

Theological Training In Expansion Mode

Moore College, Sydney

MOORE College is suffering growing pains. With 600 students enrolled on-campus each year and thousands more enrolled in distance education courses, space is at a premium in a now outmoded and inadequate suite of buildings adjacent to the University of Sydney.

Known around the world as a centre for Gospel-focused and Bible-based ministry training, the college is looking forward to replacing the building on the corner of City Rd and Carillon Ave, Newtown, with a new multi-story and multi-functional building to provide a conference hall to bring together the entire student body under one roof, new and larger classrooms, expanded library space, an additional oversized lecture theatre, an expanded ministry training precinct and new purpose-built research and study spaces for students.

The plan is to begin construction in November 2014, and to implement this exciting plan, Moore will soon launch a campaign to raise \$20 million. For enquiries about this and all aspects of Moore College life go to: www.moore.edu.au

Presbyterian Theological Centre, Sydney



PTC Sydney students looking forward to completion of the new building.

The Presbyterian Theological Centre in Sydney is in the process of building new premises for its theological college. The building, which is progressing well and on time, will be occupied by the end of this year, with the opening scheduled for 21 February 2014.

The building will be twice the size of the current premises and, as it is purpose-built, will have nearly three times the usable space. The PTC has seen steady growth in student and staff numbers over the past years, and the new premises will help cater for a student body of over 200. The new building includes an auditorium that seats over 300 people, five classrooms, a library on two levels and sufficient administration offices. The building is adjacent to the current site at 77 Shaftesbury Rd, Burwood 2134. ptcsydney.org/



Architect's rendering of proposed new building for Moore College.

Syrian Civil War Exacts High Price

THE United Nations' human rights office says almost 93,000 people have died in Syria's two-year civil war. Nearly six million Syrians have been displaced by it, too. 80 Operation Mobilization workers are serving in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq. Although overwhelmed, they say the Syrian crisis has opened the door for many who would otherwise have had no opportunity to hear the Gospel. Please pray for wisdom for the OM workers in the field as they struggle to meet needs.

Full story: <http://www.MNNOnline.org/article/18651>

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God's Word At Work In The World Today.

I CAN'T understand why any Christian would belittle the Bible, the most remarkable book in the world, the core of our faith, the supreme revelation of God to man. Yes I know that everything from the scholarship which proceeds on the presupposition that the Bible is a purely human document full of error and fantasy to the haunting melody of George Gershwin that 'it ain't necessarily so' conspires to undermine our confidence in the Bible. But believing scholarship, founded on the presupposition that the Bible is what it claims to be – the inspired, infallible, authoritative, relevant and sufficient Word of God – has more than answered the critics and put it back in our hands as 'the sword of the Spirit' to be wielded mightily in the ongoing war against 'all the flaming darts of the evil one'.

C.H. Spurgeon tells us that just as the best way to defend a lion is to let it go, so the best way to defend the Bible is simply to get it out.

On my recent visit to Scotland I heard Elaine Duncan, Director of the Scottish Bible Society, tell how the Bible Society is doing just that. She told of a Masai lady who heard *Paul's Letter To The Ephesians* read and who learnt to read just so that she could read the Bible for herself; of a wholistic ministry in Iraq where food-parcels-with-a-difference are being distributed: they also contain a copy of the Bible, which is transforming lives; of one lady whose husband began reading it, was struck by the love of God and became a Christian, shared his faith with others and was martyred for that faith; how the now-widowed lady is continuing to share her faith with a group of others and now sees eight of her neighbours following Jesus, many making good use of wearing head-scarves – to hide the fact that they are also wearing earphones and listening to the Word of God.

She told of the Amity Press in China having just printed its 100 millionth Bible, millions of which have been distributed throughout China; of a Chinese man who was typesetting the Bible at Amity Press for printing in braille and became a Christian as a result of what he was 'reading'; of boxes of Bibles being distributed throughout China and the believers' joy in receiving them so that they can know God and know His Word.

Meanwhile, 'back at the ranch', Scottish Bible Society sends its travelling Bible exhibition all around Scotland (see p.13), encourages *Bring Your Bible To Brunch* meetings, has put together a *Wild About The Word* youth program and a *More Than Gold* Bible for distribution at the forthcoming Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

'Get the Bible into peoples' hands,' she said, 'and pray that the Lord will get it into their hearts!'

Amen and amen.

– Bob Thomas

TURKEY: At The Crossroads?

THE 'Great Schism' of 1054 left the Church divided into Western (Latin/Roman) and Eastern (Greek/Byzantine) branches. As imperialist Ottoman Islamic forces advanced northwards, the Eastern Church found itself on the front-line of Islamic jihad. In 1095, Byzantine Emperor Alexius I appealed to Pope Urban II for help to defend Constantinople (the magnificent capital of the Byzantine Empire), re-conquer Asia Minor and liberate Jerusalem. The First Crusade was launched. In 1204, however, Western crusaders got sidetracked while en route to the Fourth Crusade. Instead of liberating the Holy Land, they sacked and looted Constantinople, weakening the city irredeemably. Abandoned by the West, Constantinople fell to invading Ottoman forces on 29 May 1453. After a period of killing and looting, the Christian remnant was subjugated and Constantinople – the centre of Eastern Christianity for over 1000 years – became the base from which the 21-year-old Ottoman Emperor Fatih Sultan Mehmed II would launch his jihad into Europe.

