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15 October 2013 Vol 76 No 8 Free On Request: office@nlife.com.au

## Clifford Wilson's Life's Work Takes Pride Of Place At Kingsley

KINGSLEY College, the Wesleyan Methodist College Of Christian Ministry And Theology, celebrated its relocation to modern new premises in Broadmeadows (Vic) with the official opening on Saturday 12 October of the *Clifford Wilson Memorial Collection*, an archeological display curated by Dr Wilson as a labour of love over many years to show the connection between the Biblical narrative and the archeological record. Consisting of hundreds of artefacts and display boards, it covers the flow of biblical history against the background of the ancient world. Dr Wilson's son, David, spoke of helping his father make some of the replicas, and Kingsley College Principal Kevin Brown thanked the Wilson family for their generosity in making the collection available to the college where Dr David Wilson had been principal and Dr Clifford had lectured.



Formerly at nearby Glenroy, Kingsley College has now relocated to a bright new location and functional modern building in an industrial park. Exciting new courses in Christian counselling are being developed in conjunction with St Mark's College in Canberra. Enquiries about courses in counselling and ministry can be made to Kingsley Community, 1/21 Lakeside Drive, Broadmeadows, Vic 3047; phone (03) 9357 3699; mobile 0423 127 199; email [kingsley@kingsley.edu.au](mailto:kingsley@kingsley.edu.au)

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Central exhibition area of Clifford Wilson Memorial Collection.



(Left to right) Principal Kevin Brown, Dr Wilson's daughter Elaine Reeves and son Dr David Wilson.

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AUSTRALIA'S CHRISTIAN NEWSPAPER

## Thinking – And Acting – About HELL

AUGUSTE Rodin was a French sculptor, best known for his sculpture, *The Thinker*. I saw the original *Thinker* in the square of the Royal Academy in London. Many *Thinkers* have been reproduced but the first was sculpted by Rodin atop a gate.

Have you ever wondered what the *Thinker* was thinking?

When you see the gate you realize that the *Thinker* is thinking about the eternal future of

perishing humanity. The *Thinker* is surrounded by humanity, as pictured in Dante's *Inferno*, descending into the depths of Hell because of its indulgence in the seven deadly sins. Rodin was not a Christian, but such a reality was the cause of much reflection. The *Thinker* is thinking about the reality of Hell and of humanity's plight due to sinful indulgence. The *Thinker* is thinking what few people, even Christian people, think about today.

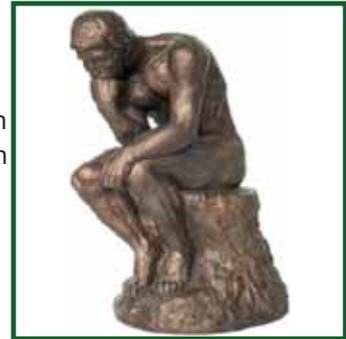
A financial supporter of SMBC once assured me that he would continue to support the College as long as one thing was true – that the College continued to affirm that those outside of Christ are bound for a hellish eternity. I thought that was shrewd, because that conviction can only be maintained through acceptance of the teaching of Jesus and the reliability of God's Word, the Bible. Also, the maintenance of that conviction fuels evangelism and mission.

The most loving thing we can do for perishing humanity is to warn them of the approaching chasm and urge them to repent and trust in Christ the Saviour. In our post-modern age the existence of such a state as Hell is considered repulsive and those who believe it are seen as pitiable. But our Lord Jesus was in no doubt as to its awful existence; the reality of Heaven in all its splendor must be matched by a place of terrible judgment because the judge of all the Earth will do right (Genesis 18.25). The unfashionability and unacceptability of reality doesn't change the reality.

Jesus said there is a Hell – 12 of the 14 references to Hell (Gehenna), in the New Testament, fall from His lips. Either He was right or wrong. Jesus' resurrection from the dead indicates that He is Lord and therefore the most reliable source of truth.

Be sure therefore, that you are not self-deluded, AW Tozer said: 'Hell is full of those who can recite John 3.16!' Make sure that your trust is in the Christ of the Gospel you proclaim. And cry out to God for compassion in your heart for those who are hell-bound – that God, who takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 33.11) would loosen your tongue to speak and thus point them to salvation.

– David Cook



## MATTERS FOR PRAYER

### INDIA: BJP Pursues Votes In Uttar Pradesh

THOUGH 74% Hindu, India is officially a secular nation. High-caste Hindus are challenging this and are determined to preserve the power and privilege guaranteed them through the systematic racism of the Hindu 'caste' system. They are striving to secure majority power at the federal level so they can change the constitution and declare India a Hindu State.

Traditionally they have been fear-mongering by demonising Muslims and Christians as threats to national security. They aim to dragnet the Hindu vote by offering Hindu nationalism as the solution to the existential dangers within – separatism and terrorism – and without – cultural invasion. They persuade traditionally-animist, indigenous tribal Indians to convert to Hinduism and join the 'Hindu mainstream' to help fight the enemy. India's 172.5 million, often reactionary Muslims (the largest Muslim minority in the world), are being wooed today for their vote and Christians alone are being demonised. During its two terms (10 years) in power, the Congress Party-led United Progressive Alliance government has done nothing at all to counter Hindu nationalist propaganda. Consequently, sectarianism and violent persecution has escalated on its watch.

#### A Faithful Witness

On 13 September a Hindu nationalist mob in the south-western state of Karnataka ambushed Sannamma (50), a Christian woman. After beating her to the ground and kicking her, they dragged her to a nearby Hindu temple where they poured water over her, forcibly applied a red dot to her forehead and tried to coerce her to convert back to Hinduism. Under great duress, Sannamma (a believer for eight years) signed a document stating that she and her husband, Shidda Naik (members of The Glorious Church), would not spread the Christian message. In an attack that lasted six hours they then dragged her out of the temple and marched her around the village, slapping and abusing her continuously. Eventually her sister-in-law rescued her. Though hospitalised with internal injuries, Sannamma told *Morning Star News*, 'What I am suffering is nothing compared to what my Lord Jesus has suffered. I will love Him forever for giving me a new life.' Appalling attacks like this are commonplace in India, occurring on a daily basis. If anyone is ever charged, it is usually the Christian.

