

Scots Church Rocks – With Watoto Children's Choir



SCOTS Church, Melbourne, played host to two concerts by the Watoto Children's Choir on Wednesday 11 June, with congregations of several hundred enjoying a presentation of several spiritual songs (*I Am Not Forgotten; Celebrate!, Jesus Cares; With Jesus Christ I'm Not Alone; He Lifts Me Up And Holds Me Close; You're My Friend Like No Other*) interspersed with challenging Gospel messages and news about the work of Watoto Children's Choirs.

Watoto Children's Choirs have travelled internationally since 1994 as advocates for the estimated 50 million children in Africa orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS, war, poverty and disease. Accompanied by a team of adults, the choir presents Watoto's vision and mission through their stories, music and dance. Watoto choirs act as ambassadors to raise awareness about the plight of the orphaned and vulnerable children of Africa. Issues such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, the effects of war and the child soldier crisis in Northern Uganda are highlighted.

Each of the children in the choir has suffered the loss of their parents either through war or disease. They live in Watoto children's villages. The experience gives the children exposure to other cultures, broadening their worldview. It also gives them confidence and boldness and helps them rise up out of their own situations of sadness and despair. The choirs have toured Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, Australasia, Canada, UK, Germany, France, USA, South America, Hong Kong, China and Japan. Go to: <http://www.watoto.com> for details about their current Australian tour – and if they happen to be coming to a venue near you, make every effort to go along and receive a faith lift.

(Pix courtesy Mrs Alison Robertson and Rev David Currie.)



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The logo for 'newlife' is displayed in a bold, lowercase font. The word 'new' is in white and 'life' is in green. To the right of the text is a stylized green leaf with a brown stem. Below the main text, the words 'AUSTRALIA'S CHRISTIAN NEWSPAPER' are written in a smaller, white, uppercase font. The entire logo is set against a dark green background.

And The Winner Is ...

OUR ABC's Classic FM has just completed its annual survey of *The Top 100* – this year, *The Top 100 Baroque And Before*. So what came first by a long shot? Handel's *Messiah*. And what were we treated to as a selection from this most famous of oratorios? *Comfort Ye, Comfort Ye My People; I Know That My Redeemer Liveth; Hallelujah, For The Lord God Omnipotent Reigneth; The Trumpet Shall Sound And The Dead Shall Be Raised Incorruptible*.

Ever since I first heard *Messiah* as a teenager, and in the lead-up to Christmas every year since, I've always believed that there's more, much more to it than the music, for all its musical brilliance. The Word of God satisfies the deepest longings of the human heart, and the brilliance of *Messiah* goes far beyond the brilliance of the music, to the brilliance of the Word of God itself and the inspired (if I may say so with reverence and deference to the inspired Word) selection and ordering of the various texts in *Messiah*.

What do people need to know but that there is a God; He is our Father; Heaven is His dwelling place; He is holy; He is working His purpose out; He is Lord of all; He is our great provider; forgiveness for sin is to be found in calling out to Him; 'we need His presence every passing hour'; 'from Him and through Him and to Him are all things'; He is eternal and calls us to Himself 'not for the years of time alone, but for eternity'? (Praying the Lord's Prayer is therefore not just a prayer, but more than a prayer – it is a confession of faith, an expression of hope, a revelling in the God who is love. But I digress.)

Our privilege as Christians is to fulfil the Great Commission by taking the Gospel and proclaiming it in all the world for the salvation of souls. The Gospel is indeed 'the power of God unto the salvation of all who believe', and it is this Gospel, so beautifully portrayed in the selection of Scripture and order of placement in *Messiah* and underscored by the music, which meets humanity's deepest needs.

As a result of receiving salvation, being justified through the Person and Work of Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore having 'the hope of glory', many consequences flow out of the life of the believer: living a holy life, walking every day with Jesus, ministering common grace in the form of works of mercy, encouraging others and working for social justice, being peace-makers. But the lesser of these things must never overshadow or replace our focus on Messiah Himself – not even Handel's marvelous music. In rehearsing God's plan of salvation may *Messiah* ever be a means of pointing to and exalting the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah foretold and fulfilled in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

– Bob Thomas

LAOS: The High Cost Of Faith

THE Communist regime in Laos has long been committed to 'eliminating Christianity' which it regards as a 'foreign' religion linked to its enemies. [The Lao Hmong aided US troops against communist forces during the Second Indochina/Vietnam War, in which the US bombed Laos heavily. After the war, a massive crackdown on the Hmong saw most Christians flee Laos for the US]. For decades, severe, targeted and systematic persecution of the Hmong continued and has included even the use of chemical weapons. While the situation has improved, Christianity is still regarded as a problem and a threat by both the government and local people. Christians are still being imprisoned for their faith – often constrained in shackles or stocks – and torture is endemic. The most common forms of persecution involve high-level pressure to abandon their faith, with sanctions commonly including forced eviction, denial of service and social exclusion.

Despite all this, and due to the amazing witness of local believers, the Church continues to grow. In fact stories like this from 2012 are not uncommon: 'Another Christian was expelled from a village in Bolikhamsay Province (east of Vientiane) for "having made 300 villagers embrace the Christian faith" (UCA, 21 May 2014).' Yet, as *Operation World 2010* notes: 'The remarkable growth of the church is still dwarfed by the size of the task remaining.' Only 3.4% of Laotians are Christians and the cost of faith can be high.

Many Laotian villagers follow traditional religions that involve continuously appeasing ancestral spirits so as to avert disasters such as storms and crop failures. Consequently, Christians who refuse to engage in traditional religion are viewed as a threat to village prosperity. Village chiefs are enlisted to evict Christians from the village. Content to see the Christians persecuted, government authorities do not defend the rights of Christians but rather will exploit any opportunity to arrest them.

Washington think-tank Freedom House ranks Laos as the least free country in South-East Asia and second only to North Korea in East Asia. According to one rights group that monitors Laos, dozens of Christians remain behind bars for practising their faith. Persecution is most intensive in the fertile highlands of Savannakhet Province.

