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Brotherhood Brings Bikies To Book (With The Gospel, That Is)

SYDNEY'S Brotherhood Christian Motorcycle Club (CMC) continues to minister and conduct outreach to the Australian biker community, through direct mission, motor show events, and a free-to-air television show. The Club, based on land leased from the Diocese of Sydney in Parramatta, Western Sydney, has been in operation for over 36 years and seeks to reach people for Christ while being authentically 'biker' in culture. In a political culture where bikers are cast as negative influences, Grant Howard, Brotherhood's Pastoral Team Leader with their Street Level Christian Community church plant, says there are many positive aspects of biker culture; many ways in which Jesus can be made known.



Brotherhood Christian Motorcycle Club – on the lookout for new recruits.

'I think lots of people want to belong, and they want to have a family,' he says. 'They want to be cared about and have genuine mates. At the strongest end of the scene, people in the club are really committed to each other. They're committed to the lifestyle, riding together, and living life together. People often come from situations where they don't have particularly strong family, and clubs often meet that role.'

Negative Aspects Need To Be Witnessed To

However, there are negative aspects to the culture, where it's important to provide authentic Christian witness. 'There's a lot of alcohol in the culture, strippers, things that can easily cause people to stumble in their walk with God,' Grant says. 'And so we're really careful about watching that line there.'

Greg Hirst, the head of Brotherhood CMC, says it's really important for them to maintain the fact that they must 'be in the world, but not of the world.' In many cases it's the ability of the Club to maintain a true love of bike culture while also drawing a line of separation when it comes to some activities that has forged the relationships the Club has maintained for decades, not only with bike enthusiasts and the police, but also with the one percent, or 'outlaw', motorcycle clubs. 'They come knowing that being Christians and talking God stuff is part of how we run an event like a motor show,' says Mr Howard, 'but that's ok because they accept us with that. They may not agree with it, it may not fit into their lifestyle, and what they're involved with would not be a part of our lifestyle, but it results in mutual respect, and opens ways for us to point people to the Gospel in meaningful ways.'

Current Projects

Current Brotherhood projects include its TV show *Temporary Australians*, presently airing its second season on Network Ten's ONE digital channel, which showcases bike culture and the stories of bikers, both Christian and non-Christian. 'There's a mixture of the real breadth of bike culture,' says Mr Hirst. 'We look at the breadth of the culture, withholding moral judgments as tastefully as we can. People connect to that. A guy named Vic gave some feedback on *Facebook*, and said he thought it was the best story he'd ever heard. People are listening.'

Tim Robinson, director of the TV show and currently a 'nom', or prospective member of Brotherhood CMC, became involved with the club through his work on the show. He became part of the club scene for the first time through seeing how Brotherhood integrated its faith and its culture. 'To me it felt like a natural thing, because I can integrate my faith with what is now my culture,' he says. 'I love bikes, I love Jesus, I love documentaries, and they all kind of fit together here.' The Club is now looking to expand its relationships with churches. It's already planning to bring its experience in motor shows to bear, as it currently runs an annual show called the *Silverwater Motor Festival*. The club also has experience in counselling and pastoral care, and has a particular heart for men and youth, with many members of Brotherhood having backgrounds in youth work.

Mr Hirst says prayer for the biker community is needed, with many people in the scene thinking through what it means to follow God.

– Sydney Anglicans via Worldwide Photos

(<http://sydneyanglicans.net/news/brotherhood-takes-gospel-to-biker-family>)

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newlife
AUSTRALIA'S CHRISTIAN NEWSPAPER

Do You Suffer From Separation Anxiety?

I'VE just read an article on *The Ten Worst Things You Can Say To Your Children Or Grandchildren*. One of the worst is: 'Do that again and I will leave you here!' Such a saying apparently builds the worst fear we have as children: the fear of being left, abandoned. It is called separation anxiety, such as experienced by a young child being left behind by Mum at the school gate.

Do we ever grow out of our separation anxiety?

Dame Cicely Saunders, the founder of the hospice movement, used to refer to the needs of the dying: hold me, talk to me, don't leave me.

Little wonder the Lord Jesus, the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5.4) urges us to come to Him (Matthew 11.28) and assures us that He will never leave us (Matthew 28.20). King David tells us that even though we walk through the valley of death, surely the loneliest of all journeys, God the Good Shepherd will never leave us: 'Your rod and Your staff they comfort me.' (Psalm 23.4).

Therefore let us cast off every vestige of separation anxiety, knowing that absolutely nothing in the world God created can separate us from 'the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!' (Romans 8.39). The Christian is never alone, never abandoned. What a privilege it is to be in the flock of a Shepherd who knows and cares for His sheep so well.

This is why the ministry of the Holy Spirit is so precious to the believer. The Lord Jesus assured His disciples that His leaving them was to their advantage, for His ascension meant the coming of the Holy Spirit (John 16.7). At Pentecost the Holy Spirit comes, not just to be with the disciples, but to be within them (Acts 2.38). The Holy Spirit is the Counselor within the believer, He leads us in the battle against the flesh (Romans 8.12-14); He reminds us that all believers are adopted into God's family and can call God, 'Father' (Romans 8.15); He helps us when we don't know what to pray (Romans 8.26). God cannot be more with us than by being within us – and He *is* within us, in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Believer, you are never alone; there will never be any sound reason for you to suffer from separation anxiety. An American country music group, Lady Antebellum, sings a song called *Never Alone*. It is a lover's promise never to leave his loved one – it is a nice, but uncertain sentiment.

The gift of the Holy Spirit, however, is certain since He comes to us from God, given to us because of the work of the Lord Jesus and that work is eternally effective and certain (Acts 2.32-33).

– David Cook

New Life commends the article, *Age Of Intolerance: The War On Religion*, by Barney Zwartz, Religion Editor of *The Age*, published in *The Age* on Saturday 2 November.

The following link will take readers to it:

<http://www.theage.com.au/comment/age-of-intolerance-the-war-on-religion-20131101-2ws4o.html>

MATTERS FOR PRAYER

ERITREA: Persecution Fills Prisons, Fuels Refugee Crisis

IN 2001 the Eritrean government cancelled elections, arrested political opponents and closed down independent media. Determined to eliminate anything that could threaten national cohesion, the regime extended the repression in May 2002 to 'foreign' and 'non-traditional' religious groups. That meant all except the state-sanctioned Muslim, Eritrean Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Lutheran denominations were banned. Since then, many thousands of mostly evangelical Christians have suffered severely at the hands of a regime known for its human rights abuses, appalling prison conditions and widespread use of torture. Even teenagers are not spared and must complete military service in military training camps before they can graduate from school. Separated from their parents, religious persecution in these camps is systematic and severe.