#### A Disturbing Trend

India's next federal election will be held during April-May 2014. In mid-September the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party anointed Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi as its prime ministerial candidate. To shift attention away from his image as a sectarian figure and rabid Hindu nationalist, Modi is exploiting Gujarat's massive development and marketing himself as India's most successful pro-business administrator – an economic 'saviour' who will lift all Indians out of poverty. At a BJP rally in Gujarat on 17 September some 40,000 Muslims were persuaded to join the party. At a rally in New Delhi on Sunday 29 September the charismatic Modi spoke to a crowd of more than 200,000 who responded to his lofty promises with 'frenzied' excitement. It was, writes Sanjay Singh, 'a public rally, the likes of which it had not seen in many decades.'

#### An Imminent Catastrophe

From 1 October to mid-November Modi will be campaigning in Uttar Pradesh, India's strategic heartland and the home of Hinduism. Nine mega-rallies are being planned. The population of this northern state is 80.6% Hindu, 18.5% Muslim and around 0.1% Christian. It is India's most populous state, accounting for a massive 80 parliamentary seats. Writing in *The Australian* (18 September) Amanda Hodge expresses the prevailing view: 'After the Congress Party-led government's disastrous second term – five years marred by corruption on a grand scale, parliamentary paralysis and sharp economic decline – the BJP should sail into power.'

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

## PLEASE PRAY THAT:

† God will protect, bless and sustain His precious Church in the face of militant Hindu nationalism, praying especially for Christians in Uttar Pradesh as Narendra Modi campaigns there over the next six weeks. 'Keep me as the apple of Your eye; hide me in the shadow of Your wings' (Psalm 17.8)

† He will expose lies and malicious intentions, so that Indians are not seduced by offers of economic advancement to vote for a party that will perpetuate the systematic racism of caste and enslave them as second class citizens. 'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.' (John 1.5)

† He will raise up honourable leaders who will lead India with integrity and wisdom, doing what God calls leaders to do: 'Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.' (Proverbs 31.8,9)



## TURN BACK THE BATTLE: Isaiah Speaks to Christians Today.

With persecution escalating globally, **Elizabeth Kendal** calls us to revisit the prophecy of Isaiah, maintaining that Isaiah 1-39 provides an unambiguous treatise on how God's people are to respond to persecution, suffering and existential threat. For purchasing options, visit:

[www.turnbackthebattle.com](http://www.turnbackthebattle.com)

# Annual Reformation Day Service

**Sunday 27 October 2013**

**at 3.30pm**

**Lygon Street Christian Chapel, Carlton  
(next to Trades Hall)**

**Speaker:** Rev Troy Harris

**Sermon:** *Compromise? When The Details Really Matter.*

Rev Troy Harris was born in the USA from a Jewish background.  
He is known for his harmonising of Old and New Testaments in his teaching.

Ordained in 1999 and a student of history,  
he has devoted much time to studying the history and theology of  
the Reformation in Scandinavia and Germany.

He has translated doctrinal and liturgical works into English for  
the Concordia Lutheran Church in Sweden.

As a musician he is involved in music outreach.

He currently serves as

Pastor of Box Forest Wesleyan Methodist Church, Hadfield, Vic.

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Victorian Protestant Federation,

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## TAKING THE WORD TO THE WORLD ...

### Gospel Melts Hearts In Iceland

DESPITE a huge, concerted effort by homosexual activists to derail Franklin Graham's *Iceland Festival Of Hope*, dramatic testimonies from thousands reveal tears, brokenness, salvation – assurance of a 'new beginning' for Iceland. On Sunday 29 September, as Icelanders came streaming down the aisle responding to a Gospel message from Franklin Graham, an emotional night left tears of joy and real hope for a revival to sweep their nation.

It normally takes a lot to move Skúli Barker to tears, but what he witnessed on Sunday night in his country ... he'll be the first to tell you, that simply doesn't happen in Iceland. 'My wife was sobbing next to me,' Skúli said, 'and I started to cry. It's just amazing.' It started off as a few souls responding at the end of Franklin Graham's Gospel message and before he knew it, throngs were flooding the stage, elbow-to-elbow, hundreds of people packed in, aisles backed up with people wanting to meet Jesus, and willing to say that out loud, pray that out loud.

Skúli is a native Icelander in his 40s, and he's seen the state of Icelandic people when it comes to talking about God or anything spiritual. 'There's a joke here that we are the "Frozen Chosen",' Skúli said. 'But it's really true. In Iceland, people don't show their feelings. So for Icelanders to come forward to receive Jesus ... It's just been a real fight here for Christians,' he said, 'and this gives us hope.' In one sentence, Skúli summed up five years' worth of prayers from a core group of pastors and business leaders. He managed to put into words what this meant to the *Iceland Festival Of Hope* executive committee members who put in nine months of hard work.

'It was like a child has been born, in many ways,' said Ragnar Gunnarsson, *Iceland Festival Of Hope* director. 'A tremendous experience. This is what we have been praying for.'

Franklin Graham, preaching out of Luke 15 on *The Prodigal Son*, gave a clear Gospel presentation, weaving in candid stories about his own rebellion in his teenage years.

After two powerful *Iceland Festival Of Hope* nights with nearly 6,000 in attendance, one question lingered as Icelanders filed out, spiritually charged from a weekend filled with a top-notch choir, a plethora of local artists, two Michael W. Smith worship concerts and hundreds of new believers: Is this the start of revival? While only God knows the answer, the signs are already encouraging. Prayer for revival has multiplied in the Iceland evangelical churches. Many of the 41 involved churches at the Festival are now closely working together, with pastors praying together weekly.

– Trevor Freeze



### Aussie Is Moderator-Designate Of The Free Church Of Scotland

THE Rev David Miller, Minister of Cobham in south west London, is the Moderator Designate for the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland in May 2014.

Mr Miller was born in Korea to missionary parents, although he spent most of his childhood in Tasmania, Australia. After finishing school he completed an Economics degree at the University of Tasmania, Hobart, in 1981 and moved to Edinburgh the following year. Feeling led to the ministry, he studied at the Free Church College from 1985 to 1988. That year he was accepted by the Foreign Missions Board for service in South Africa, for which he was ordained and seconded in March 1989.