On 11 May, 23 Christians were detained in Paksong Village in Songkhone District, Savannakhet Province after being arrested for meeting in what authorities said was an 'unauthorised' location. Twelve were released after signing documents agreeing not to meet there again, but eleven remain in prison. It seems the former village chief had given the Christians permission to meet but the new village chief had not.

On 20 May the chief of Saisomboon village in Atsaphangthong District of Savannakhet Province deemed that by becoming Christians, three female students had forfeited their right to an education. Noi (15), Net (15) and Nut (14) have been told they will not be permitted to sit their exams. Local Christian leader, Mrs Kaithong, has since appealed to the Atsaphangthong District education chief, who is negotiating with the school's director.

On 25 May police raided the home of Pastor Phupet in Donpalai village, Atsaphangthong District, where some 80 believers had gathered for worship. After abusing and intimidating the believers, the police confiscated 53 Bibles. This police raid occurred without the consent of the village chief.

On 29 May Lao police, under the order of the Loynam village chief, seized a Christian man, Sort (40), from his home in Nong District, Savannakhet Province. Sort was tied to a pole and publicly mocked and berated for refusing to recant his faith. About one year ago, Sort, along with his wife and two children, became the first family to embrace the Christian faith in the whole sub-district of Nathorn. The police had been trying to coerce Sort to renounce his faith since 15 May, when they threatened to confiscate all his property. At that time, Sort told them, 'I've embraced the Christian faith over a year and I have not broken any law!' Even after they confiscated Sort's savings, he still refused to recant. So on 29 May, after publicly humiliating Sort, they arrested him for refusing to renounce his faith in Jesus Christ. Sort is now being held in the Nong District prison.

– *Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin* is a ministry of **Elizabeth Kendal**, author of *Turn Back the Battle: Isaiah Speaks to Christians Today* (Deror Books, Dec 2012)

PLEASE

PRAY THAT:

• *all Christians suffering in Laotian prisons will know the comforting presence of Jesus Christ who promised 'behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age' (Matthew 28.20b); may God restrain their captors and open their eyes to recognise righteousness and their hearts to receive the Gospel.*

• *Noi, Net, Nut and other Christian students will not be denied an education because of their faith in Christ; may God bless and work through the advocacy and witness of Christian leader Mrs Kaithong. 'Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us ...' (Ephesians 3.20)*

• *God will bless Pastor Phupet and his 80-strong house church in Donpalai village; may He supply more Bibles and continue to build His Church there. [Aid groups including Open Doors, Voice of the Martyrs, Bible League etc raise funds to facilitate provision of Bibles.]*

• *God will pour out His Holy Spirit (Joel 2.25-32) in generous abundance on Laos' capital city, Vientiane, so that, just as in Beijing, China, Christians might be found at every level of society, ready for when God brings freedom to their land.*

TELLING THE OLD, OLD STORY TO THE WEAK AND WEARY

MemoryLink – New Christian Resource For The Ageing

MEMORYLINK is a small, hand-held, battery-operated player programmed with hymns, choruses, Bible texts and prayers from the childhood memories of Australian seniors. It was developed by the former Director-General of Education in NSW, Dr Fenton Sharpe, and a very dedicated group at West Pennant Hills Uniting Church when they became aware of and concerned for the growing numbers of people throughout Australia who suffer from Alzheimer's and other forms of Dementia and memory loss.

Easy to use, MemoryLink® features 30 hymns, 30 children's songs and over 40 Bible passages and prayers taken from a nation-wide survey in which Australian seniors listed the Christian songs, readings and prayers they could still remember from their childhood days.

The MemoryLink player, developed by Fenton's friend Tom Treseder, former Director of the Bible Society in NSW, includes hymns like *What A Friend We Have In Jesus*, *All Things Bright And Beautiful* and *Jesus Loves Me*; choruses like *Build On The Rock* and *Wide, Wide As The Ocean*; and Bible passages like 'For God so loved the world ...' (John 3.16), 'The Lord is my Shepherd' (Psalm 23) and 'Behold I stand at the door and knock' (Revelation 3.20). MemoryLink is already being used with ageing people (including those with dementia), enabling them to relive their precious memories, bringing hope, joy and peace to their later years. People who have not communicated for a long time still enjoy singing along with the hymns and choruses and mouthing the words of their favourite Scriptures. MemoryLink is already a cherished resource for aged care pastoral workers and people caring for ageing relatives and friends.

MemoryLink plays for over eight hours and includes 40 meditations, each about seven minutes in length. The package includes a charger, an instruction leaflet and a booklet with the words of the songs and the components of the meditations.

MemoryLink is a project of Pennant Hills (NSW) Uniting Church. The hymns are sung by a community choir assembled for the purpose, and the choruses by a local children's singing group. They are meant to sound like the congregational and Sunday School singing remembered by ageing people.

MemoryLink is now available for sale at the non-profit cost of \$68. For more information contact Dr Fenton Sharpe, phone 02 9484 6197, email: fsharpe@bigpond.net.au (See advert adjacent).



MemoryLink®

Awakening peace and love and joy

Recorded Hymns, Choruses, Bible Readings and Prayers – memories from childhood

MemoryLink was created from an Australia-wide survey to provide comfort, encouragement and joy to ageing people, especially those suffering dementia, by using music and Bible verses to awaken memories of their early Christian experiences.

MemoryLink was developed by Pennant Hills Uniting Church using a player by Megavoice with a grant from UnitingCare Ageing, Northern Sydney Region.

PRICE \$68 For more information ...

email fsharpe@bigpond.net.au

phone 02 9484 6197

or write to

MemoryLink at Pennant Hills Uniting Church
PO Box 902, Pennant Hills NSW 1715

For brochure and order form go to website

www.pennanthillsuniting.org.au

THE WORD GOES OUT ...

'To The Ends Of The Earth' With MegaVoice Bibles

WHEN Canon White first saw and heard the Scriptures read beautifully and accurately in the revolutionary, hand-held, solar-powered MegaVoice unit he wept. He said, 'I do not know how long I have been crying out to God for such a tool as this, it is wonderful.' Now he wants one in Arabic for all his 6,500 congregation, many of whom are 'oral preference learners.' (50% are actually non literate!)

Canon White is a magnificent, modern day example of a Christian willing to live out an old chorus loved by many, *I'll go where You want me to go dear Lord, I'll be what You want me to be.* This man of God has in the last ten years seen 1,276 of his congregation perish as victims of violence.

