev John Wilson</p>	 <p><i>Hear Dr Guy Waters</i> from Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson USA</p>
<h2>Walking with Giants</h2> <p><b>Evening Short Course beginning April 17th</b> 6 Wednesday evenings 7.15pm to 9.15pm</p>	<h2>Romans</h2> <p><b>Master of Arts in Theology (Intensive)</b> July 22nd - 26th Intensive week (&amp; Wednesday evening lecture)</p>
<p>info@ptc.vic.edu.au</p>	 <p>www.ptc.vic.edu.au</p>

## WITH CHRIST

**Lady Patricia Loane**, widow of the late Sir Marcus Loane KBE, former Archbishop of Sydney and Primate of Australia, has passed away in Sydney in her 100th year. Her family has provided the following obituary:

Patricia Loane was the second child of the Rev David Knox and Doris Knox, born in Adelaide, SA. Her father was then the rector of St Luke's, Whitmore Square before returning to NSW, first to St Michael's, Wollongong followed in 1924 by St Paul's, Chatswood and in 1932 Christ Church, Gladesville. There were six sisters and four brothers in total. After the sudden death of her older sister, Patricia had to assume the leadership, care and comfort of her siblings. She became their role model in conduct and outlook and they all held her in deepest respect and love throughout their lives. She was so practical and competent that no fault could be found.

In 1937 she married Marcus Loane, thus beginning a 71 year long partnership with him, serving the Lord in all their undertakings. They had four children, Mary, Robert, David and Winsome, 17 grandchildren and 31 great grand children.

Lady Patricia Loane is remembered for her graciousness, her wisdom, her dignity, her humility, her gentleness, her staunch support of her husband and family and her tireless entertaining of all who entered her home.



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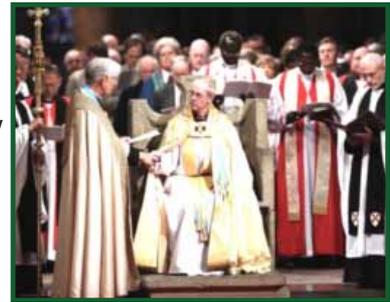
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We know that a lot of older people are missing *New Life*.  
Could you take your laptop to family or friends  
and help them read *New Life* from it?

## PASSING THE BATON

### Archbishop Of Canterbury Enthroned

'WHO are you and why do you request entry? Why have you been sent to us?' asked a young Anglican girl when the 105th Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, knocked three times on the door of Canterbury Cathedral. 'I am sent as archbishop to serve you, to proclaim the love of Christ,' he replied, 'and with you to worship and love Him with heart and soul, mind and strength.' The Most Rev Justin Welby later spoke of his optimism for the future of the Church.



Some 2,000 guests, among them the Prince of Wales and David Cameron, filled Canterbury Cathedral for the ceremony. Archbishops and bishops from around the Anglican Communion, and leaders of other faiths were also present.

In his sermon, Archbishop Welby spoke of 'rootedness in Christ' as the key to a society characterised by justice, security and love. There is 'every possible reason for optimism about the future of Christian faith in our world and in this country', he continued, acknowledging that it would take 'extraordinary Christ-liberated courage' to tackle the challenges presented by the economy, environment and global poverty.

'Courage is released in a society that is under the authority of God, so that we may become the fully human community of which we all dream,' he said. For a fuller account, *Holy Courage And The Enthronement Of Archbishop Justin Welby*, go to: [csugden@anglican-mainstream.net](mailto:csugden@anglican-mainstream.net)

### Global Poverty Is Shrinking—With Help From Nine-Year-Old Jojo

WORLD poverty is shrinking rapidly, according to a recent study by the University of Oxford. The study predicts that some of the poorest countries in the world could see acute poverty eradicated within 20 years – and nine-year-old JoJo Rock is just one individual doing his part to see poverty eradicated. Though still a child himself, JoJo Rock is helping to raise money for children living in poverty through Compassion Australia.