David and his wife, Margaret, served in southern Transkei in village ministry for five-and-a-half-years before moving to Dumisani Bible School to cover the administration and publishing work. During this time he also taught courses on Church History, Study Methods, and Old Testament in association with Potchefstroom University. Three sons were born during their time in South Africa – Andrew 19, Ben 17, and John 14 – before the family returned to the UK in 2002.

David has a keen interest in missionary affairs around the world, and enjoys reading as well as keeping up with cricket and Australian Rules football. Commenting on his nomination, David said: 'It is an enormous honour and privilege to be appointed Moderator Designate of the Free Church. I would welcome the prayers of all our congregations in the run-up to the Assembly for my new role.'



## IS ANYTHING IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOD?

### Prophetic? Ancient Judean Tree Seed Sprouts, Blossoms and Flourishes

IN 1973, archaeologist Ehud Netzer and his team uncovered a 2,000-year-old clay jar filled with seeds. The ancient seeds were subsequently stored away in Tel Aviv at Bar-Ilan University until, in 2005, botanical researcher Elaine Solowey at Hadassah Hospital was given one for an experimental planting. Told she was 'mad' for thinking the seed would ever sprout, Solowey went ahead and 'did the impossible,' planting the seed in a pot at Kibbutz Ketura. It sprouted into a seedling and produced its first blossom in 2011



'Methuselah' as a seedling (above) and growing strongly (right). (Photo: David Blumenfeld/The Chronicle)

and now reportedly 'flourishes as a young date palm tree.' Not surprisingly, it was given the name Methuselah. According to a report in *Popular Archaeology*, Methuselah looks just like other modes date palm trees, with one, very unusual difference – a third leaf. The report also notes that the Judean date, which ancient Hebrews considered to be the 'tree of life' has many remarkable healing properties and that for Christianity, it has 'long been regarded as a symbol of peace.'

– *Breaking Christian News*

## Manager – Cheshunt Christian Camp (Trading as King River Camp)

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or by email: [secretary@kingrivercamp.org.au](mailto:secretary@kingrivercamp.org.au)

Applications Close 15 November 2013.

Support the International Day Of Prayer  
For The Persecuted Church  
Sunday 3 November 2013

See <http://criticalprayerrequests.blogspot.com>

## WITH CHRIST

### MARION LEAN (NEE RENSHAW) – 'A WOMAN WHO FEARS THE LORD'

HUNDREDS filled the large auditorium of the Clontarf Baptist Church, Brisbane, on 10 September for the Thanksgiving Service for Marion Lean (nee Renshaw), who passed into the presence of the Lord on 4 September, aged 83. Marion, who had studied at Melbourne Bible Institute, and her husband Ron Lean, spent their married life in Port Moresby for 25 years, then in Darwin and finally at Margate, where Marion was pianist for the Margate Baptist Church, and also where for many years, she led a weekly KYB Bible Study fellowship in their home.

In Port Moresby, Ron had for years held a service in the local 'place-talk' language for nationals at the Boroko United Church, and they helped start the fellowship which developed into the present influential Boroko Baptist Church. Originally Marion and Ron were providing hospitality with other young marrieds in their homes for missionaries moving through the Port Moresby vortex to and from Australia. As their own families grew, Marion and Ron were part of the original founding group of the present busy MAPANG missionary home at Boroko that provides accommodation and hospitality for missionaries travelling through Port Moresby.

Ron meanwhile had become an expert linguist in Hiri Motu, the trade language spoken in Port Moresby and along the southern coastline of Papua New Guinea. He assisted Sir Percy Chatterton with the translation of the pure Motu Bible and then himself translated the entire Bible into the Hiri Motu language for the Bible Society, which was published in 1994.

Marion taught Religious Instruction in schools for nearly 45 years. After his Bible translation work finished, Ron joined her in this ministry, accompanying the singing of the children on his guitar. As a 'tentmaker' draftsman, he designed a number of significant church buildings including the large Hanuabada United Church that serves the population of the largest over-water village in Papua New Guinea. Together, their home in Boroko was an open home, 'given to hospitality', where locals and expatriates were always welcome for fellowship.

Marion was a living example of the Spirit-filled life. She is survived by her husband Ron, the Rev Dr Murray Lean, Senior Pastor of the City North Baptist Church Brisbane, Elizabeth (Redman), Andrea (Sercombe), Mark, John who is Senior Pastor of the Woody Point Community Church, Alison (Gough) and Dr Danny Lean who takes a medical and outreach team to Vanuatu every three or four months. Marion is also survived by 35 grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren. In her closing days, as she became aware that Heaven's gates were opening before her, she thanked God that the over 90 descendants, including married partners, were overtly walking with the Lord, and that many were in full-time and other work for the Gospel in Australia and overseas.

– Will Renshaw (Marion's brother)

**FOOTNOTE:** As a six month old baby, Marion was sculpted in one of the four main statues (she is on *Peace And Goodwill*) that are on the eastern and western exterior walls of the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne. While the woman holding Marion is not her mother, it is her mother's hand that forms part of the sculpture on the eastern wall, the city end, facing Government House. The Shrine folk always gave her VIP treatment when she visited there on her occasional visits to Melbourne.

## SPECIAL!

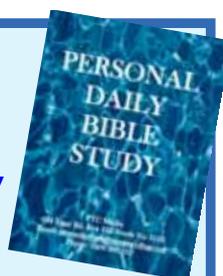
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## Signposts of the Second Coming

Brought to you by Friendship Baptist Church Carnegie

"And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?" (Luke 21:7)

This November is prophecy month at Friendship Baptist Church. You are warmly invited to attend our weekly Sunday services to hear Pastor Kyle Sutton speak on the many signs of Jesus' Second Coming.