Brad Turkington who heads up the MegaVoice Media Centre in Northern Ireland, recently met Canon White at a conference in Jerusalem. Brad has given him 60 MegaVoice Bibles and now they are being heard by families in their homes all over Baghdad. Brad says, 'what a way to spread the Good News to people in places where missionaries can't easily go!' Being solar powered, Canon White called it, 'the Sun/Son Bible' when he recently presented one to the US Ambassador to Iraq. Ambassador Beecroft said, 'This is the most exciting thing I have ever seen, I'll use it every day.'

The inventor of MegaVoice, Tom Treseder, says, 'This door that has opened into this church in the centre of Baghdad, must surely be seen as a miraculous act of God. I want everyone to say with the Psalmist, "It is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes". Our designers have purposely created this MegaVoice Bible to not look like a black covered, Bible book. In fact, it looks more like a modern mobile phone and therefore cannot be compared to any book, particularly those sacred to other religions.'

This fact is becoming increasingly understood and valued as more and more missions and ministries serving in countries hostile to Christianity are using these audio Scriptures to reach the otherwise unreachable, including to members of Boko Haram in Nigeria.

MegaVoice International wants to offer Christian people the opportunity to provide an audio Bible for each of Canon White's 6,500 congregation. Donations may be sent to: MegaVoice International, C/o Christ Church, Att. Tom H. Treseder, PO Box 250, Gladesville 1675.

• Tom Treseder, Founder and President of MegaVoice International leaves on 16 June for strategic and creative meetings in The Netherlands and then Singapore. Tom will speak on *A Mission-Hearted Church* in Eindhoven, with Dutch church leaders and spend creative time with the MegaVoice Media Centre team in Amsterdam. Some time there will be spent developing ways Dutch missions will distribute MegaVoice Bibles into the most restricted countries on Earth.

Tom's time in Singapore is to focus on and create ways to distribute God's Word in the form of MegaVoice throughout 15 major countries surrounding Singapore. This task will be carried out in conjunction with the Bible Society of Singapore, the MegaVoice Asia Pacific Media Centre and with other church and mission leaders.

Tom says that, with each MegaVoice audio Bible being heard by 500 people in the course of 12 months, the potential to reach multiplied millions with the Good news has never been greater. Tom will value prayer support as he goes off on this strategic trip. www.megavoices.com



Canon Andrew White, the vicar of the only church in Baghdad, presenting a MegaVoice Audio Bible to a good friend. In his normal working week Canon White wears a bullet-proof jacket.

Do Science And God Mix?

- What do scientists make of Genesis?
- Do you wonder about the fusion of Christianity and science?
- Do you like to



wrestle with ideas of faith and scientific claims?

Don't miss Oxford University Professor of Mathematics **John Lennox** as he distills the turbulent debate about science and faith in God. A cosmic event for the skeptically minded, the scientifically curious and the believer who likes to wrestle with questions of science and belief.

John will be in Melbourne on Friday 8 August; Adelaide on Tuesday 12 August; Perth on Monday 18 August; Brisbane on Friday 22 August; Sydney on Monday 25 August.

Contact City Bible Forum for further details.

www.citybibleforum.org

BACK TO THE FUTURE

First Modern Jihadist State Forming In Central Syria And Iraq

WITH breathtaking speed, the creation of the first jihadi state in modern times is almost a fait accompli, stretching from central Syria to central Iraq – with nothing standing in the way of militants' designs on Baghdad. 'This is shaping up to be the biggest Arab-jihadi victory since the 12th Century – 1187 – with the fall of crusader Jerusalem,' Lt Col Ralph Peters told Fox News. 'This is momentous! I can't overstate the importance,' he said. Boundaries and borders seem meaningless to the jihadists. 'That line on the Rand McNally map dividing Iraq from Syria is gone,' he added. 'It's now a true jihadi state.'

In the last few days, the second largest city in Iraq, Mosul, fell to the offensive conducted by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. Iraqi troops trained by the US abandoned their weapons and fled the city, along with 500,000 refugees. The militants then rolled into Tikrit, the hometown of Saddam Hussein, and seized oil fields further to the south. ISIS forces also looted the central bank in Mosul of \$420 million, took 48 employees of the Turkish consulate as hostages, and seized American Humvees, helicopters and weapons. They are only 80 miles from Baghdad and vow to take the city.

So far, President Obama has denied requests by the Iraqi government for airstrikes against the militants, according to the *New York Times*.

ISIS is currently led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who was declared a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in 2011 by the US State Department, and the government offered a \$10 million reward for information leading to his capture or death. His group is considered more extreme than al-Qaeda. 'It is even more brutal than al-Qaeda,' Lt Col Peters noted. 'It is "Son of al-Qaeda" on steroids. As I pointed out a few years ago, what if Osama bin Laden is not the terrorist messiah? What if he is just John the Baptist? And Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the head of ISIS, is chilling in his resolution, brutality, and hatred for civilization.'

The US spent \$14 billion on the Iraq War and suffered 4,487 dead and over 32,000 wounded. 'All the death, all the bleeding, all the money, was for naught,' according to Lt Col Peters, because the administration failed to grasp the strategic importance of Iraq and bowed to political pressure to end US involvement. 'He believes a residual force of 10,000 to 20,000 troops should have been left in Iraq to serve as a deterrent. 'The Obama administration doesn't want to do anything militarily in Iraq, no matter what the price is,' he maintained. 'The only way to do airstrikes and make it work would be to put special ops spotters on the ground, and we're not going to do that. The only way to stop this onslaught would be to put troops on the ground and we're not going to do that,' he told Fox News.