'Conquest Day'

May 29 is celebrated annually in Turkey as Conquest Day. This year Turks celebrated 560 years of Turkish rule in Constantinople/Istanbul. In an article for *Huffington Post* (29 May 2013), Drs Elizabeth H Prodromou and Alexandros K Kyrou report: 'Visitors to Istanbul on 29 May could hardly mistake the nationalist message of the city draped in Turkish flags for as far as the eye could see, and under the current Islamist government of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, secular nationalism has been augmented with a religious message about the fall of Constantinople as a sign of Islam's triumph over Christianity.' Erdogan has even proposed that Conquest Day be declared a national holiday and the historic Byzantine Christian Cathedral of Hagia Sophia – presently a museum – be converted into a functioning mosque. As Prodromou and Kyrou note, 'The fall of Constantinople on 29 May in 1453 began an unrelenting, centuries-long pattern of persecution and discrimination against the city's Christian population.' Like most Christians, they regard the 'erasure of Christians from Constantinople ... [as] one of the tragedies of history'. Later, Ataturk modernised and Westernised Turkey (1923-38), but only after he had ethnically cleansed it of its Christian peoples: Greeks, Assyrians and Armenians. Since then, massacres, systematic discrimination and persecution have caused Turkey's Christian remnant to decline to a mere 0.2%. As one church leader described them, they are 'an endangered species'. As far as Prodromou and Kyrou are concerned, 'The siege of Constantinople continues today, 560 years after the fall on 29 May, 1453.'

Party Day Or Protest Day?

But not everybody in Istanbul was partying on 29 May, with some setting up camp in Taksim Square's Gezi Park in defiance of government orders. Police stormed the camp on 30 May and returned on 31 May with water cannons, tear gas and barricades. The local confrontation has since morphed into nation-wide protests and riots by Turks who are sick of PM Erdogan's corrupt and arrogant dictatorial rule and heavy-handedness. They are also unhappy about his re-Islamisation and re-Ottomanisation of Turkey. Derided as 'the Sultan' by pro-secular Turks and 'the Caliph' by Syria's al-Assad, Erdogan is supremely confident that he is popular and powerful enough to ride out any storm. He plans to run for the presidency in the 2014 elections, after he has amended the constitution to bolster presidential powers. He has already gutted the military and silenced dissent. Yes, Turkey's prisons are full – of generals, lawyers, writers, comedians and artists! (*Continued p.7*)

Our thanks to Katherine Goswell for editing the last three issues of *New Life* during the editor's absence overseas.

PLEASE PRAY THAT:

- ❖ God will raise up Turkish leaders who will reject Islamisation and dictatorship and lead Turkey with wisdom, integrity and fairness. (1 Timothy 2.1-4)
- ❖ The Holy Spirit will give Turkey's Christian leaders – bishops, pastors, lay and ethnic – great discernment and wisdom as they seek to guide the Church through the present crisis. (Ephesians 3.16)
- ❖ God, who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think (Ephesians 3.20,21) will 'remember' Turkey, evangelised by Paul, Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, Priscilla and Aquila, Apollos and multitudes of faithful servants and martyrs through the ages and up to the present day; may this land come to know the love and mercy of God as He answers prayer and pours out His Holy Spirit in grace to awaken and transform.

TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

Jesus Christ Superstar Fans Urged: Read The Original Script



Bible Society volunteers give away the 'original script' about Jesus, the Original Superstar.

WITH *Jesus Christ Superstar* opening in Sydney on 7 June, arriving audiences have been spruiked by the Bible Society to take a pre-show look at the 'original script'... as found in the New Testament Gospels. In a 'covert operation', people were offered themed and free copies of *The Gospel Of Matthew*, T-shirts and badges with slogans like 'Jesus: The Original Superstar'.

Bible Society volunteers engaged with people going to the show at the Sydney Entertainment Centre, pointing out light-heartedly that 'the (un)official program is even better than the musical'. Many people appreciated the humour. While some productions on religious themes invite violent opposition and conflict between religious groups and theatre-goers, the Bible Society took a good-humoured approach.

'We always love it when Jesus Christ is getting air-play, whatever the vehicle,' says Bible Society CEO, Dr Greg Clarke. 'We just want people to have a chance to enjoy the original story in all of its glory and see what they make of it.'

Despite the Bible being the best-selling book of all time, the vast majority of Australians are not regular readers of the Bible, with even three out of four practising Christians being irregular readers of the Bible.

The Bible Society in Australia is the nation's oldest continuous organisation, founded a month before the first bank (now Westpac) by Governor Macquarie. With a cross-denominational mission to translate, distribute and engage people with the Bible, it translates the Bible into the languages of the world, including Indigenous languages in Australia, and prints and distributes millions of Bibles every year. Its patron is the Governor General.

www.jesustheoriginalsuperstar.com

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Meanwhile, Up In Edinburgh ...



THE Top End of the Royal Mile in Edinburgh abounds in people offering all sorts of Scottish wares and memorabilia, as well as 'Ghostie Tours'. But opposite St Giles' Cathedral stands this intrepid and dedicated Christian, earnestly sharing the Faith with passers-by, using a survey to ask what they think about the great issues of life and death, then engaging them in Gospel conversation. We don't know his name but we heard him faithfully 'preaching Christ and Him crucified.' Praise God for such unsung heroes of the Faith. Surely, 'Great shall be (their) reward in Heaven.'

'TOWARDS BELIEF'

Leading Christian Apologists Feature In New Australian DVD

TOWARDS BELIEF has attracted international interest as leading Christian thinkers defuse the belief blockers of our time. Unlikely as it seems, Richard Dawkins was the inspiration for Olive Tree Media's new 10 part Christian DVD series, *Towards Belief*, which was launched last week at Sydney's St Philip's York Street Anglican Church.

Speaking at the launch, host and executive producer Karl Faase said, 'I've watched Dawkins being interviewed a few times on Q&A on Monday nights and realised that there was a real need to present a Christian, alternative view to his book, *The God Delusion*'. A well known atheist and strong opponent of Christianity, Dawkin's book challenged Karl. 'I knew there was plenty of evidence for the truth of Christianity – it wasn't a delusion to me, as I had experienced God myself,' he said.