### TOPICS

Israel Regathered	Nov. 3
Confusion & Chaos	Nov. 10
Fearful Sights	Nov. 17
Days of Noah	Nov. 24

Meeting at Carnegie Primary School Auditorium  
Corner of Glen Huntley and Tuggerini Roads, Carnegie  
Service begins at 10:15 am sharp  
Pastor Kyle Sutton— 0403 803 841 Ch. Office 6802-7566  
WEBSITE: [www.friendshipbc.com.au](http://www.friendshipbc.com.au)

## 'INTO ALL THE WORLD ...'

### \$100,000 To Change The World For Christ!

CHRISTIANS of all ages, stages and denominational backgrounds who are 'giving back' and want to change the world for Christ, are encouraged to apply for \$100,000 worth of 'Giving Back Grants', presented by Mission Travel, a national travel agency specialising in 'God-inspired travel'.

The grants started in 2010, as the dream of Lisa Tarzia, owner of Mission Travel, her small business which had started only a couple of years earlier. She wanted to focus her giving and tithe her profits to give back \$100,000 to Christians who wanted to 'go out and make disciples of all men'. She saved her pennies and now has 14 grants to give to mission organisations and individuals with missional projects. The grant categories include:

- Funding for overseas and local mission.
- A Holy Land tour for a minister or pastor.
- A Gap Year grant for a young person.
- An opportunity to visit a sponsored child overseas.
- A grant for a scholarship to Bible College.

Mission Travel's Giving Back campaign involves distributing grants of \$5,000 and \$10,000, totalling \$100,000, for mission projects in Australia or overseas. Mrs Tarzia said previous grant winners had achieved 'amazing things with small grants and huge faith. Their sole desires were to spread the Gospel, living it out through projects and their God-given dreams,' she said.

'This year we'd like applicants to focus on how their mission work, project or study would influence others and spread God's word. Applications should focus not on how you as the applicant would benefit, but how you can use this grant to impact others. I encourage anyone with a mission project to apply.'

She said that one winner had spent every cent of his grant to use his engineering skills to light up villages in the Middle East while a Tasmanian woman had supported the university fees of doctors and nurses in the Congo and a filmmaker had used the money to make a film about asylum seekers. The testimonies of other 2010 grant recipients are available online.

Grant entries opened on 1 October and close on 25 October. See [www.missiontravel.com.au](http://www.missiontravel.com.au) for grant application details and check out their Facebook page for regular updates.

– Dean Troth

#### Ecm Cares For High-Risk Population



WHILE orphans are getting a helping hand, so are kids with albinism. In Africa, albino children could be considered high-risk. Their

organs are considered good luck, so they're targeted by traffickers and witch doctors. Lorella Rouster of *Every Child Ministries* says, 'Because people do not really understand albinism, they tend to imagine reasons for it.' There are kids with albinism in most of their ministry locations. ECM's national staff reaches out to these kids with Christ's love. 'It provides an opportunity to share the Gospel with the whole family of the child who has albinism, because usually no-one else is reaching out to them.' Help us spread the word of ECM's work on Facebook. 'We're also looking for volunteer translators who would put this material into other languages that are spoken in Africa. For full story go to:

[www.MNNOnline.org/article/19081](http://www.MNNOnline.org/article/19081)

#### Christian Man Prays For The Men Stoning Him

A NEW Christian has shown tremendous strength in the face of persecution. *Global Advance* tells of Pastor Ibrahim



in Central Asia who began to pray aloud for his Muslim friends while they were stoning him for his newfound faith. By God's grace, his tormentors ran off just before delivering the final blow. Similar stories happen daily, usually with darker endings. Please support and encourage Christians facing danger. Pray for believers who are on the front lines. Full story: <http://www.MNNOnline.org/article/19072>

## VIEWPOINT

### How Could They Have Done It?

THREE times in the history of our nation children have been forcibly taken from their parents. I recognize that in some of these cases, it was totally necessary for the well being of the child, but in others, a policy was imposed which was not appropriate. These occasions were: 'the stolen generation', which involved the forcible relocation of Aboriginal children; the 130,000 children taken from Britain and sent to Australia (1940 – 60's); the forced adoption of babies of single mothers in the 1950's and 60's.

In each of these cases, children have now grown into adults to protest at their treatment. Surely it is in the interests of a child to be raised by the child's birth mother and father. There may well be cases justifying the intervention of the State for the sake of the child where the birth parents are not capable of providing appropriate care. But on the whole, the raising of children by their birth parents is to be preferred.

I wonder if in 20-30 years' time another group of grownup children will protest at the treatment they received from society. These are the children such as we see being raised in the TV series *Modern Family*, raised by two fathers or two mothers.

Governments must act for the weakest members of society. That is why governments should protect marriage – they are thus defending the rights of children to be raised by both mother and father.

George Orwell once remarked: 'We have now sunk to a depth at which the restatement of the obvious is the first duty of intelligent men.'

– Summary of an article

**Why Gay Marriage Is Not Good For Australia**  
by Rod James in the *Association of Confessing Congregations Magazine of the Uniting Church of Australia.*

### Legal Advice Shows ACT 9 Have Overstepped The Mark

ADVICE from the commonwealth Solicitor-General that the nine people in the ACT Legislative Assembly trying to redefine marriage for the nation have overstepped the mark should bring the debate to an end. Australian Christian Lobby managing director Lyle Shelton said if a report in the *Weekend Australian* of legal advice to the Abbott Government is correct, then it was time to move on.

'This issue has had more than a fair go. There have been multiple Parliamentary inquiries and unsuccessful votes in federal and state Parliaments. An election was fought in part on Kevin Rudd's pledge to legislate within 100 days,' Mr Shelton said. 'Labor's worst primary vote in 100 years and the loss of 600,000 votes to the party of same-sex marriage, the Greens, demonstrates that voters are underwhelmed by this issue. Discrimination against same-sex couples in Australian law has long been removed and that is supported by the Australian people including Christian groups like ACL. There is no need to open up vulnerabilities to freedom of speech, freedom of belief and social justice for children by changing the definition of marriage.'

Mr Shelton urged the Government and the Parliament as a whole to take whatever action was necessary to protect the Commonwealth's constitutional jurisdiction over marriage. 'I think the Australian people are becoming tired of the same-sex marriage lobbyists' attempts to bring about legislation by fatigue. If they wish to persist with their campaign, they should put it to a referendum of the Australian people. Because of the consequences for freedom of speech, belief and the rights of children, all Australians should have a say if marriage is to be changed,' Mr Shelton said. 'There are more important issues facing the nation, such as the Government's proposed cuts to overseas aid of \$4.5 billion which was to go to our neighbours in extreme poverty.'