– Mark Ellis, *Godreports via ASSIST News Service*

• IRAQ'S – 'Christian Heartland' Under Attack

RELEASE partners are asking for urgent prayer for Christians in Mosul, the traditional heartland of Iraq's church. Islamist militants from the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS) have gained full control of the northern city, historically known as Nineveh. The vast majority of Christians in the city, up to 1,000 families, are said to have joined the exodus of half-a-million residents fleeing the violence. The army too has reportedly fled. Release partner Canon Andrew White of St George's Church, Baghdad, says Kurdistan has closed its borders to refugees and the situation in Iraq is 'the worst it's ever been'. 'Most of our people come from Nineveh and still see that as their home,' he says. 'Now the Christian centre of Iraq has been totally ransacked. The tanks are moving into the Christian villages, destroying them and causing total carnage.' He added that ISIS had 'totally taken control, destroyed all government departments. Allowed all prisoners out of the prisons. Killed countless numbers of people. There are bodies all over the streets.'

Middle East Concern reports that at least one Assyrian church in Mosul has been burned down. Christians feel particularly vulnerable to attack. Christians in Syria's northern Raqqah province, where ISIS is also in control, were forced to convert, sign up to strict 'rules of submission' or be considered 'enemies of Islam' (Prayer Alert, March 5).



Images from the fall of Mosul,
with ISIS leader in lower left

**A Service Of Thanksgiving For The Life Of Miss Beatrice Madeleine ('Madge') Sugden
Will Be Held In St Kilda Presbyterian Church, Cnr Alma Rd & Barkly St, St Kilda
Commencing At 12 Noon On Saturday 21 June 2014
'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints'**

INTERNATIONAL NEPAL FELLOWSHIP

Finding A Purpose-Driven Life

PURNAM BK wanted her life to end rather than to go on living with a disability. She felt she was a burden to her family and could see no hope for her future. But thanks to the treatment and care of International Nepal Fellowship's Green Pastures Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre Purnam now has a purpose-driven life.

This Is Her Story...

AS a young 19-year-old married woman Purnam fell from a tree while collecting animal feed. The fall badly damaged her back and she was taken to the Mid-Western Hospital in Pokhara, Nepal. Her husband felt there was no improvement in her condition so took her to another hospital across the Indian border. Doctors in India told Purnam she had a serious spinal cord injury with life-long implications.

'The news completely shattered me and my family,' recalls Purnam. 'I stayed in India for six months. During that time my numb legs were also burnt by hot water.' Her condition worsened, with painful ulcers. Consequently she was unable to begin physiotherapy treatment and eventually returned to Nepal depressed and impoverished. She had spent much of her money on alternative treatments, including traditional treatments. Purnam's husband abandoned her – a common occurrence among those with such injuries.

Several months later, Purnam's father brought her to GPHRC where she finally began proper treatment and physiotherapy. Slowly she regained her physical strength, was given a wheelchair and her hope for the future grew. Purnam also received spiritual, social and emotional care while at GPHRC and has become a Christian.

Purnam learnt tailoring through INF's Partnership For Rehabilitation program and for a short time she ran her own shop. However, hospital staff realised Purnam had the skills and desire to help other spinal cord injury patients at GPHRC. She joined the staff as an INF Peer Counsellor at GPHRC providing much needed support to others learning to live with a disability. The role has given her much happiness and a real sense of purpose in her life.

'I wished for death but now I am happy, living a purposeful life. Helping other people with a disability rehabilitate, counselling them, praying with them. It gives me great pleasure and satisfaction.' Purnam is thankful to INF's GPHRC for all its support and for helping her to live a dignified life again.

Save Green Pastures – You Can Help!

Green Pastures Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre has served the needs of poor and marginalised Nepalis since 1957 but is now facing a significant funding shortage. GPHRC specialises in the treatment and rehabilitation of leprosy, spinal cord injury and other disabilities and reconstructive surgery. For more information about GPHRC go to www.inf.org



Hungry Hearts Consume Scripture

HOW many Bible verses have you memorized? Hungry hearts are consuming God's Word in Thailand. A couple of young girls at AMG International's Joy Youth Development Centre have written 500 verses on their heart. Christianity is often viewed as a Western religion in Thailand, so AMG's focus on discipleship is equipping these youngsters to become missionaries to their own people.

What began as a small centre to support impoverished children from six families has morphed into a youth hostel hosting 50 kids, mostly from the Hmong tribe. Approximately 100,000 Hmong are scattered throughout northern Thailand. As spirit worshippers, or animists, their lives revolve around sacrificing pigs or chickens to please various deities.

JYDC provides an opportunity for both Hmong youth and their families to hear the Gospel. Many children have professed faith in Christ; two are currently attending Bible school. Along with weekly prayer meetings, nightly Bible studies are held Thursday through Saturday; Sundays are time of corporate worship and Bible memorization. Mornings are another time of corporate worship. JYDC youth gather together for devotions using *Our Daily Bread* as a devotional guide. Children are growing up both spiritually and physically, and love to worship the Lord in songs.

VIEWPOINT

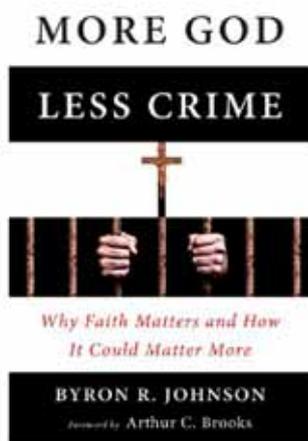
Why Bing And Google Are Outperforming The Aussie Government

'I congratulate internet giant Google for announcing that it will no longer accept advertising for sexually explicit material,' FamilyVoice President David Phillips said, after Google announced early last month that it had removed all pornographic apps and most sexual apps from *Google Play*. The Microsoft search engine Bing has gone one step better. Its searches are filtered as the default, unlike Google, which requires users to opt in for filtered searches.

Dr Phillips said stories about careers and marriages destroyed by pornography addiction are beginning to emerge. The movie *Don Jon* shows some of the damage that results. 'Nearly 100 Christian leaders in Adelaide recently heard US neuroscientist Dr William Struthers speak about the problem,' Dr Phillips said. 'He showed MRI images of the brain that graphically illustrate how repeated pornography use changes the brain's structure. It is clear that many adults need help with this problem. What is even more concerning, however, is the increase in child-on-child sex abuse. These children have not developed any proper mechanism to process sexual images. Some are as young as five or six. Parents today have a hugely difficult task. They cannot control what their child is exposed to – on unfiltered mobile phones in school yards and unfiltered computers in public libraries.