'It doesn't matter how big or small you are, you can make a difference,' says JoJo, a nine-year-old rapper who writes, performs and records his own music. His most recent song—a modern version of *Amazing Grace*—was recently released on iTunes, with all profits going towards supporting JoJo Rock's Compassion-sponsored child, Charles, in Uganda. JoJo Rock recorded the song with former Compassion-sponsored child, Ozzy Basoka, from the Sowers Group.

'It's a privilege for me to participate in releasing children from poverty, because I know first-hand what that situation looks like. I love the heart of JoJo, he is a blessing and I always want to be able to encourage a young talent like him whenever there's an opportunity,' says Ozzy Basoka, from The Sowers Group.

The Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative analysed 22 countries using a Multidimensional Poverty Index, a collection of factors such as number of years of schooling, child mortality, nutrition, electricity and drinking water access, living standards, housing and asset ownership. Rwanda, Nepal and Bangladesh were identified as countries where deprivation could disappear within the lifetime of present generations. Close on their heels with reductions in poverty levels were Ghana, Tanzania, Cambodia and Bolivia.

'The lofty endeavour to eradicate extreme global poverty must never slip from our focus. At the same time we must recognize the significant inroads being made in many countries where poverty has been a way of life for many years. Every effort is to be celebrated as it makes a difference in someone's life!' says Tim Hanna, Compassion Australia CEO. And, as JoJo Rock proves, age is no barrier when it comes to making an impact.

'Jojo has combined his talent for rapping with his desire to help another child less fortunate than himself. Above all we are so proud of Jojo's heart for others,' says Marlon Marescia, JoJo's father.

#### About Compassion Australia

Compassion Australia is part of a global network of funding countries and 26 developing countries. It is a Christian holistic child development and child advocacy ministry committed to working in partnership with local churches to foster the spiritual, economic, social, physical and emotional development of children living in extreme poverty. To purchase *Amazing Grace* go to: iTunes; Facebook page – <http://www.facebook.com/jojorockmusic>

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## PERSECUTION WATCH

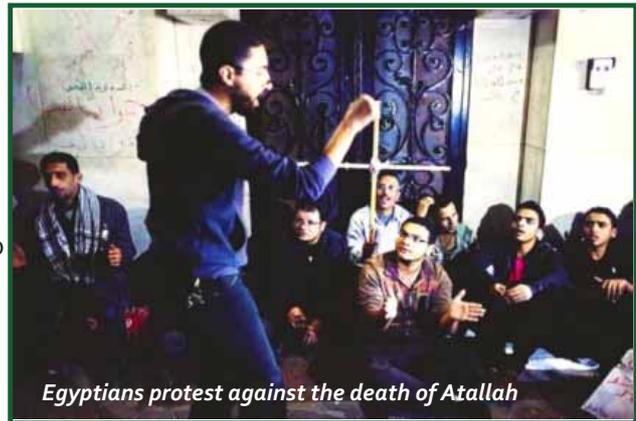
### Demonstrations Follow Death Of Coptic Christian In Libya

THE death of a Coptic Egyptian detained in Libya has angered the Christian community in Egypt, reports Doaa El-Bey in *al-Ahram Weekly*.

Ezzat Atallah, a 45-year-old Egyptian Christian who was detained in Libya last month with four other Copts on charges of missionary activities, died on Sunday 10 March. The death of Atallah caused widespread anger among Egyptian Copts and cast doubt over the true reasons behind his death. Both Egyptian and Libyan officials claim that he died of natural causes; he suffered from diabetes and heart problems. However, various videos and pictures on the Internet showed that the detainees were subject to torture. Atallah's family and his lawyer met Egyptian Ambassador to Libya Hisham Abdel-Wahab on Monday. Atallah's wife told Abdel-Wahab that she met with Libyan authorities, the forensic department and the detainees who were with Atallah when he died. According to the wife, they all said that Atallah died of natural causes. The embassy took the necessary measures to transfer the body to Egypt on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, dozens of Egyptian Coptic protesters demonstrated on Monday outside the Libyan embassy in Cairo. Angry over Atallah's death from alleged torture in Libya, the protesters burnt the Libyan flag and clashed with Libyan nationals. The protests came in response to a call for a sit-in in front of the Libyan embassy by Egypt's Coptic Youth Front and the Maspero Youth Union.