World Watch Monitor reports that during the week of 14 October, Wehazit Berhane Debesai, an Eritrean Christian woman in her 30's, died in custody after a year of harsh imprisonment. Wehazit died of pneumonia after being denied medical treatment because she refused to deny her faith. On 28 October Eritrean security forces raided a prayer meeting in Maitemenai, a suburb north of the capital Asmara. They arrested between 70 Christians (as reported by *Open Doors*) and 185 Christians (according to *Release International*). Where they are is not yet confirmed. The total number of Eritrean believers currently incarcerated for their faith is estimated at 1,500.

On 24 October the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, Sheila B Keetharuth, raised the issue of Eritrea's human rights in the UN General Assembly. She noted that serious human rights abuses are behind the flight of up to 3,000 Eritreans each month. 'The current human rights picture is desperately bleak,' she told journalists. 'People feel trapped in a long hopeless situation.' Later, several NGOs jointly hosted a side meeting on Eritrea at which five Eritrean victims gave their personal testimonies. Elsa Chyrum, Director of *Human Rights Concern Eritrea*, noted: 'Although the human rights situation is extremely alarming in Eritrea, this is the first time that it has been brought to the attention of the General Assembly by the UN-appointed Special Rapporteur. It is clear the recent Lampedusa tragedy which resulted in the loss of over 350 lives, the vast majority of whom were Eritreans, has had an impact on the consciences of many state governments, leading to questions being asked relating to the root causes of those who were fleeing.' Indeed, not only were most of the refugees involved in the Lampedusa tragedy Eritreans, but according to Father Mussie Zerai, Chair of the Habeshia Agency which works on behalf of these migrants, the majority of those Eritreans were Christians.

According to a recently published report from the Feinstein International Centre, Tufts University, Massachusetts, USA, those fleeing Eritrea usually employ people smugglers to take them north through Sudan to Libya before they embark on the dangerous voyage across the Mediterranean to the EU. Alternatively they may go north through eastern Sudan and Egypt to Israel, or south into Ethiopia, South Sudan and beyond. The route through eastern Sudan is especially high risk. Increasingly Bedouin traffickers are kidnapping Eritrean refugees straight out of Sudanese refugee camps. The Eritreans are then taken to concrete bunker torture chambers in the Sinai (Egypt) where they are tortured while money is extorted from their relatives via mobile phone. A Catholic nun who serves the Eritrean community in Israel says they recently heard that 'with God's help, 150 people escaped from the torture camps, as a result of the chaotic situation prevailing in the Sinai following the attacks by the Egyptian army, but the escapees have disappeared; we do not know what has happened to them.' The trafficking of Eritrean refugees has become an extremely lucrative business. the corruption trail stretches right back to Eritrea where the regime is busy not only creating refugees but in profiting from their misery.

– Elizabeth Kendal

PLEASE PRAY THAT GOD WILL:

- 'Break the arm' (the mechanism of action) of the wicked (Psalm 10.15) who profit from misery. Lord, eliminate the demand by destroying the Bedouin trafficking rings and Sinai torture chambers; eliminate the corruption by heaping consequences on those who profit from human suffering; eliminate the supply by bringing radical change to Eritrea so that the flow of refugees will cease at its source.

- 'Break the arm' of the wicked who inflict violence and torture on the Lord's beloved. Lord, convict them of sin, soften their hearts, restrain or remove them. Protect, sustain and comfort Your suffering people; provide them with all their needs.

- Bring revival to Catholic, Orthodox and Lutheran state-sanctioned churches, so that disunity will dissolve and believers will love, care for and cover one another; may the Lord so work in the Eritrean Church that she is refined as pure silver for future ministry and for the glory of God.

- 'Break the arm of the wicked and evildoer; call his wickedness to account till you find none.' (Psalm 10.15 ESV)



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

Christians Respond To Tragedy In Philippines

CHRISTIAN churches and aid organisations have been quick to respond to the horrendous tragedy unfolding in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. So far *New Life* has been advised of the following avenues through which Christians may donate to the relief effort:

- World Vision: www.worldvision.org
- Barnabas Fund: www.barnabasfund.org
- Samaritan's Purse: www.samaritans-purse.org
- Christian Aid: www.christianaid.org
- Baptist World Aid: www.baptistworldaid.org.au
- FEBC: www.febc.org.au
- Operation Mobilisation: www.om.org.au .

World Vision Responding To Devastation

TYPHOON Haiyan, reported by media outlets as possibly the strongest tropical cyclone in recorded history, made landfall on 9 November in Samar, Central Philippines. According to a story by Aaron Aspi and Crislyn Felisilda for World Vision, the humanitarian organization has launched an emergency response to help affected vulnerable children and families.

World Vision's first relief flight loaded with critical emergency supplies has arrived with 5,000 blankets and 3,000 tarpaulins that will help survivors build temporary shelters. Images of houses damaged, large trees uprooted, and swelling waves caused by storm surges towering as high as six metres have dominated international and local headlines. 'The impact has been tremendous. It's reported to be the biggest typhoon of the year, and it is,' said Gjeff Lamigo, World Vision communications manager in Manila.

The government of the Philippines estimates that at least 4,000,000 people have been affected by the typhoon, and there are reports that in one area alone, Tacloban, 10,000 people have died. World Vision said the number of fatalities is likely to rise as communication channels are restored and access improves to impacted areas. Many have been displaced, especially in Bohol, where about 5,000 families remain temporarily sheltered in makeshift tents following the recent earthquake.

At more than 100 evacuation centres in the affected area, the greatest needs include food, clean water, and emergency shelter supplies. 'Families are displaced and living in cramped conditions,' said



Aaron Aspi, a World Vision emergency communications specialist. The greatest challenge for us is still clearing the roads, restoring power and water supplies for many of the displaced families who are experiencing such hardship. It's us against the clock as we try to provide them with the necessary aid that they need.'

World Vision is launching one of its largest relief operations in the country's history, mobilizing staff across the country to respond to nearly 400,000 people affected by the disaster. The organization is mobilizing more than 500 local staff to help provide food, non-food items, hygiene kits, emergency shelter, and protection, especially for children and women. The storm's impact zone includes 20 development project areas where World Vision works with more than 35,000 sponsored children and their communities. The World Vision national office in the Philippines has committed its total effort for the next three weeks to carry out its largest emergency response to date.