Call From God

Karl Faase is Senior Pastor of GyMEA Baptist Church in Sydney's south. Trained at Morling College, the NSW Baptist Theological College and has served in three previous churches in NSW and Victoria. In his final year at Morling College, Karl Faase took part in a two-day retreat, when students were asked to do a reflection exercise. 'At the end of the retreat I had a very real sense that God was giving me a clear and personal vision to impact Australia for Jesus,' said Karl. 'I didn't understand this as a promise that would happen nor did I think this was something that only I could do. Rather it was just a very clear call that the decisions I made in my life should be aligned with this vision from God. As I look at what God has enabled me to do since those two-days of retreat, I get a very real sense that I am moving towards the goal that God placed on my life all those years ago.'

Towards Belief features high profile speakers such as John Lennox, Nicky Gumbel, Erwin McManus, Dale Kuehne, Craig Keener, Amy Orr-Ewing and Stanley Hauerwas. Episode titles are: *Suffering; The Bible; The Supernatural; Religious Violence; Exclusive Faith; Church Abuse; Science And God; Homosexuality; The Church; Towards Belief*. *Towards Belief* is presented as a 10 part DVD series and includes a study guide so that churches can study the series in small groups and neutral venues where people can invite their non-Christian friends who are interested in faith. *Towards Belief* will also be available as individual episodes for renting or downloading over the Internet and will be shown on cable TV networks around the world, including Australia, USA and the UK. Full details of *Towards Belief* are at: www.towardsbelief.org.au

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A FOND FAREWELL FOR A GREAT ARCHBISHOP

Peter Jensen Retires - St Andrew's Cathedral Packed For Farewell Service



Peter and Christine Jensen. Photo: Southern Cross

THE retiring Archbishop of Sydney, Dr Peter Jensen and Mrs Christine Jensen were officially farewelled at a large service in St Andrew's Cathedral on Friday night, 14 June in the presence of the Premier of NSW, Barry O'Farrell, and the Governor, Professor Marie Bashir. Hundreds of clergy, parishioners and friends from all over the diocese as well as from overseas and representatives of other churches gathered to give heartfelt thanks for Peter Jensen's splendid leadership throughout the diocese, the Anglican Communion and the wider Church.

The Archbishop preached from 1 Corinthians 1, *We Preach Christ Crucified*, and the service was livestreamed on the Internet and available for playback on demand. Go to: <http://new.livestream.com/audioadvice/peterjensen> to view the service. Dr Jensen will retire on his 70th birthday in July.

A Typical Expression Of Appreciation:

The *Australian Church Record* has expressed its warmest appreciation for the wise and Godly ministry of Abp Peter Jensen and Mrs Christine Jensen, saying: 'As a pastor and teacher, Peter's local ministry has had a deep and lasting Gospel impact attested to by many: as Curate of St. Barnabas, Broadway (1969-76), acting Rector of St Andrew's, Oxford (1976-79) and St Barnabas, Broadway (1981), and visiting preacher at St Matthias, Centennial Park (since 1983). His heart for evangelism is unmistakable, and his stories of evangelism during taxi trips are unforgettable.' (Continued p.8)

**'If the Cross
of Christ
is anything
at all
to you,
let it be
your
everything.'**

- Abp Jensen's challenge
to the Lord's people.

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TURKEY: At The Crossroads?

(Continued from p.3)

ACCORDING to *Pew Institute* (April 2013), only 12% of Turks want to live in an Islamic State with Sharia Law. Erdogan's legitimacy rests on his ability to deliver stability and prosperity – not Islamisation. However, by aligning Turkey with the US-Saudi-Qatar Sunni axis against Assad in Syria (contrary to the will of the people who took to the streets demanding neutrality), Erdogan has seriously damaged Turkey's relations with its two main trading partners, Russia and Iran. Furthermore, the brutality of the present crack-down on protesters is generating more opposition. It is even possible that the military, which has been seen handing out gas masks to the protesters to protect them from tear gas and taking the injured to hospital, may not remain loyal to the government.

Turkey is at a crossroads. Could this be an opening for change that will be more than skin deep? Might Islamisation be halted? Might liberty and equality become a reality? Pray for Turkey through these days, weeks and months of turmoil and questioning, for the sake of the Gospel and the long-suffering remnant Church.

Written for the Australian Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty Commission by Elizabeth Kendal, international religious liberty analyst and advocate, and 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, and Director of Advocacy for Christian Faith & Freedom based in Canberra, Australia.

Teacher In Egypt Sentenced For 'Defaming' Islam; Fined Beyond Ability To Pay; Civil Trial Looms

AN Egyptian court has found a Christian teacher guilty of defaming Islam and imposed a large fine against her after prohibiting her lawyers from presenting a single witness during the trial. According to a story by *Morning Star News*, Dimyana Obeid Abd Al-Nour escaped jail time but was fined 100,000 Egyptian pounds (\$A14,000), far beyond her ability to pay. She is on the verge of a nervous breakdown, her father, Ebed Abd Al-Nour, told *Morning Star News*. He said his daughter did nothing wrong.

Al-Nour, 24, a first-year teacher in Egypt, made less than \$A300 a month before she lost her position in the wake of the accusations against her. Her family is poor, and she could be sent to jail for failure to pay a court-ordered fine if unable to find the money. *Morning Star News* said Muslims created a clamour in the courtroom that put intense pressure on the judge, said a human rights advocate who was surprised that the guilty verdict did not send her to prison. 'I personally was expecting a prison sentence, but thank God she was only given a fine,' said Mohammed Noubi, a human rights advocate with the Luxor office of the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights. 'There was a lot of pressure and uproar inside the courtroom.'

On 10 April, *Morning Star News* said, three elementary schoolchildren at Sheikh Sultan Primary

School in the village of Al-Edisat, Luxor Province, along with their parents and some teachers, complained to the school administration that Al-Nour had made blasphemous comments while teaching.

Morning Star News said Al-Nour reportedly expressed in class her admiration for the former head of the Coptic Orthodox Church, the late Pope Shenouda III. In some versions of the alleged incident, she also made comparisons between Shenouda and Muhammad, the prophet of Islam. Three students said she made a gesture expressing disgust with Muhammad.