Atallah, who had been accused of practising missionary activities in Libya, was arrested last month together with four Evangelical Christian Egyptians, who all worked as traders in a local market. Atallah's brother told the media after receiving the news of his brother's death that his brother had been tortured after being moved from a Benghazi prison prior to the investigations. Legal measures against the Libyan authorities were called for 'for committing crimes against humanity'. The Foreign Ministry managed to secure the release of 20 Copts out of 48 others detained earlier in March who were also accused of proselytising. They were said to be in possession of copies of the Bible and texts bearing images of Christ and the late Coptic Pope Shenouda. They were also charged with urging Libyan Muslims to convert to Christianity.



*Egyptians protest against the death of Atallah*

### Turkey Conference On Religious Freedom

PERSECUTION of Christians continues to be a problem worldwide.

Sergey Rakhuba of Russian Ministries along with over 50 other organizations are gathering in Turkey to help fight for evangelicals' religious freedom, especially in Eurasia. He says, 'We are equipping the evangelical church in those countries to fight for their freedom, to value their freedom, to educate their congregations about freedom, how to be careful with freedom.'

During the conference, they will also develop policies and develop letters that will be sent to the oppressive governments, making a statement for those being persecuted. 'Continue praying for the evangelical church, that God would equip the church to not just survive but to be productive, be progressive in those situations, and continue reaching their communities with the Gospel.'

<http://www.MNNonline.org/article/18327>

### Persecution, Violence Increase In Northern Nigeria

IN Nigeria, a brutal offshoot of the Boko Haram sect claimed the murders of seven foreign hostages. The group was kidnapped in Bauchi a month ago. The insecurity and lawlessness caused by Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria seems to be spreading. While northerners lament the lack of security, ministry workers with Open Doors say they're under immense pressure. In the last three weeks, there have been three violent attacks against Christians. Pray that Gospel workers will stand strong in their faith.

Full story: <http://www.MNNonline.org/article/18329>



## Visitors From Myanmar

THE story of Hope Myanmar Partnership began with the conversion of Edward, son of a chief man in a small village in the Falam tribal area. Edward was the first convert in his village. Over the years he went to Bible college, earning a Bachelor of Theology degree. He then worked as a Bible instructor and went on to be General Secretary of the Zomi Baptist Convention and later, General Secretary of the Falam Baptist Association. In 1978, Edward moved with his wife and children to Yangon where he started a small Bible school. In 1984 Edward and a fellow preacher started a mission amongst the Asho Chin people in Magway division – a mountainous area in central Myanmar that had recently opened up after several decades of communist rule. There are 800 baptised believers, including five Bible school graduates and a number of trained evangelists in the area today.

Edward's son Lincoln and his wife Leah now head up the work which has expanded to include a boarding house for children of poor families, a preschool, training workers for orphanages, running a play therapy group in the local hospital and supporting the pastors and evangelists in their area. In 2005 HMP was formed to gain overseas support for their work.

Lincoln and Leah will be visiting Sydney, Newcastle and other areas in April and May to raise awareness of their work and specifically to gain support for Vision 2020, a project to build needed facilities at the Bible school which has just moved onto its own land. For details of their visit see [www.hopemyanmar.org](http://www.hopemyanmar.org)



Lincoln and Leah

## Visitors From China

WORLDSHARE has announced that Alfred and Alsie Ng from their partner ministry A & A Ministries in China will be in Australia from 12 April to 11 May. The Ng's ministry includes community development projects such as building schools, reservoirs, agricultural projects and medical clinics as well as church building ministries. Many small villages have been impacted by God's love and have received the Gospel as a result. Alfred and Alsie will speak in Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney, Bendigo, Brisbane and Perth. Some lunch and dinner engagements have been arranged. Updates will be posted on their website: [www.worldshare.org.au](http://www.worldshare.org.au)