Barnabas Fund Working Through Churches

BARNABAS Fund is working through churches and Christian organisations in the Philippines to help people whose lives have been ravaged by this disaster. Dr Patrick Sookhdeo, International Director of Barnabas Fund, says: 'It has been absolutely heart-rending seeing the scenes of devastation wrought by Typhoon Haiyan. Our thoughts and prayers are with all those who have lost loved ones and homes and find themselves in a desperate plight. Most of those affected are Christians, so please give if you are able to help our brothers and sisters at this most desperate of times. (Continued on p.5)

INASMUCH – 2 ... (Continued from p.4)

Disaster Hits Hard; Christians Work Harder

CHRISTIANS are supposed to take care of the poor and needy. So what about when it gets personal? According to Tim Glenn of Compassion International, Typhoon Haiyan hits close because of the 339 church projects they have in the Philippines. 'We think probably 99 or 100 of those church projects have been affected or impacted in some way, which could mean as many as 19,000 kids – easily a third of our kids in the Philippines – are impacted in some way by this storm.'

As Compassion assesses this impact, they see an opportunity to share the Gospel. 'We're inviting people to come into the church, learn about the Gospel, learn about the love of God, and learn how we've been called as Christians to care for the poor and do exactly this: to minister, to serve, and to disciple.' Along with prayer, consider helping Compassion replenish their disaster relief fund. Full story:

<http://www.MNNonline.org/article/19201>

Samaritan's Purse Provides Rapid Response

SAMARITAN'S Purse has deployed a disaster response team to the Philippines to provide desperately needed relief to the victims. The international Christian relief organisation began mobilizing as

the storm started pummeling the Central Philippines. The charity has been working in the Philippines for the past 15 years, deploying disaster response teams and working through local partnerships.

'We've seen the kind of devastation storms like this can bring to life,' said Samaritan's Purse President Franklin Graham. 'We will do everything we can to provide for their needs. We'll be there not only to provide survivors with physical aid, but also to share God's love and bring hope to their communities.'

Samaritan's Purse staff arrived on the ground in the Philippines on Saturday afternoon, 10 November, local time. The team is made up of experienced relief workers, including water and nutritional experts. Once in country, they will begin working immediately to provide basic necessities that may include temporary shelter, clean water, food, and hygiene items.

'Samaritan's Purse always seeks to go to the area of greatest need to areas where many other people can't get to and where people are suffering most,' said team member Peter Ivermee from Dorset.

– ASSIST News Service

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HERE TO HELP

A Big Day For Ridley Melbourne

THE Ridley Melbourne family and friends gathered at the college on Tuesday 12 November for the launch of two books by Ridley staff members: *Evangelical Theology, A Biblical And Systematic Introduction* by Theology Lecturer Michael F Bird, and *Jonathan Edwards And The Church* by Church History Lecturer Rhys Bezant.

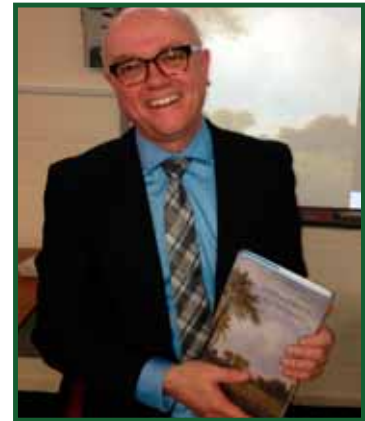
Dr Stuart Piggin, Professor of History at Macquarrie University, Sydney, launched *Jonathan Edwards And The Church*, and John McClean, Theology Lecturer at Christ College, Sydney, did the honours for *Evangelical Theology*.

Dr Piggin warmly commended *Jonathan Edwards And The Church*, noting that the life and writings of Edwards had already been comprehensively dealt with by a multitude of writers over the centuries, but Rhys Bezant had managed to find a neglected aspect of Edwards' writings, namely his view of the Church. He said that Edwards' Ecclesiology had a below-up perspective rather than top-down and that Rhys Bezant had written with impressive simplicity in a style which could be described as 'Bezantine' as opposed to 'Byzantine'.

Rhys Bezant spoke of his surprise at finding that this aspect of Edwards' thought had not been written about earlier, so he began this work as a doctoral thesis, now distilled into the book. He told how he had grown to love the way in which Edwards was able to make heart and head meet in such a balanced way. He offered it as a gift to help understanding of the Church in the church, declaring: 'Long live the Revival and all who sail in her!'

In launching *Evangelical Theology*, John McClean said that the book was an obvious failure – it was far too engaging and interesting, even jocular at times, unlike the average theology textbook. Eventually most present caught up with the McClean sense of humour. He declared the publication of this book to be a historic moment, as no other Australian has written such a substantial systematic theology.

Michael Bird said in reply that he wanted to write this book to demonstrate that the Good News really is good, and that he hoped those who read it would be better equipped to know the Gospel and the God of the Gospel. – Bob Thomas



Dr Rhys Bezant (above) and Dr Michael Bird (below, left) with Andrew Adams.



Jim Packer's Tips For Knowing God:

1. Read and study the Bible. God is a relational God who has revealed Himself in the Bible. Reading it builds that relationship.
2. Read Romans, which is described as 'the purest Gospel' because it reveals God's salvation plan in a logical, clear way.
3. God's character reveals who He is. Studying these attributes helps us know Him more fully.
4. Know yourself: we are not strong and all-powerful like God but are fallen, spiritually dead and need saving. Hence, we need Jesus to give us victory.
5. Ask God for mercy and find this mercy in Jesus. In so doing we receive the riches of being children of God.
6. Get life's priorities right. The most important thing in life is not money, or church union, or refuting-isms, or being prosperous, but knowing God.

Jeremy Dover is a former sports scientist and pastor who contributes regularly to *Christian Today*.

Other articles by Jeremy Dover may be viewed at:

www.pressserviceinternational.org/jeremy-dover.html

Signposts of the Second Coming

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



Friendship Baptist Church warmly invites you to attend our weekly Sunday services during November to hear Pastor Kyle Sutton speak on the many signs of Jesus' Second Coming.

Meeting at Carnegie Primary School Auditorium
Corner of Glen Huntley and Truganini Roads, Carnegie
10:15 sharp each Sunday morning
Ch. Office 8802-7566 — www.friendshipbc.com.au

CHURCH AND NATION

New SA Death Bill: Loopholes You Could Drive A Hearse Through

'SOUTH Australian Independent MP Bob Such has introduced his *Ending Life With Dignity (2) Bill 2013* – his ninth euthanasia bill since 2000, and his second try this year,' says FamilyVoice SA state officer David d'Lima. 'Sadly, even though Dr Such claims that his November bill is tighter than his April version (which he had claimed was as tight as anyone could get), it still has huge loopholes you could drive a hearse through.' David d'Lima said he is concerned that the new bill is likely to be debated and possibly voted on before MPs and other bodies such as the Law Society, AMA, palliative carers and the insurance industry have had time to trawl through its 25 pages and determine its full implications.