#### **FREE TO A GOOD HOME**

**2 boxes of old filmstrips,  
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**Also 4 filmstrip projectors.**

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or can be picked up.**

**Box Hill, Melbourne, area.**

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#### **Can YOU Help?**

DO you have a set of *Good News Old Testament* audio cassettes (in good condition) you no longer need?

One of the Aboriginal church leaders in Tennant Creek is blind. He listens to his cassettes and prepares his sermons using them. He has the New Testament, but the Old Testament is no longer available.

**Please contact:** Richard Davies, Australian Indigenous Ministries, PO Box 374 Tennant Creek, NT 0861.

**Email:** [davies@aimpa.com](mailto:davies@aimpa.com)

**Knowing God’s Plan**

**(Read Romans 4.1-15)**

**FOR REFLECTION:**

*The Jews believed that having the law and being circumcised were safe shelters against God’s displeasure.*

*In what ways do we substitute things for the only safe shelter we have for salvation, namely, Jesus?*

PAUL anticipates the objection that what he is saying is so revolutionary, he simply thought it up. Objectors to the Gospel today often reject it on the basis that it is just Paul’s gospel. To prove that what he is saying is not innovative, Paul gives two illustrations.

**First**, he takes us back to the experience of Abram.

He shows that Abram was not justified by works, or he would have had something to boast about (v 2).

Rather, he quotes Genesis 15.6. Abram knew the blessing of a credited righteousness by faith. This righteousness was unearned. It came as a gift to Abram through faith (vv 4,5).

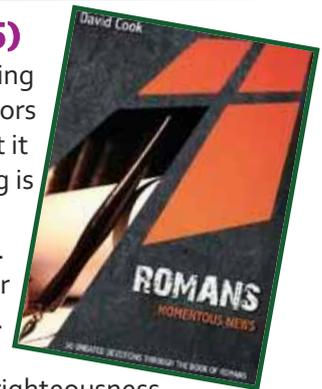
**Secondly**, Paul quotes Psalm 32.1,2 to show that even the great King David anticipated the blessing of a covering for sin and that God will not count sins against the guilty. Abram has a credited righteousness; David’s sins are not imputed to David himself. So, justification is not new. The experiences of Abraham and David confirm it.

Is this justification for Jews only? This becomes Paul’s next question. His response is ‘No’, because when Abram received the blessing (Genesis 15), he was uncircumcised. It was not until 14 years later that his circumcision took place (Genesis 17). Circumcision did not confer the blessing on Abraham. It was the sign and seal (v 11) of the blessing of a credited righteousness. So circumcision does not establish our lineage to Abraham. Ours is a spiritual lineage, faith being the common link. Abraham is the father of those who believe God and so ‘walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had’ (v 12).

The law did not confer the blessing on Abraham either (vv 13-15). Righteousness was credited to him well before the law was given. The law brings only wrath because it accuses us, and we cannot keep it. Abraham’s righteousness was by grace through faith, not by circumcision or by lawkeeping. Consequently, he is the father of all believers in God’s promise, the Gospel.

As we shall see in vv 16-25, God’s method of salvation has never changed. Faith focussed on God’s Gospel is always to be the controlling factor of our lives. Abraham is our father in this, because for him, as for us, God spoke and man believed. Here are God and man in right relationship.

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



**Coming Full Circle**

JIM Stevens says of his return to the ministry of Teen Challenge, Kyabram Vic, ‘It feels like I have just put on an old pair of sneakers that are well worn and comfortable.’ Jim started with the rehabilitation ministry in 1992 and spent five years as an intern and then a mentor. Going back into secular work he started a lunchtime program for the students at the school where his wife taught and also taught Christian Religious Education there, becoming assistant pastor at his church in Kyabram and then planting a church in nearby Rushworth. ‘Last year God placed on my heart that it was time for me to step down as the senior pastor there and raise up my assistant to the role. Twenty years after I first started here, I have returned to Teen Challenge. I’m excited to be back,’ he says.

*– Teen Challenge Victoria, Spring Update*

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## PERSECUTION WATCH

### Kazakhstan: Pastor Deported, Orthodox Priest to Follow?

BAPTIST pastor Viktor Lim was ordered deported from Kazakhstan for leading a registered religious community and left in mid-August. Lim, a stateless person, had lived in the country for 20 years and his wife and children are Kazakh citizens. According to Felix Corley, of the *Forum 18 News Service*

([www.forum18.org](http://www.forum18.org)), the authorities classed his action as 'illegal missionary activity' for which punishment is a fine and, for non-citizens, deportation.

'The appeal hearing lasted just 10 minutes – it was a pure formality,' Pastor Lim complained to Forum 18 News Service. Zhumagul Alimbekov, head of the Religious Affairs Department of Almaty Region, which lodged the suit against Pastor Lim, refused absolutely to discuss his deportation or the moves to deport Russian Orthodox priest Fr Sofrony.

– Dan Wooding, Founder, ASSIST News Service



A church service in Kazakhstan.

According to Elizabeth Kendal, Protestant fellowships are viewed with suspicion, derided in the media and targeted in policy as 'new religious movements' (cults) and 'foreign'. The treatment being suffered by several dissidents (including this Protestant pastor) indicates Kazakhstan is returning to Soviet-era methods of social control.

### Persecution of Christians Increases Sharply in Karnataka

INCIDENTS of violence against Christians in India's Karnataka state have spiked since June, including hospitalization of a school helper this month after Hindu extremists beat her and marched her through the streets. According to a story by *Morning Star News*, Hindu extremists kicked and punched the 50-year-old Christian woman after intercepting her in Chamrajnagar District on 13 September.

A resident of Kolipalya, Sannamma was in Nirayanpalya village to invite students back to school when a mob of about 40 Hindu nationalists stopped her and demanded she give money for a Hindu festival, a Christian leader said. 'Sannamma agreed to give them the money later, as she did not have any money with her at that time,' area pastor Vincent Dass told *Morning Star News*. However, the Hindu extremists began beating her, calling her 'pagan,' and accused her of forceful conversion. As they verbally abused Sannamma, the mob punched, kicked and shoved her around before dragging her to a Hindu temple where they tried to forcefully convert her back to Hinduism by pouring water on her as a symbol of religious cleansing from Christianity and applied a red dot on her forehead as a symbol of reconversion, Christian leaders said.