## Training Believers In Central Asia

CHRISTIANS continue to face severe difficulties throughout Central Asia. New laws have been passed in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan which make worship difficult. Open evangelism is banned and churches and individuals are experiencing increasing attacks. In Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan Christians are under constant surveillance and can end up imprisoned or heavily fined. Training national Christian workers is therefore

vital, and one option is through the International Bible Correspondence School, a ministry supported by Slavic Gospel Association. The courses cover a wide range of biblical, theological and practical subjects. Currently 1,800 students are enrolled across the different countries. Administered by dedicated Christian workers Training Believers in Central Asia who help the students deepen their knowledge of the Gospel, going far beyond marking exams and posting lessons and literature. Each one strives to build personal relationships with the students via phone, emails, letters or face to face conversations. Unfortunately there is virtually no published Christian literature in Turkestan and there are no Bible schools. The IBCS is the only school to study Scriptures. – *Slavic Gospel News, Feb/March 2013*

## Christmas Cards

LAST year more than \$1,800 was raised by SIM Australia from the sale of Christmas e-cards. \$1 per card went to world missions from the project. It was so successful they now intend to release a new range of cards for different occasions. Keep an eye on their Facebook page through their website [www.sim.org.au](http://www.sim.org.au) for further details.

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

## **A Chocolate Story – Sweet!**

LATE last month Nestle Australia joined Cadbury and Mars in announcing that every chocolate it sells is independently certified to ensure the cocoa is sourced and produced sustainably on farms with safe working conditions. Nestle's commitment will see more than 3,000 tonnes of UTZ Certified Cocoa now being used to produce iconic favourites such as Kit Kat, Smarties and Club chocolate. This achievement will improve the social and economic conditions of farmers and their families in the cocoa industry, especially in Cote d'Ivoire where Nestle sources the bulk of its cocoa.

Nestle's announcement was greeted with much anticipation and celebration by Baptist World Aid, a member of the Stop The Traffik coalition. The industry has been under scrutiny for poor wages and working conditions from the coalition, and Nestle has received over 100,000 postcards from consumers demanding their chocolate be produced ethically. Since 2009 Baptist World Aid's Catalyst advocacy groups have participated in Stop the Traffik's campaign on major chocolate companies to adopt ethical certification for their cocoa.

'With this announcement we can see that campaigning is making a difference. Nestle has felt the consumer pressure and is making a positive change because of it. So let's celebrate!', TEAR Fund writes. There are currently over 50 Catalyst advocacy groups around Australia demanding ethical supply chains from a variety of corporations.



**STOP THE TRAFFIK.**  
PEOPLE SHOULDN'T BE BOUGHT & SOLD  
[WWW.STOPTHETRAFFIK.ORG](http://WWW.STOPTHETRAFFIK.ORG)

### **Camping Ministry Here And There**

ESA Country Ministries has an extensive camping program aimed at leaders, specific adult groups, young adults and children of all ages. For the adventurous there are snow camps, fishing, water skiing, rock climbing, and more, while adults can enjoy a time apart with good fellowship, good food and helpful teaching. Email [esa@virtual.net.au](mailto:esa@virtual.net.au) and ask for a program.

### **To Russia With Love**

KARI Lehelma, executive director of Kids Outreach Int in Australia, is urgently appealing for workers from Australia and New Zealand to man their children's camps in Russia this northern summer. Each year hundreds of children from all walks of life enjoy programs to help them in life and hear the message of Jesus and hope in Him, but this year they are desperately short of volunteers. In addition to their core programs, teams will present a preventative program against human trafficking. This program was launched last year and was well received by camp leaders all the way to high ranking police personnel. For further info contact 02 6259 0760.

### **Presbyterian Placements**

VICTORIAN Presbyterians are rejoicing to see six couples moving from theological training into pastoral ministry – with quite a little band of Presettes to swell the numbers too!

Adam and Tracey Humphries with their two children are posted to Brimbank where Adam did his required Supervised Field Education training, so

they are well known there. Adam plans to spend his first year in ministry getting to know the congregation even better and working on preaching well.

Jared and Jasmine Keath have five children ranging from one to nine years. Jared will be associate minister at Frankston. He intends to pray earnestly, focus on preaching and also discipling people on a personal level and through hospitality.