'We are alerting MPs to some glaring deficiencies we have noted,' David d'Lima said. 'The April Bill required two medical practitioners acting independently to personally examine the person seeking euthanasia. The November Bill no longer requires the doctors to act independently. They could be part of the same medical practice. The second doctor may feel under subtle pressure to agree with the first doctor's diagnosis. Dr Nitschke could set up a death clinic with a partner and the two could work together.'

'Key loopholes in the April Bill remain unchanged. "Terminal illness" could include conditions like asthma, diabetes, obesity and so on. There is no requirement in the November Bill for the condition to cause imminent death: a person just diagnosed with MS could qualify for euthanasia, even though natural death may be 30 years away. There is no requirement for the person to have treatment – he or she can simply say any treatment or pain relief is unacceptable and demand a lethal dose of drugs. There is no absolute requirement for a consultation with a psychiatrist to assess possible depression, even though depression is often a trigger for euthanasia requests.'

David d'Lima said that this second bill increases penalties for non-compliance – but while loopholes remain, mere penalty increases cannot provide additional safeguards. 'The bill again requires the death certificate to falsely state that death was caused by a medical condition, not suicide or homicide – allowing the rorting of life insurance provisions. Clause 27 includes the withdrawal of treatment (eg life support) as a means of providing euthanasia, even though such withdrawal can be part of good clinical practice. Including it in the bill could mean that palliative care doctors would have to satisfy the bill's many onerous provisions, merely to allow a patient to die naturally. There are a number of drafting errors as well. This bill was prepared in haste, and it shows. We are urging SA MPs to reject it at the second reading.'

Anglican Church Welcomes Report Of Inquiry Into Child Abuse

THE Anglican Diocese of Melbourne welcomes the report by the Victorian parliamentary inquiry into the handling of child abuse by religious and other non-government organisations, released on 13 November.

'We thank the committee members for their careful, thorough and patient work, and also the State Government for establishing the inquiry. It is vitally important that victims have been given the opportunity to be heard in this public way, and that church processes and protocols have been rigorously scrutinised to investigate where improvements need to be made,' said Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr Philip Freier. He said the Anglican Church would study the findings of the report closely. 'It is crucial that children be protected from abuse, and that we continue to strive to ensure that our protocols and processes meet the standards the community expects of us,' Dr Freier said.

He said the Anglican Church supported the report's key recommendations, and would continue to provide full co-operation with the State Government in implementing whatever is necessary in order to ensure that children are adequately protected, and that victims of abuse are treated with compassion, justice and equity.

– Medianet Press Release

Churches At Risk – Not Prepared For New Media Dangers

CHURCHES and Christian ministries are not prepared for publicity crises and under-estimate the dangers of the new media age, according to Lyall Mercer, Principal of Mercer PR, who says the Australian media landscape has changed with the evolution of social media, placing churches at a greater risk of serious reputation damage. Mr Mercer said many church leaders wrongly believe that their personal communications skills will see them through any public issues, but every church and Christian organisation must have a workable and structured media policy, issues management plan and public relations strategy. 'It's a new media world – what worked in the past won't work anymore,' Mr Mercer says. For further advice contact Lyall Mercer, phone: 0413-749-830 or 1300 780 355.

GOOD NEWS FROM ABROAD

Egyptians Turning To Christ Despite Violence

SINCE the Muslim Brotherhood took power in Egypt, Christians have been the targets of violence. Once the Islamist government was sacked, Christians hoped the situation would change, but, according to Mission Network News, it hasn't. Thousands of supporters of former President Mohammed Morsi took to the streets recently in Alexandria, Suez and other cities, calling for Morsi to be reinstated and urging military leader General Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi to step aside. According to an IN Network worker, 'David,' the protests have put his family at risk: 'Every Friday there [is] a big group of the Muslim Brotherhood; they try to come back, and they fight with the army and police ... They are still creating troubles and problems. The last two months they've gotten very crazy. They want to destroy the country. They attack many churches. More than 80 churches have been burned. Many Christians have been killed.'

But while the violence has been difficult, David says there is good news: 'Churches are united together. And the spirit of prayer is happening in all the churches. People are praying all the time.' The response to the violence against burned churches has also been remarkable. Christians posted signs on their burned-out churches that read: 'You burned our church, but we love you.'

'So it's a great message of forgiveness,' David says. 'This makes many Muslims discover the reality of Christianity, and many of them come to know Jesus ... Until now, they find difficulty for security reason to join local churches, so they meet underground in a secret way. They worship the Lord together, and they're growing.' As Muslims come to Christ, they're uniquely qualified to share the Gospel. 'The easiest way to reach Muslims is through converted Muslims,' says David.

While David isn't praying for more persecution, he's excited about God working. 'It's always like this,' he says. 'When there is pressure over the churches, the Holy Spirit is working and many people are coming to know Jesus as Saviour.'

– Anna Kuta

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or by email: secretary@kingrivercamp.org.au

Applications Close 15 November 2013.

Knowing God's Plan

(Read Romans 5.1-11)

FOR REFLECTION:
God says having two witnesses in a case is important. (Deuteronomy 19.15). Who are the two witnesses to God's love mentioned here? How are they different? What should the blessings of justification cause you to do?

JUSTIFICATION is such a treasure that Paul now outlines the three blessings that flow from it.

First (v 1), God is at peace with us because His justice has been satisfied. He holds nothing against us.

Secondly (v 1), not only do we have a relationship with an absence of anger, we have access to a gracious relationship – an unconditional, undeserved relationship without prerequisites from God's point of view.

Thirdly (v 2), we have the certain expectation that in the future we will share in the glory of God (see 8:18ff).

But we not only rejoice in hope, we also rejoice in suffering. Why?

Because suffering leads to perseverance, which leads to character. Perseverance in the face of opposition shows the authenticity of our commitment. Such an experience leads to a freshening or new yearning for the fulfilment of our hope (v 4).

How can we be sure that our hope will be fulfilled? Paul gives us three reasons:

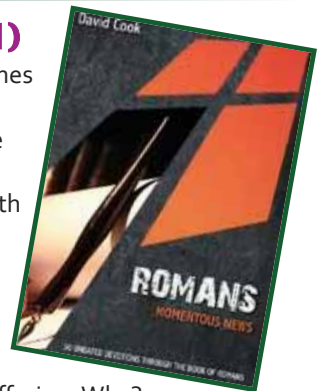
First (v 5), God has given us the Holy Spirit who reminds us of God's love. God's love will not allow the hopes of His children to be disappointed.