'Aussie parents need the Federal Government to act urgently, to require all internet service providers to deliver clean feed services by default. IT experts say it can be done. Bing has already taken action, and Google is likely to follow suit. Surely the Australian Government can do better for our kids!'

More God Less Crime – A Constructive Approach To Church–State Relations



BYRON R Johnson, in his book *More God, Less Crime*, puts before us an exciting, instructive and inspiring read on how the secular and the sacred can work together for the overall wellbeing of our society. *More God Less Crime* is a blue print for how Christian and secular organisations can work together, given a little bit of humility on both sides.

If you are looking at how you or your organisation can help create a better society, then this book is for you. Johnson is honest in his approach and discusses an obvious problem where Christian or religious organisations are often just dismissed and how sometimes Christian organisations can be equally dismissive of secular and Government organisations.

Those who make the point about separation of church and state tend to ignore the fact that the church and the state have to live (and work) together. Sadly it has often become a 'them-and-us' situation, however Johnson scientifically and practically demonstrates that a better result is a 'we-together' approach.

Much of the book is taken up with issues within the American judicial system which includes children through to adults. However, the same principles of working together are so effective that both the secular and the sacred should have a hard long look at how together we can make our society a better and safer place to live in.

I would encourage all Christian (and secular) organisations or groups to read this book with the view of looking at ways we can explore the untold possibilities of working together for a better society for all.

More God, Less Crime by Byron R. Johnson is available from the WORD Bookstore and other Christian bookstores. – Graham McDonald, National Children's Advocate, Children Of The World, a ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ Australia. graham.mcdonald@ccca.org.au ; www.children.org.au

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HERE.
Call Mignon
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*Our thanks to Katherine Goswell,
who edited the last issue during
the editor's absence overseas.
Well done Kath!*

CAUSE FOR THANKSGIVING

Christian Discipleship Centre, Bangladesh, Celebrates 40 Years

FOUNDED in 1974 by Rev Biswanath 'Bishu' Chowdhuri, Christian Discipleship Centre has been at the heart of Christian work in Bangladesh to this day.

Bishu was born into a Hindu Brahmin family in India where he became a scientist with the Atomic Research Institute. In September 1963 he suffered paralysis resulting from a work-related accident. While undergoing treatment in hospital, he had the opportunity to read a *Gideons Bible* and found new life in Christ. After long medical treatment, including rehabilitation in Perth, WA, he recovered to be a paraplegic in a wheelchair.

In 1974, after marrying Vijaya, the nurse who cared for him, and two years training at WEC College, Tasmania, they moved to Bangladesh and established the Christian Discipleship Centre. By the end of 2014, more than 800 students will have graduated from the one-year residential course to serve in churches and mission groups across the nation. The course includes Biblical studies, Bible storytelling, easy English and basic computer.

Bishu (now with the Lord) and Vijaya share an amazing story of God's faithfulness as evident in the provision of CDC facilities for students, staff, media studio and multiple ministries that include slum school classes, adult literacy program, Circle of Life Groups (SIL), leadership training for new believers, etc.

For more information contact the Director, Mrs V. Chowdhuri, phone: 0406 550 699, email: bishu@bol-online.com



Clifford Wilson Resources – Still Bringing Blessings

EVAN and Denise Chipman, on their annual visits to Fiji, have a ministry of bringing Gospel Light through literature, supported to a degree by allocations of many of the books printed for Drs Clifford and Barbara Wilson, made available periodically by New Life Books And Archeology together with excess collections of Bibles and reference books.

The Chipmans report: 'It is with immense gratitude that we share something of our two most recent ministry visits to Fiji, where we had the privilege of distributing Christian books and Bibles, including a significant number of Clifford Wilson Resources, that others have generously collected/purchased/donated for the resourcing of our brothers and sisters in Christ and the church in Fiji. Your partnership has been significant and may you be blessed to learn what you have been a part of as God equips and prepares His Bride in Fiji. 2014 was our seventh annual ministry visit to pray and distribute Christian resources throughout Fiji. God said to us that the distributions were to be a 'Prophetic Seed' and we were given very specific instructions about the number of 'Seed Packs' to distribute to Pastors/Churches and where they were to be delivered. An important aspect of our personal deliveries is the opportunity that opens up for us to pray with the pastor and church and for the resources as they are released.

COMING TO WESTERN AUSTRALIA?

Come to Scots Church, Fremantle,
90 South Terrace
(next to Fremantle Markets)
Reformed and Evangelical
10am and 5pm Sundays
12:30 pm Wednesday Lunch Time
Worship

Also at Southern River,
Bletchley Park Primary School,
Balfour Road
9am Sunday

Rev Stuart Bonnington
08 9398 1304
melbonn@bigpond.com

Mittagong Presbyterian Church

is seeking Committed Christian
couples and singles to come and join us
on intentional ministry service
to touch lives for Jesus.
Interested?

Contact David Hocking on (02) 4869 3118
or email: dh008405@bigpond.net.au

We're Encouraged!

One Of Australia's Major Mission Agencies
has advised us they send each edition of
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and to the members of their
National Council.

Who Can YOU Forward *New Life* To?

GOOD NEWS FROM ABROAD

FCBH And SAT-7 Grow Broader Audience In Partnership

FAITH COMES BY HEARING distributes audio Bibles to people who don't have access to the Gospel otherwise. Last October, they partnered with SAT-7 Christian satellite television ministry to the Middle East and North Africa. The two organizations combined their resources in their shared goals to bring a 24/7 audio Bible to Arabic-speaking countries via television. SAT-7 helps FCBH promote their audio Bible and find channel space. And the project is growing, as evidenced by the addition of three new channels.

FCBH Vice President Troy Carl says, 'First and foremost, we are simply broadcasting the dramatized *Audio New Testament* 24 hours a day: no commentary, no proselytizing, no particular doctrine being taught. It's just the Word of God.' So what? Why does it need to be audio that's accessible all day? It's because many of the people who FCBH is reaching are illiterate. They have no way of accessing the Bible aside from their television. Carl explains, 'Many people that are looking for the Truth don't have access to the Scripture in a form that they can engage with. That's why audio is so critical. The channels have a broad coverage in 22 countries in the Middle East. We estimate that just the two satellites we are now broadcasting on in Arabic, Farsi, Dari, Azerbaijani, and Turkish – alone reach approximately 160 million households,' Carl says. But more people need to be made aware of the Arabic Bible.