The Hindu extremists also forced Sannamma, who belongs to The Glorious Church, to sign a paper stating that she and her husband would not spread word of Christianity. Her husband, however, was not with her at the time of the attack, Christian leaders said. After that they dragged her out from the temple and marched her around the village again, continuing to slap and push her.

The attack against her lasted more than six hours, until she was finally rescued by her sister-in-law,' *Morning Star News* reported. She was rushed to the hospital, where she was treated for internal injuries and multiple contusions. Sannamma spoke of pain in her throat, inner chest and back, and doctors said she would require bed rest for some time.

'What I am suffering is nothing compared to what my Lord Jesus has suffered,' Sannamma, who became a Christian eight years ago, told *Morning Star News*. 'I will love Him forever for giving me a new life.'

Christians in Karnataka state have suffered at least 21 attacks from June to mid-September, compared with just four attacks from January to May, said Sajan George, president of the Global Council of Indian Christians. 'Karnataka Christians are being threatened, attacked and harassed for their faith and practice of charitable works,' *Morning Star News* reported. 'The Hindu extremists of the Bajrang Dal collude with lower level police and district administration officials to terrorize Christians and their institutions in Karnataka.'

– Jeremy Reynolds, ASSIST News Service

## PERSECUTION WATCH (Continued) ...

### Coptic Bishop Escapes Assassination Attempt In Egypt

BISHOP Anba Makarios of Minya was the target of an unsuccessful assassination attempted on Monday 30 September. According to a story by Mary Abdelmassih of the Assyrian International News Agency ([www.aina.org](http://www.aina.org)), the Bishop was driving into the town of el-Sario in Abou Qorqas, Minya Province, when his car came under a hail of bullets from several unidentified persons.

'The Bishop's driver was able to drive away and he brought the Bishop to the home of a local Copt, where the Bishop took refuge,' said Abdelmassih. 'But the gunmen followed, surrounded the Copt's house and shot at it for over 90 minutes, causing extensive damage to its windows, doors and walls. Minya security were contacted immediately but they arrived 90 minutes after the shooting stopped.'

The head of Minya security told the media the Muslim people in the village were angry because they thought the Bishop had come to reopen St Michael's church, the only church in the village, which was closed 10 years ago for security reasons. 'In other words,' said Coptic activist Mark Ebeid, 'Muslims were angry because of the presence of a church in the village and the police do not want any trouble with them, and therefore Copts have to go without prayers just to appease the Muslims.'

Abdelmassih went on to say that the Coptic rights group Maspero Youth Union issued a statement warning officials of the spread of hardline guerrilla warfare led by Muslim Brotherhood members against Christians. MYU said what took place was an assassination attempt, not, as was claimed by the Minya police, Muslims shooting in the air. MYU demanded an immediate investigation into the behavior of the Minya security services, not only because of their slow response to the emergency call of the Bishop, but also because of their attitude towards the Copts in general and the 'ongoing attacks on them, such as the burning of homes and property in Zakaria village in Minya and the expulsion of a Christian family from the village.' MYU called on the President and the Prime Minister to stop the systematic violence against Christians, who are targeted by spreading rumors or incitements in mosques to generate chaos against them and loot their property, in the complete absence of law and security, and 'reconciliation' meetings that deprive the Copts of their rights.

'The province of Minya has suffered most after the ousting of former President Morsi, where over 20 churches have been looted and torched. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and abroad, especially the UK, issued threats of assassination against many public figures, including Coptic Pope Tawadros II,' concluded Mary Abdelmassih.

– See all ASSIST News articles at [www.assistnews.net](http://www.assistnews.net)



Bishop Makarios

#### New Relief Centre Opened For Refugees

BAPTIST Global Response has set up a new community centre for refugees in Syria. The project is helping to centralize refugees and to build a strong community. Partners are helping build homes for refugees so they may start their lives over in a new home. Needs are still high, but food, medicine, and making Jesus known continues on. For updates on the relief program and more details, click on:

<http://www.MNNonline.org/article/19088>

#### Kazakhstan Pastor Arrested Again Within Minutes As Suspected 'Extremist'

PRESBYTERIAN Pastor Bakhytzhon Kashkumbayev's son Askar describes as 'complete rubbish' the new criminal case against the retired pastor on charges of extremism, which carry a seven-year prison term.

Kazakhstan is in Central Asia, with its smaller part west of the Ural River in Eastern Europe.

He told *Forum 18 News Service* for a story by Felix Corley, 'They're trying to turn my father into a terrorist.'

Kashkumbayev was arrested minutes after he was freed

from prison in Astana after five months pre-trial detention on separate criminal charges of harming a church member's health. Police investigator Captain Vyacheslav Glazkov, the Police Anti-Extremism Department (which is overseeing the case), the KNB secret police and the city Prosecutor's Office all refused comment to *Forum 18*. The prison chief where Kashkumbayev is being held dismissed concerns over his health. For more information about *Forum 18 News Service* visit

[www.forum18.org](http://www.forum18.org)

#### Twenty Five Christian Buildings Marked For Demolition In Nigeria

CHRISTIANS are facing further conflict from the government and Boko Haram in Nigeria. *Voice Of The Martyrs Canada* reports that eviction notices have been issued for 25 Christian churches and schools, calling for their demolition. The government claims that the land is needed for new housing, though no plans have been produced. Pray for protection of the Nigerian believers and their buildings. Pray, too, that their Muslim neighbors will hear the Gospel.

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

### Well Known Melbourne Missionaries Retire

READERS of *New Life* are familiar with the names Ron and Jeanette Tibbey. They both studied at Sydney Missionary and Bible College and were accepted as missionary candidates by European Christian Mission at a time when the mission's multi-language literature ministry was developing.

Literature distribution was mainly in English and European languages, but after the Tibbeys moved to Melbourne in 1974 it soon became apparent that they needed to have material available for all migrant peoples in Australia.