Secondly (vv 6-8), The objective ground, or proof, of God's love is the cross where Jesus died for our sin (vv 6,8). Jesus' death is gracious because those for whom He died are described as sinners, helpless and enemies. This demonstration of God's love lies at the very core of Christianity, which is about the death of the

innocent Son for His undeserving people.

Thirdly (vv 9-11), finally, Paul argues that our hope will not be dashed because God reconciled us when we were His enemies. Now that we are His friends, He will surely save us. Having done the greater thing, He will do the comparatively lesser, the fulfilment of our hope and so we can be sure that our hope of glorification will not be dashed.

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



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PERSECUTION WATCH

Boko Haram Violence Cripples Christianity In Areas Of Nigeria's Borno State

ISLAMIC extremist Boko Haram insurgents have driven thousands of Christians from areas of Borno state, with some of those remaining unable to hold worship services, church leaders said. According to a story by *Morning Star News*, Boko Haram attacks that killed at least 150 members of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria (Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria, or EYN) in the past 10 months have caused 8,000 Christians to flee, EYN leaders said.

'Most of our church members affected by these attacks have fled to other communities, and they are in desperate need for help,' said Rev Daniel Yumuna, Jos District Secretary for the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria. Militants from the Islamic extremist group destroyed 15 places of worship belonging to EYN, which is the dominant denomination in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states in north-eastern Nigeria with 180,000 members.

Boko Haram, based in Borno state, has killed at least 900 Christians in the past year in its stated campaign to establish strict sharia (Islamic law) throughout the country, according to the Hudson Institute. Filibus Gwama, former President of the EYN, told *Morning Star News* that a 27 September attack by Boko Haram on his community, Gavva West in Gwoza District, forced many Christians to flee to neighbouring Cameroon. 'Five members from my village who escaped from the attackers said seven of our Christian members were killed in the attack, and two of them were children, ages 6 and 8,' Gwama said. Yumuna and Gwama said 75 houses were burned in the attack on the Christian community near the border of Cameroon. They said it was the 10th attack on Gavva West village this year. Another attack on Barawa, also in Borno's Gwoza District, devastated local churches, EYN leaders said. 'One church member was killed, three EYN churches were burned, and 19 houses were destroyed, including the house of our pastor,' Yumuna told *Morning Star News*. 'The Boko Haram gunmen forced about 8,000 people out of Barawa area and set fire on nine churches, while 400 houses were destroyed.' – *Jeremy Reynolds, ASSIST News Service*



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PERSECUTION WATCH (Continued) ...

INDIA: As Attacks On Christians And Legal Restrictions Spread, Release Calls On India To Protect Freedom Of Faith

RELEASE International staged a prayer vigil at the India High Commission in London on 11 November. Supporters presented a petition on behalf of Indian Christians suffering violence from Hindu militants and threats from anti-conversion laws. The petition calls on the Indian Government to protect Christians from growing attacks from extremists, as well as widening discriminatory legislation, which is threatening church activities. Release partners in India have documented 42 attacks against Christians in Andhra Pradesh alone in the past six months, and are recording an average of two assaults a week against Christians in Karnataka State. Alongside the threat of physical violence, Christians face false accusations and detention. Seven states have anti-conversion laws, which limit Christian witness and charitable and social programs. The latest, awaiting presidential approval, is in Madhya Pradesh. Release believes this poses an even greater legal threat against Christians. Release partners say the motive behind the persecution is to try to restrict Christian outreach towards the Dalits, who are often regarded as a slave class in Indian society. The attackers and those pressing for anti-Christian legislation subscribe to a form of Hindu ultra-nationalism called Hindutva. Adherents believe that to be Indian is to be Hindu.

LAOS – Villagers Encouraged To Attack Christians

THREE Christian families in a village in Laos are living in fear after officials gave locals permission to attack and rob them, to force them to leave. At a recent meeting, villagers were told they could persecute the Christians with impunity, according to Release partners in Laos. Destroying their crops and livestock, stealing their land, preventing them from farming and raping their women were all permitted. Two days earlier, a district official had warned locals about Christians infiltrating the area with American backing, and had given villagers the right to 'arrest suspects immediately'. The three families were given written notification in June that they were to be evicted. They have not left as 'they have nowhere else to go', according to our partners. Already, one of the three families has had its one-acre lemon orchard confiscated.

– Release Partners

Reason To Celebrate In Iran

VOICE of the Martyrs USA says Iranian Christian Mostafa Bordbar has been released from the notorious Evin Prison. He was arrested last December while celebrating Christmas in Tehran. Among the charges was Bordbar's conversion from Islam to Christianity. After being locked up for months in Evin with fellow persecuted believers, an Iranian court cleared him of all charges. Pray for believers who are still imprisoned. Full story: <http://www.MNNOnline.org/article/19189>



PAKISTAN – Christian Accused Of Using Koran To Make Fireworks

A CHRISTIAN man has gone into hiding in Punjab after being accused of blasphemy for allegedly using pages of the Koran to make fireworks. The accusations against Tariq Yousaf prompted calls for his arrest to be broadcast from the loudspeakers of mosques in Wazirabad city, Gujranwala district. Tariq, who is in his mid-20s, is well known locally and makes a good living making fireworks for weddings and other events, say Release Partners. Police have taken into custody his two brothers, Waris and Arif, aged 22 and 27 respectively. Local Chris-

tians are fearful of retaliatory attacks and called on Release Partners to intervene to restore calm to the area. Pray for protection for Tariq and his brothers. Pray too for Release Partners supporting Tariq's family and trying to defuse tensions. Continue to pray that Pakistan's Government will undertake a thorough review of Pakistan's blasphemy laws, which are frequently misused to target religious minorities.

• The unofficial death toll from the double suicide bombing of All Saints' Church in Peshawar, Pakistan, has now risen to 181. This follows the death in recent days of some of those injured, including a five-year-old. Pray that God will heal all those who are injured and comfort the bereaved.

– Release News Service www.releaseinternational.com

MEXICO – Evangelicals Beaten And Jailed

A MOB abducted, jailed and beat a group of evangelical Christians in southern Mexico – allegedly on the orders of a district official. Beating the Christians with rods and stones, the mob also attacked their unfinished church building in Oaxaca with sledgehammers and pick-axes. The attack was apparently in retaliation for the Christians declining to take part in traditional religious festivities and for protesting about previous ill-treatment. This is the latest attack in a long-running campaign of persecution. The National Commission on Human Rights alleges that the violence is being orchestrated by a senior municipal official who has stirred up hatred against the Christians and made life very difficult for them since 2011, threatening to expel and even kill them.