Stuart and Adele Withers from Tasmania and parents of five children, have started at Rochester. Coming from a farming background, Stuart is feeling very much at home in a country placement.

Gary and Carolyn Wentworth are already involved three days a week at Leongatha. Their three older children have stayed in Melbourne for studies and work, while the youngest, Samuel, is settling into South Coast Christian School.

Aaron and Gabby Boyd will be involved in a church plant in Thornbury, the area where they have been living for the past five years.

That leaves Peter and Gail Roberts, appointed to Cranbourne where he has been serving as a home missionary since 2010. Peter and Gail also have five children aged between 20 and 11 years old.

– *Fellow Workers, March 2013*

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ANDY Vance is one of Australia's leading jazz pianists and a devoted Christian who has been delighting audiences and listeners with his music and imparting his experience to students for many years. He is a member of the Creative Arts Team at NewHope Baptist Church in Blackburn, Melbourne, involved in many areas of music ministry and is invited to play at church services, concerts, outreach and events across Australia.

Andy is a performing artist for CBM Australia. Because Andy himself is legally blind, he views his role with CBM as a platform to use his musical gifts for entertaining audiences while raising a greater awareness of the important work of CBM Australia.

Andy has just released his latest CD. Produced at the ABC Studios in Melbourne, *Just As I Am* is a solo piano instrumental Christian CD. Andy's originals and re-arranged classics take the listener on a journey through Andy's inspired touch on the keys. More info: [www.andyvancemusic.com](http://www.andyvancemusic.com)



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## GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

# Violence, Bloodshed And The Easter Story



EASTER is the bloodiest time in the Christian calendar. The fact that Christians celebrate the death of Jesus, even to the point of hanging pictures of the instrument of His demise on their church walls and around their necks, has confused non-religious people for a long time. What kind of religion makes a spectacle of the moment of humiliation undergone by their beloved leader?

So many Christian songs and hymns focus on the violent death of Jesus, from the Gospel sounds of *Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?* to the medieval hymn *O Sacred Head Now Wounded* to Charles Wesley's *And Can It Be That I Should Gain An Interest In The Saviour's Blood?*

So much blood! These Christians seem to relish the bloodshed in some strange, ancient way, complain Richard Dawkins and the new breed of anti-religionists. The enormously influential atheist philosopher Nietzsche criticised Jesus for encouraging His disciples to 'drink His blood'. Surely this is madness, Nietzsche claimed (actually, the philosopher himself ended up insane).

Can the Easter story be defended against the claim that it is merely a mad, primitive religious idea of blood sacrifice, invented to give more meaning to Jesus' death than was really the case for a charming sage who was condemned to crucifixion by the barbarous first century Roman Empire?

Of course it can.

To start with, the violence of Jesus' death is an historical fact, but not a theological key. Some Christian traditions have probably made too much of the physical pain and suffering Jesus endured. It is certainly heartbreaking and devastating, but it should not be our focus of spiritual attention. Some church architecture, some songs, and Mel Gibson's *Passion Of The Christ* movie all fall into this trap.

Furthermore, for Christians Jesus' death is not an isolated incident of bloodshed, but part of an unfolding story of how God is reshaping the world. The manner in which Jesus died completes the Old Testament's account of how sinful humans would humble themselves through God, using a system of sacrifice. Jesus' own sacrifice has to be understood as the climax of this story: the 'full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice' for sins as the *Book Of Common Prayer* describes it.

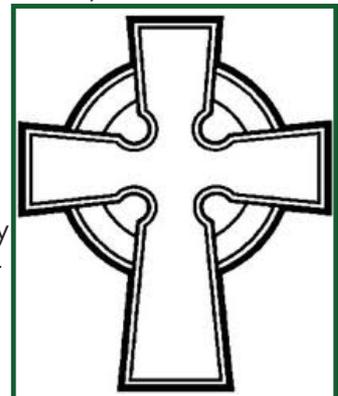
And finally, while the crucifixion of Jesus completes the story of sacrifice, it is only the penultimate chapter in the story of the renewal of all things. It is the tragic moment in a comic story (one that ends in Marriage!). It is the point in the story where the problem (sin) gets resolved (in Jesus' perfect sacrifice) so that the celebrations and restorations (resurrection and new creation) can commence.