When the complaint was made, a group of head teachers and parents, known as the School Council, conducted an investigation into the allegations. They found there wasn't any reliable evidence that Al-Nour had committed any offense, according to EIPR sources.

When the students were questioned, *Morning Star News* reported three of them said she had said or done something wrong. But the three students' versions of what gesture Al-Nour allegedly made and what she allegedly said did not match up, according to EIPR.

In addition, the rest of the students in the class, 10 in all, said Al-Nour was blameless and never even mentioned the late pope or Muhammad.

– *Jeremy Reynolds, ASSIST News Service*

A FOND FAREWELL FOR A GREAT ARCHBISHOP

Australian Church Record's Appreciation: *(Continued from p.6)*

'During his appointment as Principal of Moore Theological College (1985-2001), he contributed greatly to the changing patterns of community life, introducing new structures for pastoral support and nurture, and starting the Department of Missions in 1992. His Biblical and Reformed teaching during this period, which included authoring *At The Heart Of The Universe* and co-editing the *Reformed Theological Review*, has left an indelible mark on two generations of evangelical clergy.

'He has prayerfully led the Diocese on a fruitful decade of mission. His wisdom is well loved and appreciated in Synod. Always with the big picture of the Gospel in mind, rather than getting bogged down in details, his is a voice which Synod listens to. As he grew into the role of Archbishop, he has grown to be recognised as a key evangelical leader within the worldwide Anglican Communion. His tireless support of evangelical Anglicans worldwide, and fearless leadership within the GAFCON movement has seen the unification of brothers and sisters from all four corners of the globe.

'In April 2001, just prior to his election as Archbishop, the ACR asked Peter Jensen, "If you had one thing to say to the Sydney Diocese what would it be?" Dr Jensen replied, "Be bold: accept the challenge posed by this place and this time. Be ready to sacrifice. Take the initiatives needed to make Christ known and to build healthy churches." Not only has Peter Jensen modelled this in his own life and ministry but it is a challenge that he leaves with us. The ACR truly thanks God for the blessing of Peter Jensen and his ever-supportive family and wife Christine. His person and work among us leaves a permanent mark upon us – a permanent mark of the person and work of Christ Jesus our Lord.'

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ACL Urges Tasmania's Legislative Council To Reject Radical Abortion Legislation

THE Australian Christian Lobby is urging Tasmania's Upper House members to reject the controversial Reproductive Health (Access to Terminations) Bill that would decriminalise abortion in the state. ACL's Tasmanian Director Mark Brown says the bill – likely to be debated in the Upper House this week – has no mandate, and has significant implications for women's health, for freedom of conscience, and free speech.

'There is no mandate for decriminalising abortion in Tasmania, as law changes in 2001 put to rest concerns regarding criminal prosecutions against women or doctors and there have been no such prosecutions since,' he said. 'There are also no significant accessibility issues that would justify decriminalisation when four abortion clinics around the state perform the bulk of abortions and without waiting lists or the need for referrals.' Mr Brown said that under the proposed changes women with unplanned pregnancies will be prevented from making an informed decision. 'The bill essentially opens the door for abortion on demand. Under the proposed laws the currently mandated doctor assessments and referrals to counselling will be removed for those women seeking abortions before 16 weeks gestation. These encompass over 95% of all abortions,' he said. 'How can less information result in better decision making? Such a critical choice made on behalf of an unborn child requires women who find themselves with an unplanned pregnancy to be supported and supplied with all possible options and potential outcomes. This is especially important at a time when they are particularly vulnerable,' he said. 'Beyond this, the bill violates the fundamental right of freedom of conscience by forcing conscientious objectors – whether doctors or counsellors – to comply with a practice they cannot support. Those who wish to exercise their right to respectful protest will also face prison sentences if the legislation is passed.'

ACL has recently presented these concerns in a letter to the Legislative Council and says community concern about the extreme nature of the bill has been ignored from the beginning of the consultation period. 'Despite a very short community consultation period, 2,000 submissions were received,' Brown said. 'It was found that 87% of respondents were opposed to abortion.'

Mr Brown said that a Galaxy Poll of 300 respondents aged 16-49 in February shows Tasmanians are opposed (73%) to late-term abortions (after 20 weeks), when the child has mild disabilities (59%), for the purposes of sex selection (92%), when continuing a pregnancy would cause financial hardship (66%), affect the mother's career (79%), or when parents feel they have enough children. (63%).

'ACL encourages Legislative Councillors to consider the sentiments of the community before they vote on this controversial law,' he said. 'It is the duty of legislators to protect freedom of conscience and free speech, and to protect the vulnerable by providing help for those women to make a truly informed decision about the welfare of their children,' Mr Brown said.

WITH CHRIST

RUTH USSHER, MAF missionary, wife and mother, went to be with the Lord on 11 June 2013. Ruth and her husband Winston have had a long history with Mission Aviation Fellowship. Following extensive service with MAF in PNG, the Usshers were involved in senior management in the Asia Pacific region and most recently established and led the Cambodian program. Ruth and Winston are also remembered for their wonderful ministry to the staff and students at MAF's Flight Training Centre in Coldstream, Victoria. Former and current staff at MAF give thanks for Ruth's dedicated service to MAF and obvious love for the Lord.

Winston and Ruth were on a 'grey nomad' journey to the Gulf of Carpentaria and were on the out-

skirts of Normanton when Ruth died suddenly on Tuesday evening. A burial and funeral are planned for later next week in Melbourne at the Canterbury Gardens Community Church, 281 Colchester Road, Kilsyth South, VIC 3137. The actual date depends on the processes that are to take place in Cairns.

Please uphold Winston, daughters Jenni, Sue and Lynelle and their families at this time.

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PERSECUTION WATCH

North Korea's Legacy Of Terrorism

NORTH Korea has found US citizen Kenneth Bae guilty for 'hostile acts' against the state, sentencing him to 15 years of hard labour. The verdict was handed down on 30 April.