Four of the Oaxaca evangelicals, including church pastor Leopoldo Alonso, were jailed and beaten from 5-11 November until state officials intervened to free them. Christians who refuse to participate in the traditional religious festivals, which they say are linked to idol worship, have been threatened, attacked and discriminated against in more remote areas of several states. Traditional religious groups invoke legislation protecting their rights to force their practices on minority groups such as evangelicals, with apparent impunity.

HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE ... With Barbara Furman

MAF Clocks Up 40 Years In Arnhem Land

ON 1 November MAF Australia celebrated 40 years of service in Arnhem Land. The hallmark of these 40 years has been families serving families in Christ's name. MAF staff have travelled alongside Aboriginal brothers and sisters in the highs and the lows: through the spiritual revival that spread out from Elcho Island in the late 1970's, the heartbreak of substance abuse and domestic violence and the implementation of various government policies.

Even though the core business has been the provision of a safe, reliable and efficient air service, somehow it has always been more than that. With staff who view their work as God's call and aircraft flown and maintained by crew who daily open the Scriptures and pray together, opportunities to serve outside the cockpit or hangar or working week have been an integral part of MAF's presence. As ideal as all this might sound, for many it has meant sacrifice beyond anything they may have foreseen, with many external pressures making an already demanding ministry that much more challenging.

It is against this backdrop that Mission Aviation Fellowship has outlived every other air service in the Northern Territory, whether under its own logo, or more recently, sometimes that of the Arnhem Land Community Airlines.

– *Flying For Life, November 2013*



The kids at Yirrkala Mission – some of the beneficiaries of MAF support services.

Please Pray For James Leviston And Family

JOSSY Chako, Director of EMPART Ministries reports: on Saturday 9 November, James Leviston, an Empart Elder and long-time Ambassador was involved in a serious flying fox accident whilst on a church men's camp at Lerderderg Gorge, near Ballarat. James sustained serious injuries, including severe lacerations to his head, broken shoulder and collar bone, broken arm and multiple fractures to his spine. We thank God that the doctors believe that James has avoided permanent brain and spinal injury. He is still in a critical condition in ICU but is expected to make a full recovery – although, given the seriousness of the accident, it will be many months before he is back to full health. James is now in a body cast to stabilise the spinal fractures and his other injuries will be treated as he is well enough to face further treatment.

An Inhospitable Mission Field

TWO teams of dedicated missionaries serving with

the Indian Evangelical Mission in the Lahaul and Pangi Valley area of Himachal Pradesh, Northern India, will experience winter in a different way for the first time this year. These valleys are covered with ice, cut off and not accessible for eight months. The literal meaning of the state's name is 'in the lap of the Himalayas'. There is great variation in the climatic conditions of Himachal due to extreme variation in elevation. The climate varies from hot and sub-humid tropical in the southern tracts to cold, alpine and glacial in the northern and eastern mountain ranges. The work in Pangi Valley began in May 2013 where two missionaries, Mr John and Mr Peter are serving. The Lahauli team members – Mr Luke Titus, Mr Lalmuan, his wife Ching with their one year old son Stephan, left on 15 October to live and share about Jesus for eight and a half months and to see a church established in Lahaul. They carried nine months' rations with them.

– *IEM Update, October 2013*

'Beginnings' – A Commentary And 24 Studies On Genesis 1-11

November/December Special

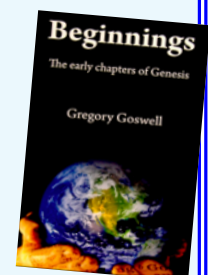
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HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE ... *With Barbara Furman*

Future Directions For OAC Ministries

IN OAC Victoria's November *Quarterly News*, Stuart Conkie, Victorian Director, outlined some changes the organisation hopes to introduce. He writes: 'Over recent years we have been evaluating our ministry and thinking about how we might continue to grow our effectiveness in communication and to increase our effectiveness in edifying, training and encouraging. We do spend a considerable amount of time training people and equipping churches when working with them. To further enhance our ministry we are hoping to allow staff to focus more on specific areas, similar to the seniors' ministry currently being conducted. The ideal will be to have one person focused on schools, another on Summer/Easter missions, resource development, etc, so that these ministries can be developed in greater ways. Allowing staff to focus on particular areas means that they may need to let go of some things they are currently doing. Initially this change may feel like a backward step, like we are cutting back. However, I believe that this will enable us to grow our ministry.'

Russians Responding Online

TWENTY five percent of responses to FEBC Radio's Russian program are received electronically from those who tune in online. People typically respond to programs dealing with the specific issues that interest them. Responses about domestic abuse are often heart wrenching. People who live in unbearable circumstances and who have no way out listen to the programs and receive hope. Outcasts dying from AIDS, abused children of alcoholic families, soldiers on the verge of suicide, mothers losing their teens to drugs: people who cannot see a way ahead find the programs online and respond. 'One of my sons died from drugs,' wrote one mother, 'and the second one began using as well. It was your program that made my son see hope and connected us to a Christian rehab centre. He is alive today because of you – and we are both saved.'

– *Skywaves, November-December 2013*

Food ...

IN the Christ Groups, the congregations established by Every Home For Christ in their areas of ministry, new Christians are not simply disciplined, they are inspired and empowered to share their newfound faith with others, and to love and care for those with needs around them. In Zambia a Christ Group was praying about how to care for the poor in their village when the group leader had a dream. 'In the

dream God showed me the members of our group in one hand,' she described, 'and in the other hand He showed me a small cake. Then He told me, 'Both of these can multiply''. The group put together a small business plan to begin raising income for their village. They learned to make and sell the small cakes in the dream. The tasty cakes were soon selling out! They couldn't make enough! They realised this could be an opportunity for sharing the Good News, so they began giving Gospel booklets to every customer. Soon they made bags for the cakes with Scriptures on them. The small business has impressed the locals and given the group good exposure. People have come to Jesus Christ as a result.

– *Every Home For Christ, November 2013*

... And Drink

A CAFE in the Melbourne suburb of Altona is lending a helping hand to the suburb's disadvantaged residents by combining coffee and charity. Melissa Cakes has joined the 'suspended coffees' initiative which sees customers buying an extra 'suspended' coffee which can then be given to someone who cannot afford one. The cafe has teamed up with the Hobsons Bay Salvation Army corps and a local youth group, providing the charities with suspended coffee vouchers to ensure the system is not abused. 'When people are in a tough spot and battling to buy food and pay the bills, they are forced to forgo luxuries like a coffee in the morning,' said manager Katrina Ellis. 'Hopefully this idea will help people out a little in a time of need.'