For many viewers, the *New Testament* isn't a new book in their culture completely. The *Quran* identifies it as *Injil*, a holy book revealed by God that has been distorted over the years. But this presentation of the *New Testament* does not present *Injil* as a partially true account of Jesus, but as all true.

'Imagine if you're in a home, somewhere in the Middle East,' Carl says. 'You don't know how to read, but you turn on your television and you see, clearly, the *Injil*, the Arabic Bible, or the *Farsi New Testament*. You simply click the button on your satellite receiver and immediately begin to hear the Word of God streaming into your home so that you can sit, listen, and learn the teachings of Jesus Christ—Isa, as they call Him—and become transformed by the hearing of the Gospel.' Carl asks that you spread the word about this resource: more people need to know that it exists so they can use it. — Julie Oosterhouse, MNN mnnonline.org

CDC 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

— Mrs Vijaya Chowdhuri, CDC Director —
A DAY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR BANGLADESH

2.30–4pm Saturday 28 June 2014

At: Cross Culture Church of Christ
(Meeting in Chapel Hall)

194 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne

ALL WELCOME

Afternoon tea to follow

FOR INFORMATION:

Mrs V. Chowdhuri

Phone: 0406 550 699

ITINERARY DETAILS:

John Vidler: 0416 053 402; vidlerjl@tpg.com.au

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PERSECUTION WATCH

SRI LANKA – Christians Hospitalised And Threatened By Villagers

A PASTOR and three members of his congregation were hospitalised after a mob attacked a Christian home in Sri Lanka's Mannar District. The Christians had gathered at a home in Madu village for a meeting with police to discuss threats made to Christians who had attended a prayer meeting there the previous day. As the Christians waited for police, some 150 villagers surrounded the house and started to abuse them. About 40 people then stormed the house, beating the pastor unconscious and assaulting other Christians. Police arrived only when the mob fled.

Meanwhile, in Kandy District, a Christian woman was hospitalised for two days after being brutally attacked by a mob as she prayed for a family. She was later charged with 'forced conversion'. The 25-strong mob including five Buddhist monks raided the house in Waththegama, beat the Christians present and dragged the woman, a Christian worker, to the village temple. There she was drenched with water, verbally abused, partially strangled and threatened with death if she entered the village again.

Pray that God will heal and restore those who have been injured or traumatised by recent attacks. Pray for the Church in Sri Lanka, where persecution is on the increase. Pray that Christians will stand firm in their faith.

– Release Partners www.releaseinternational.org

North Korea Nabs Another US Tourist

ANOTHER US citizen has been detained in North Korea: 56-year-old Jeffrey Fowle is reportedly being kept in the country because officials found a Bible in his hotel room. 'At this point, all the North Koreans have said is that they've detained this man, that he was doing activities that were not consistent with what his visa said he was doing,' notes Voice of the Martyrs USA spokesman Todd Nettleton. 'The word that he had a Bible in his room came from Japanese press reports about the arrest, but has not been confirmed by the North Korean Government.' The only religion allowed in North Korea is *juche*, or the worship of the Kim family.

Fowle joins a 24-year-old American who tried to enter the country in April and Korean-American missionary Kenneth Bae, who was detained in November 2012 and later sentenced to 15 years of hard labor. Pray for the safe release of each captive.

– Katey Hearth, MNN. info@mnnonline.org

CAR Violence Back In The Headlines

MORE Central African Republic violence has put this landlocked nation back into the international spotlight. Over 20 people were killed midweek outside the central town of Bambari, which had largely avoided the ongoing Muslim-Christian turmoil until recently. In another midweek development, the CAR's government is calling upon the International Criminal Court for an investigation into the country's war crimes. The UN released a report last week citing 'ample evidence' of war crimes committed by both Muslim Seleka rebels and Christian anti-balaka radicals.

– Katey Hearth, MNN

Officials Say At least 20 Women Kidnapped In Nigeria; Boko Haram Suspected

SUSPECTED Boko Haram militants kidnapped at least 20 young women over the weekend in northeastern Nigeria, 8k from a town where more than 200 schoolgirls were taken nearly two months ago, local officials said on 2 June. According to a story by Aminu Abubakar for CNN, the incident in the village of Garkin Fulani is the latest in a series of abductions for ransom in the area. That's from an official with the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria, the umbrella union of all nomadic Fulani in the country. CNN said the MACBAN official, who is in Garkin Fulani, put the number of women kidnapped at as many as 40. The suspected militants came into the village in broad daylight

on Saturday, heavily armed and wearing military uniforms. '(They) took away 40 women, all of them young mothers,' said the official, who asked not to be named for safety reasons. A Borno state official confirmed the abduction, but said only 20 women were abducted. 'We are working to establish the circumstances surrounding the abduction,' the government official said on condition of anonymity because he is not authorized to speak about the incident.

– Jeremy Reynolds, ASSIST

Christians Taken Captive In Slovyansk

RUSSIAN separatists are holding three believers captive in eastern Ukraine. They kidnapped the Christians from a church in Slovyansk on Sunday, says Russian Ministries. Some of the kidnapped Christians are being used as human shields, and Orthodox Churches have become storage points for weaponry. Please pray for the safe return of the three kidnapped believers.

INDIA – Concerns For Christians As Hindu Nationalists Win Election

PRAY for Christians and other non-Hindu minorities in India in the wake of an election victory for a Hindu nationalist party, the Bharatiya Janata Party, creating concerns for the safety of Christians and other minorities and for religious freedom in the country. The party has given support to Hindu extremist groups that target Christians, and states under its control have generally seen a rise in anti-Christian attacks.

What's Happening – With Bush Church Aid?

Opal Festival, Easter Saturday, Coober Pedy

GEOFF and Tracey Piggot write: 'At the Opal Festival our church always puts in a float. Last year we won \$250 for the best use of colour. Our theme in 2013 was *Jesus– For All Nations*. This year our theme was *We Are On Colour* (the phrase used by miners when they hit an opal seam in their mines) – *Jesus Is The Treasure*. We won the



Best Float award, of \$1,000. We love meeting the tourists from all around the world and are working out how to have better contacts with them as many come each day to look through our Underground Church.