According to a story by Robert Park for the *World Affairs Journal*, a 15 May press release from North Korea's *Korean Central News Agency* stated that he has now begun serving his sentence within a 'special prison.' Park said Bae, a devout Christian, is the owner of a North Korea tour company and was in the country with official permission when de-

tained by North Korean authorities on 3 November. Park said that what actually took place leading up to his arrest has been a matter of a lot of speculation. 'However', Park wrote, 'one thing is certain: Bae, a humanitarian who had compassion for North Korea's starving and abandoned orphans, is not indictable for any crime. Rather, he is a hostage being held to accommodate yet undetermined North Korean agenda.'

Park said the Bae case is reminiscent of the still unresolved case of a Christian minister and humanitarian, Rev Kim Dong-shik, who died in a North Korean prison. In 2000, North Korean agents crossed the border and hunted Kim down in China, where he was operating several underground shelters for North Korean refugees. He was abducted and returned to North Korea, where he was reportedly tortured and starved to death.

Park commented, 'Given China's inhumane policy to forcibly repatriate North Koreans who manage to escape their country-gulag (a policy that has led to thousands of deaths and divided Korean families), one can safely assume China tolerated, if not sanctioned, the abduction. Kim was a US permanent resident whose wife and two children, all US citizens, are from Illinois.' – *Jeremy Reynolds, ASSIST News Service*



Kenneth Bae

Christian Leader In Egypt Says Political Storm Clouds Are Gathering

IN an Open Doors USA article, the leader says Egyptians are being urged to 'hit the streets' on 30 June. It's part of a nationwide call to rebel against President Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood, who took office a year ago. Forms calling for Morsi's resignation have been circulating in Egypt since 1 May. Pray that this rebellion won't result in bloodshed. Pray for God's will to be done in Egypt.

<http://www.MNNonline.org/article/18629>

Massacre Of Christian Village In Syria – Almost 40 People Killed

A CHRISTIAN village in Syria was savagely attacked and almost 40 of its residents, including women and children, killed by opposition fighters, as UN investigators warned of increasing radicalisation among the rebels.

The village of Dweir on the outskirts of Homs, near the border with Lebanon, was invaded on 27 May. One of Barnabas' Syrian partners said that two of his relatives in Dweir were severely tortured by the rebels, who broke some of their bones and started to burn their bodies before shooting them in the head. The villagers who managed to escape the onslaught fled to Raman district, where Barnabas Fund is providing them with aid. Following the

massacre, the Syrian army entered the village and heavy clashes with the rebel fighters ensued. The following day, independent United Nations investigators warned that the opposition to President Bashar al-Assad is becoming increasingly radicalised and that the civil war is producing ever worse atrocities. Barnabas Fund has been warning for some time about the Islamist agenda of an increasingly dominant section of the opposition.

SGA Says Rising Persecution Parallels Rise Of Militant Islam

CHRISTIANS in Central Asia are in trouble as militant Islam is on the rise. A recent report says upcoming transitions in the region will give birth to a new wave of radicalism. Joel Griffith of Slavic Gospel Association says, 'If this continues to be on the rise, there's no doubt that this kind of persecution is related to the rise of it.' One young woman from a Muslim background came to Christ two years ago. Since then, her family has given her nothing but trouble. They've even shaved her head to shame her. Others who convert to Christianity sometimes risk their very lives. SGA supports churches who reach out to new believers but because of this kind of extremism, evangelical churches get caught up in the crossfire. Will you come alongside them in prayer for Central Asia?

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

New SIM Leader To Visit Australia



Joshua and Joanna Bogunjoko

DR Joshua Bogunjoko brings two decades of leadership and mission experience to his new role as the first African leader of SIM. He assumed his five-year term on 1 June, succeeding Malcolm McGregor. Dr Bogunjoko will visit Australia and New Zealand in July and August. He will speak at SIMworld NSW conference, 27 July; SIMworld Victoria conference, 3 August, and Reachout Mission conference in Katoomba on 10-11 August. Joshua's leadership experience includes his role as SIM's Deputy International Director of West Africa and Europe since 2006. Prior to that he was Director of Galmi Hospital in Niger, West Africa. SIM (then Sudan Interior Mission) was founded 120 years ago in Nigeria. Joshua comes from the ECWA church in Nigeria, a church of six million people that God has used SIM to plant.

www.sim.org.au

Helping Train Leaders

THE Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge Aust advances God's Kingdom by empowering Christian writers, publishers and distributors. A recent project they have carried out was in Kenya. Peter Ibui, principal of the Word of Life School of Theology in Kianjai writes:

'A proliferation of untrained and self-appointed pastors and a failure to interpret Scripture in the right way have led to a mushrooming of cults in Kenya. These pastors' enthusiasm for serving the Kenyan church is great but so is their ignorance. The lack of Bible knowledge can be attributed to lack of access to basic training and good books.

'The WLST is the only accessible and affordable Bible training available in its area. There are many practical needs as the four year old school has already outgrown its rented accommodation. For the last three years we have been teaching church leaders and pastors a certificate course using manuals from Word of Life Aust. This year we introduced a new two-year part-time Bible training program using the 10-volume African Leadership manual. We had 30 enrolments but only 10 sets of text books. Thanks to financial assistance from SPCKA we were able to buy another 20 sets and begin teaching.'

SPCKA has announced a name change to be launched at this year's Australian Christian Literature Awards event in Melbourne, 8 August. Watch this space for further details. www.spcka.org.au

Report On The Homeless

LIVING on the streets can leave children and young people with lifelong mental and physical scars, but for a growing number it is a far safer option than staying at home according to a new Wesley Mission study released recently. *Homeless And The Next Generation* shows clearly that many homeless people do not believe their homes are safe and that the experience of homelessness can leave an enduring negative impact on their lives.