– *Warcry*

BGR School Shines A Light In Gaza

REGIONAL instability has some in Gaza dreading 2014. Jeff Palmer of Baptist Global Response says Gaza holds many challenges. 'It is a hard place; you're looking at 40% of the folks living in poverty. You're looking at 75% of the population under 25 years of age.' Life gets even harder when you claim to follow Christ. 'When you're a very, very small minority – a few thousand at most, in the midst of another majority sometimes it's hard to find education and services.' BGR's Lighthouse School is shining a beacon of hope in the darkness. 'There's a lot of misunderstanding as to ... who followers of Jesus are. By giving positive help in the community ... it speaks volumes to families who may not have any contact with a believer.'

Full story: www.MNNonline.org/article/19181



HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE ... With Barbara Furman

Local Mission Expanding Work In East Africa

GENESIS Aid, a work that has grown out of Genesis Counselling & Training Service Inc, the Western Australian mission commenced by Pastor Ray and Cheryl Jenner in 1982, is seeing its work in Kenya and Uganda expand. From humble beginnings in 2003, they have built a secondary school, five primary schools, a guest house, community clinic and are currently building a new vocational training college as part of the Rubaare Education Foundation-Genesis partnership in Uganda. Sixty three groups for widows have seen tremendous growth and improvement in living conditions and income generation. Current beneficiaries in Uganda alone number more than 3,600 widows, orphans and widowers. In a new initiative, Genesis is seeking to expand its partnership with Challenge Literature Fellowship, the WA publisher of *Challenge News*, by offering churches the opportunity to adopt an African church, train a pastor, introduce *Challenge News* to the fellowship and community and provide follow-

up discipleship training materials and a Bible to those who respond to the Gospel message. In the first 18 months of distributing *Challenge News* in Uganda there were 2,000 decisions to become Christians. Now a partnership has been established with the Bible League of Kenya which is better equipped than the local pastors to provide training, materials and Bibles. Currently a mixed edition of English/Lugandan is being printed, but with new partners, this can be expanded to previously unreached parts of Uganda in other languages. There are more than 50 churches eager to receive assistance in East Africa. — *Genesis Aid News*

New Bishop Of North Sydney

THE Archbishop of Sydney, Dr Glenn Davies, has announced that a church planter with experience in Australia and overseas is to be the next Bishop of North Sydney. The Rev Chris Edwards was the founding minister of Holy Trinity, Adelaide Hills, in South Australia, which grew more than tenfold under his leadership.

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HORRENDOUS PERSECUTION

North Korea Publicly Executes 80, Some For Videos Or Bibles

AS many as 80 people were publicly executed in North Korea earlier this month, some for offences as minor as watching South Korean movies or possessing a Bible, according to a story in Fox News (www.foxnews.com). The story said that South Korean newspaper *JoongAng Ilbo* reported that the so-called criminals were put to death in seven cities across North Korea on 3 November in the first known large-scale public executions by the Kim Jong-un regime.



'A source, who is familiar with internal affairs in the North and who recently visited the country, told the paper that about 10 people were killed in each city,' the story went on to say. 'Eight people – their heads covered with white bags – were tied to stakes at a local stadium in the city of Wonsan, before authorities shot them with a machine gun, according to the source. 'Wonsan authorities gathered a crowd of 10,000 people, including children, at Shinpoong Stadium and forced them to watch the killings. I heard from the residents that they watched in terror as the corpses were (so) riddled by machine-gun fire that they were hard to identify afterward,' the *JoongAng Ilbo* source said.

Most of the Wonsan victims were charged with watching or illegally trafficking South Korean videos, involvement in prostitution, or possessing a Bible. Relatives or accomplices of the execution victims implicated in their alleged crimes were sent to prison camps.

'There is no clear reason for the executions. One government official noted they occurred in cities that are centres of economic development. Wonsan is a port city that Kim is reportedly planning to make a tourist destination by building an airport, hotels and a ski resort on Mount Masik,' said Fox News. 'Simultaneous executions in seven cities could suggest an extreme measure by the North Korean government to quell public unrest or any capitalistic inclinations that may accompany its development projects. The common theme of the persecution was crimes related to South Korea – like watching South Korean films – or corruption of public morals, especially sexual misconduct. North Korean law permits executions for conspiring to overthrow the government, treason and terrorism. But the country has also been known to order public executions for minor infractions such as religious activism, mobile phone use and stealing food, in an effort to intimidate the public.'

There were no executions in the capital of Pyongyang, where Kim depends on the support of the country's elite. The young leader continues to build luxury and recreational facilities in the capital, including a new water park.

– Dan Wooding, ASSIST News Service

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BOOKS WORTH READING

PRESENCE, POWER AND PROMISE: THE ROLE OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, Ed David G. Firth and Paul D. Wegner, Nottingham: Apollos, 2011. ISBN 978-1-84474-534-0

BOOKS that focus on the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament are a rarity, making this volume of essays by leading Evangelical biblical scholars a valuable resource for those who want to use the Old Testament for teaching and preaching. The various chapters started as papers given at a themed conference of the Tyndale Old Testament Study Group in Cambridge, July 2010, at which the reviewer was present.

The editors make the point that we cannot expect a full-blown doctrine of the Trinity in the Old Testament (pre-Incarnation), so that usually the Spirit is understood as a power that emanates from God rather than as a person differentiated within the Godhead. This leaves more to be revealed in the New Testament, while not contradicting the fuller revelation of the New Testament. Richard Averbeck surveys the multiple meanings of the Hebrew word used 394 times and variously translated as 'wind', 'spirit' and 'breath'. Some 95 times this word is specifically related to God, so the Spirit cannot be said to be absent from the Old Testament.

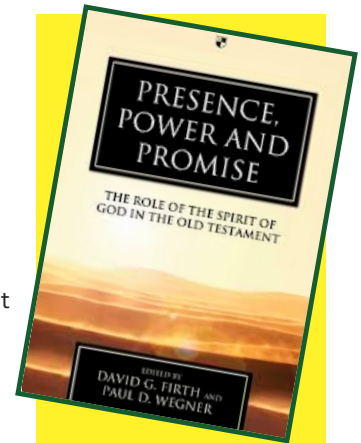
A helpful discussion of the 'Spirit of God' in Genesis 1.2 by John Walton compares what is said more widely in the Ancient Near East about divine activity and what is said about God's Spirit in the Old Testament, noting both similarities and differences (with no evidence of borrowing in either direction). This study is carried forward by Robert Hubbard Jr, who sees the Spirit of God involved in the series of divine pronouncements in Genesis 1, as is typical of the Word-Spirit nexus in Scripture generally.