Bibles, study books, devotional books, all that you would find in a good Christian bookshop, were slowly added to their stock. Although income and profits were never high, over the years hundreds of thousands of dollars were raised for ECM projects in Europe and Australia.

Ron and Jeanette officially retired on 31 August. With literature ministry coming to a close, they are still serving the Lord with all the strength and vigour the Lord gives. 'Our "Europe" has been Europe and the world in Australia.' They said. 'What a mission field: more than 250 nationalities right here on our doorstep.'



– ECM News, October-November 2013

### Name Change For Bible College Of Qld/Crossway

VARIOUSLY operating under the names of Bible College of Queensland and Crossway College, supporters and students welcomed the announcement in July that the name of the college was to be changed to Brisbane School of Theology. Principal Dr Johan Ferreira explained: "Brisbane" identifies our geographical and cultural location, "School" explains the kind of institution we are, and most importantly, "Theology" communicates clearly what we are doing.'

Dr Ferreira made it clear that the change of name does not mean a change in the college's ethos, standards, or direction. 'The changeover process will not affect the day-to-day running of the college', he said. 'We will continue to offer the same

high-quality, practical courses in Bible and mission that have earned us such an excellent reputation over the last 70 years'.

### Surfers Wanted!

THIS might not be your typical missionary assignment, however surfing is a great inroad into outreach and discipleship among youth in Madagascar. Africa Inland Mission is looking for people who love Jesus, love youth and love to surf, to make a difference in the lives of young people living along Madagascar's western shore. Other needs for this unique team include a swimming instructor, a fisherman, sailors, song writers and wood workers.

The harvest is plentiful and the surf is up!

Contact Len, (02) 4322 4777 if you are interested.

– Africa News

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

### Spreading The Whole Gospel In Word And Deed

EVERY Home for Christ is best known for taking seriously the commission given to Paul and Barnabas to take the Gospel to the Gentiles (Galatians 2.9). Their vision to deliver a Scripture portion to every home in the whole world has seen much of the world covered, some of it more than once, since its inception in 1946, resulting in numerous Christ Groups being established for the growth of new believers.

But EHC also takes seriously verse 10 whereby Paul and Barnabas were urged not to forget the poor. A summary of their work includes schools, sewing classes, personal hygiene and nutrition training for adults in Bangladesh and India; supplying rickshaws to men in Bangladesh and training them to manage their own business. In

Malawi and Zambia seeds, tools, equipment and training have been given to enable people to grow their own food and sustain future harvests, along with training in health, hygiene and nutrition. In the Amazon Brazil malaria is a killer and mosquito nets have been distributed with other health training. Togo has a medical clinic and 100 volunteers who go to the villages to help the sick and train others in medicine, and prison work in Ethiopia teaches prisoners how to grow food along with other manual training.

– Every Home For Christ, October 2013



### Alpha Course Successful In Spain

ONE Mission Society, originally founded as the Oriental Missionary Society in Japan in 1901 by Charles and Lettie Cowman, today is a global mission with home bases in Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, United Kingdom, USA and Australia, with 400 missionaries serving in 20 countries plus associate workers and ministries in 23 additional nations.

David and Catherine Cotton and their family joined OMS in Spain in 2009. They were led to instigate Alpha groups as a means of outreach. As the Lord blessed this initiative, other OMS members in Spain began including this program in their ministries. The Cottons are currently back in Sydney for a brief furlough. Even while continuing to train and learn as an investment to their Spanish ministry, David and Catherine are taking short-term work as much as possible. They are needing committed supporters to enable them to return to the work in Spain. More information from (03) 98724209 or [info@omsaus.org](mailto:info@omsaus.org)

– OneMission

### A Chance To Give Some Gifts That Count

LAUNCHING this year's gift catalogue to raise funds for their work, Baptist World Aid Aust said

that Australia has the title of being the most generous people on Earth according to a global index of giving released last year by the Charities Aid Foundation. The index measured the charitable behaviour of people across 146 countries in three areas: donating money, volunteering time and helping a stranger. 'Since 2007 our supporters have given \$2.8 million through the catalogue to projects overseas,' said Marketing Manager Rob Lutton.

After commenting that goats are quite hard to post, he explained, 'When you buy a goat you're making a donation to the community development project of which goats are a part. This lets the communities decide how they can best use the funds. When you compare the huge amount of waste in our society with the incredible life-changing difference you can make for a child in Cambodia or Kenya, why would you choose anything else?' Why, indeed. It seems Baptists know this. Last year, \$425,000 went into projects that give clean water, education and better health for those who really need the help. Why not tell your family you want a pig, a chicken or a sewing machine for Christmas from your favourite charity? – Be Love, Spring 2013

## The Highbury Centre, London, UK



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## BOOKS WORTH READING

### GESTURES OF LOVE – A POETIC CELEBRATION OF FATHERHOOD, Andrew Lansdown, Wombat Books, 2013.

FOR the first time, Andrew Lansdown's widely-published *Fatherhood* poems have been gathered into one collection, *Gestures Of Love*, released in March 2013. These insightful poems by one of Australia's leading poets are bound to delight and move all readers – not only parents, but also anyone interested in the joy, grief and quirkiness of the human condition.

Acclaimed poet and critic, Geoff Page, observed that 'Lansdown has a very sincere and direct way of handling poems about his immediate family which subtly suggests great tenderness without becoming sentimental.'

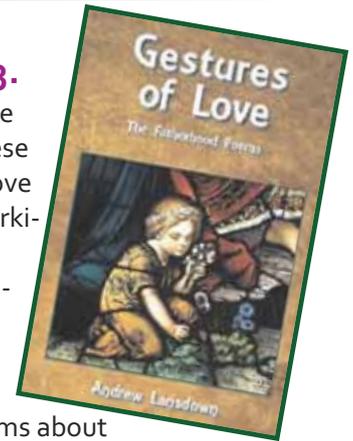
Few poets have explored the weight and wonder of fatherhood like Andrew. Over the years he has established a high reputation for his subtle, insightful poems about his wife and children.