Bush Church Aid Nomad Program

BLESSED with beautiful weather and in an idyllic setting under towering trees on the banks of the Tumut River, 58 campers and cabin-ers from around the Canberra-Goulburn Anglican Diocese enjoyed fellowship, rest and the chance to learn more of the opportunities for service around Australia provided by the Bush Church Aid Nomad program. Co-ordinators of the BCA Nomad scheme, Doug and Frances Orr, spoke of the mutual benefit which flows when Nomads offer their skills and willingness to serve God's people in remote parishes: a chance to get alongside the locals, learn of the special places to see, and, at the same time, use their expertise to carry out vital property repairs, run craft courses or assist with administration work, amongst many other things! An extra blessing was the opportunity to gather for worship with the Anglican Church family in Tumut.

– www.bushchurcaid.com.au

Global Mission Partners Hard At Work In PNG

PAPUA New Guinea is a nation of cultural diversity, with over 800 languages emanating from this lush land. Part of the reason for this diversity is the rugged terrain of the country. PNG is a nation of steep mountain ranges and rivers, meaning that tribal groups were able to create their own languages and customs in relative isolation. Australian Churches Of Christ have been active in mission and development work in PNG since the late 1950's.



GMP partners with the Melanesian Evangelical Churches Of Christ focusing on church planting, evangelism, literacy work, women's ministry and training leaders at the Gandep Bible College.

Timothy, quiet by nature, was one of the young men chosen to go to Gandep Bible College in 2011. This is his testimony:

'I did not go to a big school but I've been at Gandep Bible College for three years. It is here that I saw God's strength. I was a person characterized by shame. When many men and women were present, I did not talk. I did not easily tell God's story. I also did not pray in a crowd. But I went to Gandep Bible College and the shyness and shame that was in me before left me.' – www.inpartnership.org.au

Upcoming Events:

INTERSERVE is holding their *Stories From The Silk Road* event on Wednesday 2 July from 7.30pm – 9.30pm (with coffee and dessert beforehand from 7pm and afterwards until late) at St Mark's Anglican Church, 622 Melbourne Rd, Spotswood. Visiting speakers are Dirk and Nel (from the Silk Road Region) plus other panel speakers. More details from: www.interserve.org.au

KATOOMBA Christian Convention is holding four events in August: *Oxygen*, in Sydney, and *One Love, Search For Success* and *Engage* in Katoomba. For full details of a conference that may suit you and how to register go to: www.kcc.org.au

'WITH CHRIST ...'

Margaret Rodgers, Prominent Deaconess, Called Home

MARGARET Rodgers, a former Principal of Deaconess House and a prominent figure in the Diocese of Sydney for more than 40 years, suffered a heart attack and died early in the morning of Saturday 31 May.

Archbishop Glenn Davies has paid tribute, describing Ms Rodgers as 'a scholar of significant intellect who for many years was the leading laywoman of the Diocese of Sydney. She made her mark not only on the Anglican Church in Sydney but also on the National Church and the Anglican Communion as a whole.'

Although she retired from her position as Archbishop's Media Officer in 2007, Deaconess Rodgers had previously been CEO of Anglican Media, served on the Social Issues Committee, Standing Committee, General Synod and various other boards and committees. She succeeded Deaconess Mary Andrews as Principal of Deaconess House from 1976 to 1985.

'Moore College owes a considerable debt to Deaconess Rodgers', said Moore's Principal Dr Mark Thompson. 'The College has lost a very dear friend.'

Deaconess Rodgers also held the post of Research Officer for General Synod for nine years, filling a key media role at 1998's Lambeth Conference of world Anglican bishops.

A regular columnist in *Southern Cross* newspaper, Ms Rodgers was also heard on comment pieces for Radio 2CH over many years.

Only four months ago Deaconess Rodgers was made a Member of the Order of Australia for 'significant service to the Anglican Church of Australia through governance and representational roles, and to ecumenical affairs'.

A public Thanksgiving Service for Margaret Rodgers will be held at St Andrew's Cathedral at 2pm on Thursday 19 June.



A Prophetic Voice In Ukraine: 'Publishing The Things We Desperately Need'

LANGHAM Literature has helped fund the publication of a Russian translation of *Exclusion And Embrace* by Miroslav Volf. It was published in Ukraine by Colloquium, an indigenous Christian publisher 'who have a prophetic voice and a strong calling to shine Biblical truth on their particular setting', says Colin Macpherson, Director of Publisher Development at Langham Literature.

Over the last five years Langham Literature has partnered with Colloquium to help them establish a sustainable publishing ministry in Ukraine. They focus on biblical studies and sell to seminaries, churches, pastors and individuals. Their current list of more than 80 titles in Russian and Ukrainian include translations as well as locally authored books. And believers across the region have come to trust Colloquium publications as books that stimulate helpful discussion, debate and writing on important topics for today.

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Genesis 3 And Romans 8 – From The Depths To The Heights**FOR REFLECTION:**

Note in these verses how Paul underlines that what we have, we have because of Jesus: Romans 3.22,26; 4.24,25; 5.1,9,11,21; 6.23; 7.24,25; 8.1,34,39. What are the implications of this for your faith?

THESE chapters represent the trough and the peak of human experience.

Humanity disobeyed God's clear instruction (Genesis 2.16,17) and as a result, separation and friction entered into our experience. Adam and Eve sensed a separation between each other; their sense of openness was lost (3.7). The man blamed God, and the woman (3.12) blamed the snake.

The man and woman hid from God; their glad fellowship was gone (3.10). Their environment was going to be against them: Adam would have to deal with weeds (3.18), and Eve would have to handle pain in giving birth (3.16).

They would both find friction in their relationship; she would seek to assert herself over him, and he would seek to despotically rule her (3.16). They would both face the inevitability of death (3.19), which is part of God's curse upon them. They said to God, 'We want paradise, we don't want You', and God expelled them from paradise (3.23-24).

Ever since, we have all lived in a post-Eden environment. The trough of friction, separation and condemnation is matched by the peak of no condemnation, no separation, of Romans 8.