Tremper Longman III surveys the link between wisdom and the Spirit of God in the Old Testament, and Rosalind Clarke focusses on Job 27.3, and Daniel J. Estes throws light on the disturbing verse, Psalm 51.11 ('and take not Your Holy Spirit from me'), which, he argues, does not refer to a withdrawal of God's Spirit but to the human desire for God's holiness. Certainly, the other three references to 'spirit' in Psalm 51 refer to the human spirit. Jamie Grant sees Psalm 139.7 as speaking of God's Spirit as a personal manifestation of God, who protects and cares for His people, so that this is close to a New Testament way of speaking. Lindsay Wilson explains Proverbs 1.23, where 'spirit' refers to the core values that personified Wisdom calls the youth of Israel to internalise.

Richard Hess shows the significance of the Spirit-filling of the Tabernacle builders, Bezalel and Oholiab. Dan Block explores what the prophets say about God's Spirit, making the point that regenerate believers in the Old Testament period were indwelt by the Spirit. How else could they believe in God and follow Him? To deny that would be to fail to recognise such believers as our spiritual forebears (see Hebrews 11). John Oswalt studies the many ambiguities of the Balaam narrative (Numbers 22-24). Hilary Marlowe exegetes the famous passage about 'the Spirit of the Lord' in Isaiah 11.1-9, which deserves more attention than just making it one of the Christmas readings in church.

Paul Wegner argues that Cyrus is the speaker in Isaiah 48.16 ('The Lord has sent me and his Spirit'), and Erika Moore provides an excellent exposition of Joel's famous passage about the pouring out of God's Spirit, with the result that all His people become prophets. David Firth does a good job explaining the involvement of the Spirit in leaders like Joseph, Moses, Joshua, the judges, Saul and David. The mention of the Spirit goes with the need for new leaders to be validated and publically recognised as God's agents. This is followed up by more detailed studies of Samuel, Saul and Elijah.

Willem VanGemeren and Andrew Abernathy provide a biblical theology of the Spirit throughout the Old Testament. Robin Routledge shows that the Old Testament picture of the future includes the restoration and renewal of God's people and the whole creation, all due to the work of God's Spirit. This fact explains why the work of the Spirit is so prominent in the pages of the New Testament, for the Holy Spirit brings anticipations of future blessing into the present due to the work of Christ. Old Testament believers shared our hope of becoming members of God's consummated kingdom in the new creation brought about by God's Spirit. Geert Lorein studies what the Qumran texts say about the Spirit, with one interesting feature being their frequent use of the term 'Holy Spirit', a designation only used three times in the Old Testament but the usual way of speaking about the Spirit in the New Testament. The result of all these careful studies is that readers will discover that the Old Testament says much more about God's Spirit than they probably realised. – Greg Goswell



'The result of all these careful studies is that readers will discover that the Old Testament says much more about God's Spirit than they probably realised.'

BOOKS WORTH READING

TURN BACK THE BATTLE, ISAIAH SPEAKS TO CHRISTIANS TODAY,
Elizabeth Kendal, Deror Books, Australia, ISBN 978 0 980 722 369.

I COUNT this one of the most important and significant books to come my way, a delight to read, hugely informative and stimulating. Elizabeth Kendal is a religious freedom analyst whose knowledge is worldwide. In a very sure-footed way she reads the signs of the times, well aware where the 'pressure points' are, where and what persecutions are rife, how so many cities are already dying under pressure of gross over-population, with their infrastructure in decay, beyond serious government, breeding grounds for crime, corruption and persecution (particularly of anything Christian).

The picture is anything but re-assuring, but never other than persuasive and realistic. Into this scenario, Kendal brings the testimony of Isaiah 2-35. 'Reader response' interpretation is not always safe, degenerating into subjectivism, but not in her hands. She holds a high doctrine of the Bible and is as skilled in exposition as in interpreting today's world. In this book, the subtitle is as accurate as the title! Isaiah not only speaks again today but does so in tones that are fresh and extremely potent, going right to the heart of our situation, needs and questions.

We come away from reading *Turn Back The Battle* more alert to what and where the battle is, certainly more equipped and enthusiastic, to engage in it, more convinced that the Bible is God's Word for today and more informed and aware of Isaiah's importance and relevance. This is a book to possess, read, re-read and cherish. Having missed out on my chance to write a 'commendation' on publication, I am more than thrilled to commend it to you in this review.

– Alec Motyer (Dr Motyer is a British biblical scholar and Principal of Trinity College, Bristol.

He has written 28 books, the most popular being

The Prophecy Of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary.)

This review appeared originally in the British Christian Newspaper *Evangelicals Now*.



**'This is
a book
to possess,
read,
re-read
and
cherish.'**

SAMUEL RUTHERFORD AND HIS FRIENDS, Faith Cook, Banner Of Truth, Edinburgh, 2013

ISBN Print 978 1 84871 197 6, Kindle 978 1 84871 198 3, EPUB 978 1 84871 199 0

FAITH Cook has written a number of inspiring short biographies. This particular reprint of one of her earlier books brings to the reader's attention people who were part of the life of Samuel Rutherford.

The letters of Samuel Rutherford were of great pastoral help to his parishioners and other friends in times when many were suffering extreme difficulties because of their faith or because of the harshness of life generally. Written with a deep love for his friends and a strong desire to encourage them not to lose heart in the face of their challenges, Rutherford's letters are full of spiritual lessons and biblical teaching. It is these letters that form the backdrop of Faith Cook's book. The men and women of whom Cook writes benefitted from Rutherford's ministry and in turn were of great comfort to him in the way they met their challenges. To some he opened up of his own grief, including the pain of the death of his young children and his wife and his grief when forced away from his parishioners. Included are women such as Marion McNaught and Lady Kenmure and men like Robert Gordon.

This book will help readers who wish to delve further into the letters of Samuel Rutherford because Cook tells us of their lives and the particular circumstances they were facing. As a result the letters we read have a background. That, however, is not the only reason to read this book. The 1600's in Scotland were a harsh time to live through for those willing to stand for truth. Powerful vested interests worked hard to take the church back to its pre-Reformation practices. These biographies are an insight into history politically, socially and from a religious perspective. We are the poorer if we let this wealth of insight pass us by.

You will be inspired by and thankful for these men and women of faith who were prepared to give their lives or to keep living in faith though the way ahead seemed dark. You will be challenged to consider what legacy our lives will give to future generations. You will be made to think, too, of what really helps the Christian to go on in his or her life of faith when hit by difficulties. Biographies help to build up our spiritual stamina.

– Mignon Goswell

FOOTNOTE: The hymn *The Sands Of Time Are Sinking* was originally written as an epic poem on the life of Samuel Rutherford, recounting his life story as told in his *Letters*.

– Ed.



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