Each night Wesley Mission provides accommodation and support to 600 people who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness. 'What is disturbing but not surprising is that home is often considered less safe than the alternatives – even sleeping rough,' the CEO of Wesley Mission, the Rev Dr Keith Garner, said. In many cases children and parents had left extremely disruptive environments, often surrounded by violence, aggression, extreme poverty or drugs and alcohol-related concerns. While counselling and case worker support, housing and meals were highly valued, services which ensured security and the ability to 'stop and pause' laid the platform for more vital benefits to be realised. www.wesleymission.org.au

A Significant Anniversery For ECM

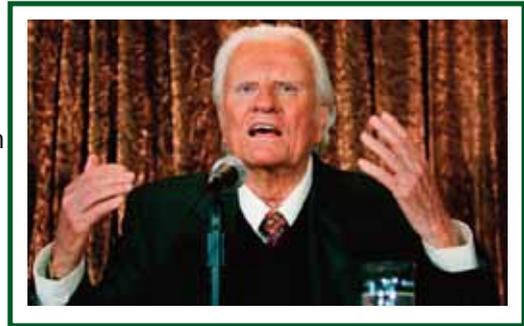
IN April 1953 Ruby Oliphant arrived in Australia from the UK after the founder of the European Christian Mission, Ganz Raud, asked her if she liked going to far places. She had a few contact addresses, \$100 and two objectives: to reach European immigrants and to establish an ECM base. Australia had become home to thousands of new settlers from Europe after World War II and Ruby regularly visited British, Italian, Greek and Yugoslav ethnic groups, distributing Scriptures and sharing Christ's love. Fellow ECM missionary Poldi Storfer joined Ruby and God blessed their outreach. A vital facet of ECM being set up in Australia was motivating people to go to share Christ's love in Europe. So a deputation ministry, which shared the spiritual needs of far-away Europe, was established. And the rest is history as they say. This year ECM Australia and New Zealand celebrate 60 years of ministry, giving praise to God for more than 110 full-time and associate workers who have served in Europe and in Australia. www.ecmaustralia.org

A Final Word From Billy?

IN what is being billed as Billy Graham's final call to America, BGEA has announced the biggest evangelistic undertaking for North America in its 60+ years' history. In the week of Billy's 95th birthday, 7 November, Christians across the entire US as well as Canada will be invited to reach their nation like never before.

The method will change, but the message will be the same, and the stakes have never been higher. Instead of filling a stadium or packing a park, *My Hope With Billy Graham* will take place in homes across North America where a 30-minute video presentation will be used as the catalyst to change hearts and lives. Individuals are being asked now to begin making a list of non-believers to pray for and to register as 'Matthews' to host friends and families for the presentation.

And because of the great benefit Australia has received from Billy Graham's ministry, we are being asked to help in any way we can. Phone: 1300 799 727. myhopewithbillygraham.org



Training For Children's Work Available

OAC Ministries run a training day each year that is a must for anyone working with children or interested in doing so. This year is no exception. To be held in Melbourne on 10 August in conjunction with ACCESS Ministries, the *Creative Children's Ministry Seminar* features keynote speaker Justin Simpson of ACCESS and more than a dozen electives including working with different age groups, developing teaching skills, engaging with the community, music, puppetry, cartooning, memory verses and drama. At the amazing early bird price of \$25 it is well worth any expense to get there. To see the brochure and register go to www.vic.oac.org.au

New Principal Of Moore College Installed

MARK Thompson preached what one listener described as 'a ripper sermon' at his installation as Moore College Principal. He spoke about *The Things Of First Importance* – the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ – things he wants to see remain as the centre and foundation of Moore College's ministry of training Gospel workers.

Meet Graham Preston, Jailed for 'Life' in Brisbane

AFTER an eight-month prison sentence, Graham Preston was released on 19 December 2012. His sentence is the longest ever received by an Australian pro-life activist. His crime —refusing to pay fines of roughly \$8,000 that had accumulated after ten years of nonviolently blocking the entrances of

four abortion clinics around Brisbane. His real 'crime' — saving the lives of many unborn human beings that were about to be aborted.

Why is it that many convicted paedophiles and drug dealers often receive lesser sentences? Graham is a family man – he has a supportive wife and seven supportive children. Graham has a remarkable story to tell and he will be visiting Sydney from Sunday 23 June 2013. He is speaking at a dinner on 29 June. Call Bruce Coleman on (02) 9499 5108 or go to: www.choicesoflife.com.au for details.



OPERATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGER KUNUNURRA, WA

HCBJ Global Australia is a Christian, not-for-profit ministry broadcasting a message of hope to the Asia Pacific Region daily.

Based at our Broadcast Facility in Kununurra, Western Australia, this unique and exciting ministry opportunity is ideally suited to a person with a passion for kingdom impact and a sense of adventure, seeking to be fulfilled in a 'second-half' career.

Ideally you have significant experience in managing staff and volunteers, project management and business development. Reporting to the CEO, you will be responsible for developing and maintaining the Kununurra facility. This includes developing strategic partnerships in the local community and abroad that support its mission. This position serves as the primary liaison between the Kununurra operations and the National Office located at Kilsyth, Victoria.

HCBJ Australia is looking to fill this position for a minimum of three years. As HCBJ Australia is a not-for-profit ministry, we are looking for someone with a strong ministry call and a heart to serve who is able to provide some self-funding. Modern housing is provided and other benefits will be negotiated.

Job Description available on request.

Contact Sindy Ward on
sward@hcbj.org.au
Ph 03 8720 8000 Fax 03 8720 8020
www.hcbj.org.au

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GOOD NEWS FROM ABROAD

Scottish Bible Society Puts The Word To Work

BIBLEWORLD, the Scottish Bible Society's travelling Bible exhibition, was parked at Carlisle United's football ground last week. Whole school classes have spent the afternoon on board Bibleworld before going on a tour of Brunton Park!