Christians are not fans of bloodshed. We are in fact delighted and grateful that Jesus' own sacrifice brings an end to the shedding of blood for sin.

At Easter time, we worship on Good Friday because we are indebted to the God who saves, all the while anticipating and yearning for Resurrection Sunday when, relieved and thankful, we celebrate the conquering of death and the beginning of the end of violence.

Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble ...

– Greg Clarke, CEO of Bible Society Australia



## BOOKS WORTH READING

**PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS**, Colin G. Kruse, Nottingham: Apollos, 2012. ISBN 978-1-84474-582-1.

**THE FIRST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS**, Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, Nottingham: Apollos, 2010. ISBN 978-1-84474-484-8.

THE *Pillar New Testament Commentary Series* edited by Don Carson continues to be published. The volume on *Romans* by Colin Kruse is a first-rate exposition of what is arguably Paul's most important letter, and probably the most important letter ever written, for it is a fulsome explanation and defence of the Gospel.

Melbourne-based Colin Kruse lectures in the Melbourne School of Theology. He sets the letter against the background of what we know about Jewish and Gentile believers in Rome. Kruse argues that the purpose of the letter is to minister to Roman Christians in preparation for his (eventual) visit to the imperial city. Paul aims to heal divisions within the Roman Christian community and to address any misunderstanding of the Gospel message. Kruse explains the on-going debate over the so-called 'New Perspective' on Paul, agreeing with its critics that it has tended to marginalise and misrepresent justification.

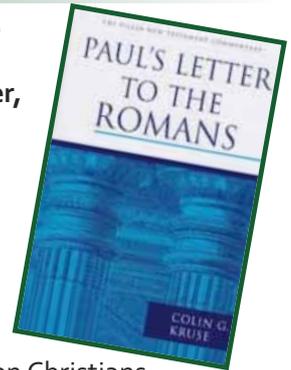
I find Kruse's discussion of the main theological themes of the letter uniformly sound and lucid. He sees the centre of Paul's theology as God's action in Christ to deal with the effects of human sin, individually, communally and cosmically.

Why choose to read this commentary over the many others currently available? It is up-to-date, alternate interpretations are considered, sensible and reliable judgments are arrived at, and it enables ordinary Christians to delve deeper into this key Bible book without drowning in detail or technicalities.

Likewise, the volume on *1 Corinthians* by Ciampa and Rosner is a helpful addition to recent commentaries on this vital Pauline letter. Brian Rosner is Principal of Ridley College, Melbourne. The authors help us to picture the situation of the church in Corinth and Paul's troubled relationship with a church that had allowed pagan values to reinvade the church (especially idolatry and sexual immorality). The Christians in Corinth were too much like their pagan neighbours. Sadly, this is not just an ancient problem, hence the currency of what Paul teaches in this letter.

What is different about this commentary and one of its strengths is that it reads Paul's letter against the Old Testament hope of the influx of gentile converts such as predicted in Isaiah 66. The church is seen as the fulfilment of the promise of the worldwide worship of God by people who shun gentile vices and live under the lordship of Christ to the glory of God. Ciampa and Rosner shows Paul's special debt to *Deuteronomy*, *Isaiah* and *Malachi*.

They pay proper regard to the continuing relevance of *1 Corinthians* to the modern Christian community in its secular setting. Paul models how to do Christian ethics in such a setting and how true Christianity is often counter-cultural. What Paul was saying to the Corinthian church still applies today. – *Greg Goswell*



### Quotable Quote:

'I'm taking every opportunity to make myself a nuisance to the Devil.'

– *Bishop Frank Retief, at Belgrave Hts Convention when asked what he was doing in his 'retirement'.*

### Seen On Facebook:

"The chief danger of the twentieth century will be: religion without the Holy Ghost, Christianity without Christ, forgiveness without repentance, salvation without regeneration, heaven without hell."