In Romans 8, we find substantial restoration and fellowship with God, but we still face an antagonistic environment that causes us to groan (8.22,23) as we await the return to the Eden paradise we lost because of sin. We have received the down-payment (here and now, in the Person of the Holy Spirit) on all we will receive there and then (8:23).

Why can this restoration occur? It is all because of the work of Jesus described in three words in Romans 3.24,25: 'justified', 'redeemed' and 'sacrifice of atonement'.

Paul never lets us forget that we are not self-made people. We know substantial restoration and have the hope of Heaven because of the work of Jesus. These blessings cannot be had apart from that work; they are for believers only; they are only for the children of Abraham.



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

Seen On FACEBOOK:**Here's A Thought:**

'By nature we are indifferent to Christ, we do not want Him to rule over us. In the days of His flesh many saw Him and were unmoved; today many can read the Bible and see nothing wonderful about Christ. But when the Spirit of God makes Him known, the whole of life must change. When sinners know the love of the Saviour, they know that they owe everything to Him. And the inevitable result is gratitude and commitment to Him.'

– Rev Iain Murray, in Evangelical Holiness

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BOOKS WORTH READING

A STUDY COMMENTARY ON EZRA-NEHEMIAH, Gregory Goswell, Darlington: EP Books, 2013. ISBN 9780852349861.

IN this welcome addition to the *EP Study Commentary* series, Greg Goswell has given us the benefit of his many years of reflection on *Ezra-Nehemiah*. Through a close reading of the text, the author brings out the structure and inner connections (linguistic, thematic) of this neglected portion of the Bible and its relation to the wider canon of Scripture. The result is a first-rate work of scholarship and a highly readable commentary, accessible to any thoughtful reader.

The work demonstrates the writer's competence in the original languages involved (though the Hebrew and Aramaic words cited are not intrusive and are generally there to highlight the text's inner connections) as well as his deep knowledge of Scripture. While not succumbing to the fashion evident in some commentaries of being little more than a digest of others' thoughts, the work does interact judiciously with the best of previous reflection on *Ezra-Nehemiah*, including the often overlooked works of the medieval Jewish scholars.

Ezra-Nehemiah, it would be fair to say, is not everyone's favourite portion of Scripture, with its long lists of names, but as the commentary demonstrates, it is rich in theological insight as it documents and reflects on a formative period for Judaism in the centuries prior to the New Testament era. In this commentary we observe careful attention to historical detail, literary sensitivity, theological acumen and a pastor's heart. Notice the hyphenated title, for, as Goswell demonstrates, *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* are not two separate works, but a coherent whole. We are also disabused of the popular notion that the work showcases the leadership of two great men. Rather, the key to understanding *Ezra-Nehemiah* is its focus on the role of the people of God (their accomplishments and their failures).

This book has a lot to say to a church in need of revival, and to contemporary world issues. The applications are not laboured, but lightly sketched, so the reader is encouraged to reflect. Is it God, or is it international forces that shape our destiny (or do we need to make a dichotomy)? What role should that thing usually called 'religion' play in politics? What should be our attitude to Third World debt? Where does the identity of the people of God lie and what are the boundary lines which mark us off from those who are ultimately opposed to God's purposes, even those who may try to present themselves as fellow-travellers? What are the biggest threats facing the church today?

As Goswell reminds us, 'It is only by being different from the world that the church can help the world' (p.227).

I heartily commend this commentary, which deserves to be read by scholars, students, pastors and all who wish to take seriously the study of God's Word.

— John Davies



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(Courtesy Rev Iain Murray)

BOOKS WORTH READING

PLEADING FOR A REFORMATION VISION: The Life And Selected Writings Of William Childs Robinson (1897-1982), David B. Calhoun, Edinburgh: Banner Of Truth Trust, 2013. ISBN 978-1-84871-356-7.

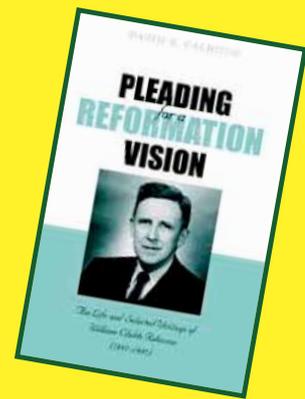
CHURCH historian Prof David Calhoun is well-known as the author of a significant two-volume history of Princeton Seminary and now is the biographer of Dr William Childs Robinson, a man who had a great influence for good in the Southern Presbyterian Church as Lecturer in Historical Theology at Columbia Seminary (1926-67).

A 126-page biography of this faithful man is provided, which tells the story of how he sought to teach and promote old Calvinism in the face of the progressive drift of his beloved church toward a more liberal theological position. He strove to preserve key Reformation doctrines (notably justification by faith) and he carried on the work of his older college colleague Prof William McPheeters, teaching and arguing for the great certainties of the Biblical faith: a sovereign God, an infallible Bible and a Divine Saviour. Like his hero, John Calvin, Robinson sought to be captive to the Word of God.

The account of his life is garnished with many reminiscences of his character and ways as fondly remembered by his former students. He was a faithful preacher of the Gospel and liked to tell his students what Calvin said: 'A preacher ought to be much in the third (chapter) of Genesis, the third of John, and the third of Romans'. That is good advice and worth passing on to a new generation.

Dr Robinson stood for what the Southern Presbyterian Church historically stood for, as did J. Gresham Machen in the North. As a teacher and church leader he never sought to be popular, but only strived to be faithful. What follows the bibliography is a selection of 23 examples of his writings and these are well worth preserving and pondering. He helped so many, had a lasting influence on his students, and his writings are of perennial value just because he did not move with the times. The tradition and orthodoxy of Old Princeton (pre-1926) is perhaps better known, so this is the ideal book to introduce the personalities and teachings of that Southern bastion of orthodox Christianity, what was called 'Our Southern Zion', Old Columbia Theological Seminary.

– Greg Goswell



'Robinson was a faithful preacher of the Gospel and liked to tell his students what Calvin said: 'A preacher ought to be much in the third (chapter) of Genesis, the third of John, and the third of Romans'.

That is good advice and worth passing on to a new generation.'



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