Limbless Australian-Born Evangelist Nick Vujicic Allowed To Tour In Vietnam



Nick Vujicic speaking in the White Palace Convention Centre, Ho Chi Minh City. (Photo: Tuong Vy www.saigon-gpdaily.com)

A FIVE day tour by limbless Australian-born Christian evangelist and motivational speaker Nick Vujicic was allowed to take place in Vietnam from 22-26 May, despite national restrictions on religious activities. According to a news release from human rights organization Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Vujicic, who was born without arms and legs, spoke to 75,000 people at seven official events, three of which were shown on national television. This was part of a *World Outreach Tour* with an overtly evangelistic intent: 'to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.'

At the end of his tour, CSW said, Vujicic also preached at Gia Dinh Church in Ho Chi Minh City. CSW said according to local reports, Vietnamese Christians were thrilled by the response to the tour, but baffled as to how and why a Christian evangelist was allowed to speak in a country which still maintains tight control over religious activities. CSW said the new Decree 92 on religious activities and organizations, which came into effect this January, places strict limitations on the delivery of 'sermons' outside religious facilities, and on the religious activities of foreigners in Vietnam.

Christian groups which have carried out evangelistic events such as concerts and Christmas celebrations have been harassed, threatened and even beaten by police. The government's approval of Vujicic's tour was therefore a significant departure from the usual treatment of evangelistic speakers, and an exceptional case which had the support of a wealthy Buddhist businessman and a Communist Party official. However CSW said he was not allowed to preach basic Christian concepts, and his interpreter was cautioned about using certain words. CSW said there is also some debate about whether one interpreter deliberately replaced some of Vujicic's words with different terms, omitting references to God, Christianity and religion. However, other members of the audience said references to God and Heaven in an event in Hanoi were interpreted correctly.

CSW's Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, 'The Vietnamese government's decision to allow Nick Vujicic to speak in Vietnam appears to be a positive move towards improving the level of freedom of religion or belief in the country. Although it is unlikely that this event indicates a change in policy towards religion, it has sparked discussion about faith and belief among the Vietnamese youth which could potentially pressure the government to rethink the state's tight control of religious activities. We urge the authorities to allow both Vietnamese and overseas Christian speakers to share their life stories and their faith freely in Vietnam, without censorship. We also encourage the government to allow Vietnamese citizens to openly discuss and debate matters relating to religion, faith and belief, both online and offline.'

Christian Solidarity Worldwide works for religious freedom through advocacy and human rights, in the pursuit of justice. For further information, visit www.csw.org.uk or to visit Nick's website, go to:

www.lifewithoutlimbs.org/

– Jeremy Reynolds, Senior Correspondent for ASSIST News Service

Bible Is Best-Seller In Norway

IN Norway, people are buying more Bibles than any other book. The Bible topped best-seller lists in 2012 and is still popular in 2013, outselling works like *Fifty Shades Of Grey* and *Justin Bieber's Autobiography*. In any European country this would be newsworthy, but especially so in Norway. Only 1% of Norwegians attend church regularly.

– Facebook post by Rob Lamont.

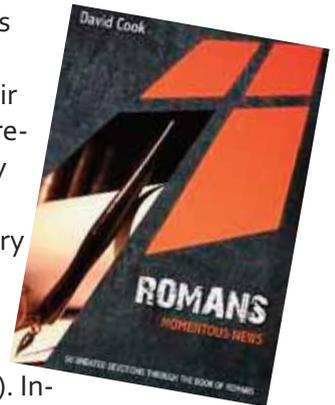
First – The Bad News

(Read Romans 1.18-22)

GOOD NEWS/BAD NEWS! Paul gives us the bad news first. (In fact, the bad news doesn't conclude until 3.21!) God's wrath is the bad news.

The reason for His wrath is people's godlessness and wickedness, as seen in their suppression of the truth (1.18). The truth is suppressed because of a determined, rebellious will. Verses 19,20 tell us that people know about God's power and deity by observation of the created order. Rather, people deliberately suppress the truth

about God by exchanging the truth and glory of God for the lie of idolatry (1.23,25). The truth is suppressed because of a determined will. The proper response to God is to glorify Him and to give Him thanks (1.21). Instead, people worship and serve created things as though those things were the creator (1.25).



FOR REFLECTION:

HOW often do we get sidetracked by the symptoms rather than looking for the root cause as to why the world is the way it is?

According to the logic of these verses (1.24-32), people act the way they do because of a theological infection: they suppress the truth of God in favour of idols (1.18,23,25).

The appropriate antibiotic for such an infection is theological – only the Gospel provides the cure.

What are the implications of this truth for you? For the Church?

What is the nature of God's wrath? Verses 24,26,28 say that 'God gave them over'. God leaves humanity to live with the fruit of its choice. This fruit comprises general uncleanness (1.24), shameful lusts and perverse sexual activity (1.26,27), and living contrary to God's standard (1,28-32). Such a lifestyle becomes, therefore, the judgment of God. It is ironic that our society describes as 'gay' a lifestyle characterised by a desperate search for the fulfilment of lusts which ought never, and will never, be satisfied.

God 'gave them over'. How different is His judgement on Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5) which is swift and obvious, removing their hypocrisy from the Church. This 'giving over' is a less obvious and more passive form of wrath. It allows sin to meander on through the life of the Church and it makes life hard for God's people. Yet mercifully, an opportunity for repentance and salvation is provided.

Content taken from 'Romans: Momentous News' published by 10Publishing, used with permission.

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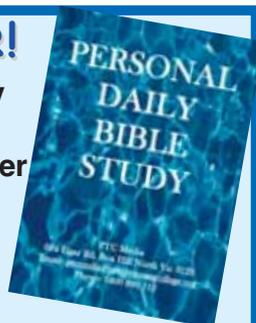
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Rev Stuart Bonnington

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melbonn@bigpond.com

HERE TO HELP

City Bible Forum Planning Big Events

The Great Debate

ROBERT Martin, Director of City Bible Forum Melbourne, reports: 'We are very excited to be organising our largest ever event. It is a public conversation between well known Christian apologist William Lane Craig and leading atheist Lawrence Krauss entitled *Life, The Universe And Nothing* at the Melbourne Town Hall on 16 August (note change of date). This is the only appearance of William Lane Craig in Melbourne and is a great opportunity to stimulate discussion of the big questions.