**William Booth**

founder of the Salvation Army



## BOOKS WORTH READING

**THE HISTORY OF PROVIDENCE AS MANIFESTED IN SCRIPTURE, Alexander Carson, Banner Of Truth, Edinburgh, 2012. ISBN 978 1 84871 175 4. [www.banneroftruth.org](http://www.banneroftruth.org)**

THE doctrine of the sovereignty of God is so precious to some, yet so difficult to accept for many, whether it be His sovereignty in creation, in providence or in redemption. The sovereignty of God in creation and redemption are well enough covered in Christian literature, but His sovereignty in providence is comparatively neglected, which makes this book such a valuable addition to the Banner corpus.

Alexander Carson (c.1776-1849) was an Irish Baptist minister and author who spent his entire ministry in the village of Tobermore, Londonderry, but through his writing ministry he reached out around the world and down through the years. This in itself should be an encouragement to all who labour long in a small, perhaps insignificant place, but who as a result have the time to exercise a wider ministry – in the providence of God.

The providence of God! What a glorious and precious doctrine this is when the good Lord opens our eyes to it. And how better to open our eyes to it than to lead us through the Scriptures and show us this merry little stream of Biblical truth sometimes hidden beneath the surface but undergirding the narrative, while at other times springing up to the surface to be clearly seen in the unfolding of events?

That is what our author does. Beginning with Abraham (and it's just a pity he doesn't begin with Adam and Eve) he takes us through the Biblical record to Trophimus at Miletum, concluding with a chapter on 'Christ the Sun of Righteousness'.

Throughout the book he scatters pearls of wisdom such as (on Genesis 18.1): 'Men in general see nothing but chance and nature, and second causes in the things that take place on Earth. The Christian may see God in everything. It is in Him we live and move and have our being. Abraham, then, at the moment of the arrival of his heavenly guests, was sitting at the tent door in order to be ready to behold and receive them.'

One doesn't want to be picky, but can't help wondering if an old typewriter with a blank page in it is the most appropriate piece of artwork on the front cover of such a book from a publishing house so renowned for the usually splendid presentation of its product. It just doesn't seem to match the content of a book which so grandly affirms that 'Thy hand, O God, has guided Thy flock from age to age; *the wondrous tale is written full clear on every page.*'

– Bob Thomas

**NOT SO SECRET: BEING CONTEMPORARY AGENTS FOR MISSION, Graham Orr, IVP, 2012.**

GRAHAM Orr is a retired missionary who had been working in Japan for many years. He compiled this book mainly from three major sources: the Bible, his cross-cultural missionary experience and life in Japan, his Christian and ministry experience in Britain and Northern Ireland. In this book he takes the readers with him as he goes through his personal journey as a missionary from Britain to Japan. He uses simple language and illustrations to share his missional reflections as applied to the current situation of church ministry in Western countries.

As an Asian missiologist myself, I really enjoyed his sharing. For instance, he said, 'Adapting to the culture has meant much observation and listening, occasional questions, regular confusion and, I hope, humble learning.' (p.43) '...defining "local" by relationship rather than proximity affects our role as local churches and our approach to mission in our locality. In Tokyo...' (p.68)

His book is easy to read, down to Earth, has no academic jargon, is truly human and is a genuine personal reflection of his cross-cultural experience. It introduces Japanese culture and the Japanese way of seeing Christianity, church and ministry. Many of these sharings are precise and easy to understand and have implications to Christians who live in the Western cultural context. For example, when talking about welcoming non-Christians to church, he says: 'We need not dilute our language of all significant Christian meaning; however, we do need to be aware that our unthinking, unexplained use of language is likely to deafen others to the very message we want them to hear' (p.122)

Reading his book is just like listening to a senior colleague who shares his story and the Bible by the fire. I agree with the author that you 'do not need to read this book in a hurry' because you need to think and do your own reflections by reading his book and asking the question: if I am one of God's not-so-secret agents in His mission to the world, how am I going to live that life out in my cultural context?

– Rev Dr Felix Chung, Lecturer in Missiology, PTC Vic.