Fellow poet Les Murray said, 'Many of Andrew Lansdown's poems have the power to bless, to unsettle now with mysterious calm, now with the deep resonance of poetry. Of all Australian imagists, he is the one with the broadest and warmest human sympathy, and no one writes of family love with more tenderness than he.'

Andrew is a widely published, award-winning writer who has published 19 books. His poems, stories and essays have been published in over 70 magazines and newspapers, including *New Life*, and are represented in over 80 anthologies. They have also been read on ABC and BBC radio, and translated into several languages.

His fantasy novels, *With My Knife*, *Dragonfox* and *The Red Dragon*, published by Scholastic, have been popular with older children and young adults and have been reprinted many times. His most recent poetry collections are: *Allsorts: Poetry Tricks And Treats* (Wombat Books 2012), *Far From Home* (Wombat Books, 2010), and *The Colour Of Life* (in *Two Poets*, with Kevin Gillam, Fremantle Press, 2011).

*Gestures Of Love* is available in all good bookstores or online at [www.evenbeforepublishing.com](http://www.evenbeforepublishing.com)



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## BOOKS WORTH READING

**PERSISTENTLY PREACHING CHRIST: Fifty Years Of Bible Ministry In A Cambridge Church, Compiled and Edited by Christopher Ash, Mary Davis and Bob White, Christian Focus, Ross-shire, 2012. ISBN: 978-1-84550-982-8.**

CAMBRIDGE is an iconic university city. The Round Church at St Andrew the Great is the subject of this exciting and valuable book. It is a history of the congregation from 1955 to 2010, covering the periods of two long-serving, inspirational ministers of the church, the 'two Marks,' Mark Rushton and Mark Ashton, and has a lovely balance of personal reflections and practical ministry teaching.

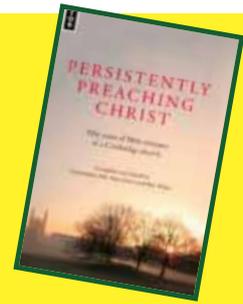
The first chapter which outlines Mark Ashton's 'eight convictions about the local church' sets the framework for the book. These convictions are foundational to the ministry this church. Mark Ashton was very keen that the book not just be about him and his predecessor. Whether you have been to Cambridge or not, whether you are in a student church or not, whether your local church is large or small, this book is full of interest. There are, of course, particular ministry challenges to the student work, but the way this particular church has sought to address these issues is important.

A stable, committed core of members whose aim is to serve and minister, is needed in every congregation. This core has owned the direction of the ministry of St Andrew the Great, and the ministry vision of the ministers was not imposed upon an unwilling people.

The tertiary student stage is a crucial, life changing one in the lives of many people, a time when leaders are developed and attitudes and patterns for life often cemented. Equally important it is a time when many meet their future spouse. All these are in evidence within the pages of this book.

The way the church spawned other congregations, the self-giving love of the 'two Marks' to their people, the expressions of thanks from present and former church members and the sheer inherent interest of Cambridge will all have an impact on the reader. This is not a book about techniques nor a church growth manual. Rather it shows intentional, biblical ministry to all sections of the church and the wider community. The personal reflections show different aspects of the ministry of the church. There are lessons for ministers and other church leaders as to what has a lasting impact on people in church. True love, service, hospitality and care go hand-in-hand with the hard work in biblical preaching, teaching, planning and training.

– Mignon Goswell



**'A stable, committed core of members, whose aim is to serve and minister, is needed in every congregation.'**

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## BOOKS WORTH READING

**EZRA-NEHEMIAH: A Mentor Commentary, Tiberius Rata, Fearn: Christian Focus, 2010. ISBN: 978-1-844550-571-4.**

A NEW commentary on the (largely) neglected book of *Ezra-Nehemiah* is always welcome, and so we owe a debt of gratitude to Tiberius Rata, who is Chair of the Biblical Studies Department and Professor of Old Testament Studies at Grace College and Theological Seminary, a conservative teaching institution in Winona Lake, Indiana. He is also writing a commentary on *Ecclesiastes*.

In his introduction to this joint-book, Rata summarises that main events narrated and key aspects of the theology of the book, though it is odd that he attributes the prayer of Nehemiah 9 to Nehemiah himself, when the text is clear that it was prayed by the Levites (on behalf of the community as a whole). It must be said that his treatment of this lengthy prayer later in his commentary is brief to the point of being cursory, which is unfortunate, for the three main prayers of the book (found in Ezra 9, Nehemiah 1 and 9) are an important gauge of the theology of the book as whole. They deserve more extensive treatment.

Rata falls into the usual pattern of popular expositions of *Nehemiah* in speaking of 'the godly leadership skills of Nehemiah', though it is not at all clear that this was what the biblical book was written to illustrate, for, after all, his efforts ended in failure and frustration (see Nehemiah 13). Rata is right, however, in following the recent scholarly trend of not seeing the Chronicler as the author of *Ezra-Nehemiah*, and he upholds the traditional conservative view that Ezra and Nehemiah themselves had a hand in writing the respective parts of the joint-book. Certainly sizable portions of the book come in the form of memoirs (Ezra 8-9; Nehemiah 1-6), with Ezra and Nehemiah the presumed penmen. Rata provides a scholarly appendix on the subject at the end of the commentary, but I do not understand why he spends so many pages summarising the arguments of Kyung-Jin Min for Levitical authorship, only to then adopt a different view and without offering any critique of Min's thesis.

In terms of the commentary itself, Rata supplies a number of maps, diagrams and tables that help integrate the, at times, bewildering details of names, places and dates in *Ezra-Nehemiah*. He comments helpfully on the text section by section and always includes pastoral comments and contemporary application. The applications are mainly for leaders, so that the impression is given that it is thought that only ministers will make use of this commentary. This is a pity, for the many lists of (yes, hard-to-pronounce) names implies that the book has a lay or popular orientation, so that this is an important Old Testament book for shaping our understanding of what it means to be the people of God. The book places stress on the importance of the joint efforts of the 'little people of God'.

Rata's comments on the theological themes of the book are thin, but he has useful explanatory comments on many things that would puzzle the average Bible reader and provides informative archeological notes. — Greg Goswell



**'This book places stress on the importance of the joint efforts of the "little people of God".'**

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