The Sweet Life

This is an evening with 2011 *Masterchef* winner Kate Bracks. Kate is passionate about food and God, and you can share an evening with her to hear what drives her. She will demonstrate some of her favourite desserts and share insights from her remarkable *Masterchef* journey. The event will be held on Friday 2 August at the Angliss Conference Centre (Level 5, 555 La Trobe St, Melbourne.)

In The Beginning Symposium

A symposium of science and the scriptures. Three views of origins will be presented. Hear the evidence; you decide: Atheist naturalism, Young-earth creationism, Old-earth creationism. Let the truth speak! Come to Melbourne City Conference Centre (333 Swanston St) from 6-9pm on Friday 30 August and 9am-4pm Saturday 31 August. Tickets for all events may be purchased through:

citybibleforum.org/melbourne/

SERMONS-TO-GO

Titus 1.2 'God That Cannot Lie.'

OUR whole basis and position rest on the fact of God and His great purposes ... This is the only ground of confidence.

1. **The Fact:** God cannot lie ... incapable of it ...
2. **The Explanation Of The Fact:** His character – immutable, just, holy, opposite of all that is false and deceptive ...
3. **The Proof Of The Fact:** Bible and history, especially the sending of His Son and His work ...

4. **The Comfort Of The Fact:**

'Promised before the world began ...
in due time manifested' ...
'I will never leave you or forsake you.'
'When you pass through the waters.'
'Let not your hearts be troubled.'

– *The Life Of Martyn Lloyd-Jones,*
Iain H. Murray, Banner Of Truth,
pp 279, 280.

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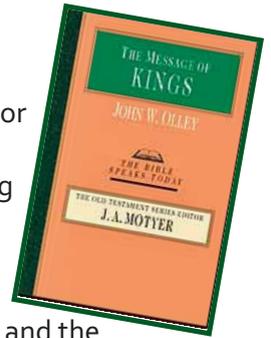
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BOOKS WORTH READING

THE MESSAGE OF KINGS: GOD IS PRESENT

John Olley (BST; Nottingham: IVP, 2011) ISBN 978-1-84474-550-0

HOW long does it take to write a commentary? Longer than you think! According to author John Olley, former Principal and now Research Associate at Vose Seminary, Perth, it has taken him his whole life to do so. One way or another, Dr Olley has been reading, studying or teaching the *Books Of Kings* since childhood. Having lived with *Kings* through all those years, he had many insights and gems of wisdom to share with his readers. John Olley writes with a fine appreciation of the workings of biblical narrative and of different cultural settings, and his aim is to allow *Kings* to speak to contemporary issues of church life and the Christian life. This, of course, is a focus of *The Bible Speaks Today* series, making this and the companion volumes in the series especially helpful for Bible study leaders and preachers trying to work out how the Old Testament applies to modern life. Let's face it, we all need help in doing that!



The Book Of Kings recounts the history of the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel down to the time of the Exile. It draws pertinent lessons from the events that ended in national disaster. *Kings* both explains and justifies the judgment of God, so that God's people might reassess and modify their behaviour, lest history repeat itself in later generations. In other words, *Kings* is both a history book and a sermon!

Dr Olley does a good job of showing us what the lessons are in the fascinating true story told in *Kings*, wherein God is a major participant, speaking through the prophets and providentially ordering of history. Olley alerts us to the main themes of *Kings*: God's promises to David, His word through the prophets, God's control of events, the need to obey the Covenant God of Israel, the temple and the presence of God, and finally, the villainous and flawed heroes that make up the human cast of the book.

The canonical book opens with old King David on his death bed (1 Kings 1) and closes with his descendent Jehoiachin a guest at the table of the Babylonian king (2 Kings 25), which Olley interprets as a glimmer of hope for the Davidic house and the Israelite nation generally. I am not so sure that the book holds out much hope for the royal house, which really was to blame for the demise of the nation. The revival of the house of David in the person of Jesus is a radical new development in God's saving purposes for Israel and the world.

John Olley is a careful scholar, but also displays a pastoral heart. He is a precise interpreter of the Bible, and he is widely read, as evident in the many scholarly works that appear in the footnotes under his commentary. He makes helpful comments on the artful arrangement of the incidents in the record of Solomon's reign (1 Kings 1-11), having previously published on that subject. Likewise, he has written previously on the Elijah narrative (1 Kings 17 – 2 Kings 2) and has incorporated his research and new insights into the present commentary.

The value of this book is that it not only clarifies the meaning of the text, but applies it with insight and authenticity to present concerns, showing that the Bible does speak today. This commentary should be the first port of call for all who want to make use of the *Book Of Kings* in preaching and teaching.

– Greg Goswell

MY GOD IS SO BIG (ISBN 9781781911341) and GOD IS KING (ISBN 9781781911334), Catherine Mackenzie, illustrated by Andy Robb, Christian Focus, Ross-Shire. 2013.

CHRISTIAN Focus has a wonderful reputation for publishing quality Christian Children's books, and both of these picture books, aimed at older preschoolers and young school age children and based on songs that will be well known to families, are no exception. *My God Is So Big* and *Who's The King Of The Jungle?* are fun songs to sing. Andy Robb's colourful illustrations add to the sense of fun. The pages are full of happy faces. The covers are engaging. The amount of text might challenge some younger children, especially in *God Is King*. Both books present Gospel truths and point to the saving work of Jesus. There is reference to a number of Bible narratives as examples of how God is mighty and how He is King to fit with the words of the songs. There is plenty of scope for the adult reading the book with the child to delve further into these Bible narratives. Some adults may find themselves being questioned when reading *My God Is So Big* about how the Holy Spirit lives inside the child: a difficult truth to teach children. Similarly children may ask questions about death. Adults can be ready for this by pre-reading the books.

– Mignon Goswell