

Samaritan's Purse Lends A Hand To Cambodian Deportees



IN early June the ruling military junta in Thailand announced that undocumented Cambodian migrant workers were required to leave the country within ten days. Fearing prosecution and forced removal, a flood of migrant workers have been re-entering Cambodia at the Poipet border crossing. Since Monday, 9 June, the International Organization for Migration Cambodia office estimates tens of thousands of men, women, and children have crossed the border or been transported across by police and left on the streets of Poipet.

The numbers have been rising daily, with an estimated 129,000 people arriving between 11 – 16 June. Several were reportedly fired from jobs and sent home, and the belief spread that both legal and illegal workers were being ejected.

Roughly 35-40% of deportees are women and children. Many have been without food, water, or shelter for several days. There is no sanitation, and people are sleeping in markets and on the streets. Local systems are completely overwhelmed.

Samaritan's Purse's goal is to alleviate immediate suffering, prevent loss of life and assist people in returning to their home communities, so Samaritan's Purse has responded quickly to the need and has provided the following immediate support:

- Seven tents have been set up to provide shelter and working space for the relief operation, with medical assistance being provided by the Red Cross,
- 126,064 meals have been distributed,
- 27,328 bags of dry noodles have been distributed,
- 163,000 bottles of water have been distributed,
- 900 hygiene kits have been distributed.

Security is a major concern. Samaritan's Purse is doing its best to respond to the situation by setting up logistics, distributing food and water, and procuring tents for shelter. The International Organisation for Migration is co-ordinating transport.

'We don't know how long this emergency will continue, but we are committed to responding,' said a Samaritan's Purse spokesperson in Poipet. 'Local systems are completely overwhelmed, and this is a crisis that could result in loss of life, instability, and longer-term displacement if not handled well,' he said.

For more information contact: Jorge Rodrigues, Executive Director, Samaritan's Purse Australia: +61 406 641 610, www.samaritanpurse.org.au or call 1300 884 468.

VOLUME 77
NUMBER 1

ISSUE DATE:
1 July 2014

ISSN: 1033-7903

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Free On Request

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PUBLISHED BY:

New Life Australia Ltd

ABN: 15 005 035 138

**CONTRIBUTORS PLEASE
NOTE:**

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The Joy Of Trusting In Jesus And Living For Him

(Notes from the sermon on Romans 8.18-39 preached by the Rev Bob Thomas in St Kilda Presbyterian Church at the Thanksgiving Service For The Life And Faith Of Madge Sugden)

WE'VE thought only briefly about Madge today, and that was at her command, because her desire for this service was that her Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, would alone be glorified. (See *With Christ*, p.13, this issue.)

What a poor, lost and perishing world it is that we live in today! People are turning to everything, anything and nothing in their vain attempts to make something of their lives. But they will not turn to the One, the only One, who can transform their lives by His glorious, risen, sanctifying power – the Lord Jesus Christ.

The greatest example of what Christ can do is seen in the life of Saul of Tarsus, that 'Pharisee of the Pharisees' who'd been beating up on himself in his vain attempts to make himself right with God, but all to no avail until that day, on the road to Damascus, when Christ stood before him in all His risen power and called him to Himself. The testimony of Paul and countless millions of others throughout the years would simply be this:

*All I had to offer Him was brokenness and strife,
but He made something, beautiful, of my life.*

That is our testimony too, whose hope is in the Word made flesh, and here in Romans 8, Paul points up the contrast between the old life of the world, and the New Life in Christ. He shows us that:

1. There is no comparison between present suffering and future glory (v18).
2. There is no comparison between this world and the world that is to come (vv19-21).
3. There is no comparison between our unaided efforts and the help the Spirit gives us (vv23-27).
4. There is no comparison between standing still in our humanity and being built up by the Spirit (vv28-30).
5. There is no comparison between being on Satan's side and being on God's side (vv31-36).
6. There is no comparison between defeat with Satan and victory with God (vv37-39).

Apart from the Beatific Vision, which she now experiences, of seeing her Saviour face to face, nothing would delight Madge's heart more than to know that all her loved ones, all her friends, all people everywhere, have passed over from death to life and know, with her, the joy of trusting in Jesus and living for Him.

If you're already one of that 'great multitude which no man can number', simply rejoice to have 'passed over from death to life'; if you've not yet done so, let me assure you it's not a great leap into an abyss, it's just a small step into the hollow of His hand, where you'll find yourself 'safe, in the arms of Jesus'.

MATTERS FOR PRAYER

UPPER MESOPOTAMIA: Christians At The Mercy Of ISIS

THE Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham/Syria (ISIS) formally split from Al-Qaeda earlier this year over long-disputed matters of principle and strategy.

First, regarding principle: Al-Qaeda's more seasoned leaders – the 'old guard' – are prepared to co-operate with Iran/Shi'ites in pursuit of higher goals. The 'young-guns' of ISIS are not. Rather, ISIS is sticking uncompromisingly to the Saudi Wahhabi/Salafi creed which is vehemently anti-Shia.

Secondly, regarding strategy: Al-Qaeda's more seasoned leaders have learnt that fighters must treat local Muslims gently and win their hearts and minds if they are to avoid generating local resistance. On the other hand, ISIS regards that as compromising and soft. Rather, ISIS is enforcing strict Sharia codes and enacting cruel Sharia punishments, including public lashings, amputations and execution, even crucifixions. It is not that al-Qaeda is 'more moderate' than ISIS, it is just more rational. Al-Qaeda still wants to annihilate Israel, establish a Caliphate and take jihad to the West. Al-Qaeda is well aware that division and intra-Muslim conflict will weaken the global jihad movement.

ISIS has ruled Syria's Raqqa Province, plus territory along the Euphrates River and Iraq's restive Sunni Anbar Province since February. The border between Syria and Iraq (pencilled in by Sykes and Picot in 1916) now exists only in theory. Last week Iraqi security services (mostly Shi'ites) melted away as ISIS advanced through Northern Iraq's Nineveh Province. In a blitzkrieg ISIS captured its capital, Mosul (Iraq's second largest city), along with its airports, banks (holding an estimated \$500 million), armouries (stocked with US-made materiel) and more.

The immediate goal of ISIS is to restore Sunni power in Baghdad. Shi'ite militias (including Iranians) are defending the Shia heartland and Shia holy places. Kurdish peshmerga forces are defending the Kurdish heartland and oil-rich Kirkuk.

While launching terror attacks and incursions, ISIS will consolidate its rule over the Sunni-dominated but ethnically and religiously diverse region of Upper Mesopotamia (Arabic: al-Jazira). Spanning north-east Syria and north-west Iraq, Upper Mesopotamia is the ancient Christian heartland.

World Watch Monitor has confirmed that some 1000 Christian families fled Mosul last week as ISIS invaded. Displaced Christians have fled to Christian churches, monasteries and schools. Many thousands of Iraqis from across Nineveh Province have fled into Erbil, the Kurdish capital. One Christian couple from Mosul who found refuge for themselves and their young children in a church in Erbil told WWM (12 June) that they had been eating dinner, having already made plans to leave, when two homes around them burst into flames after being hit by rocket fire. The family fled carrying nothing but their papers.

The Archbishop of Mosul, Amel Nona, told WWM (13 June) that in the 11 years following the 2003 US-led invasion, Christians in Mosul had declined from 35,000 to 3,000. Now 'all the faithful have fled the city'. There are reports that ISIS has taken an unconfirmed number of Christians hostages. With such a vast area to defend, ISIS will doubtless secure its bases with human shields.

In Nineveh, as in Raqqa, Syria, ISIS is enforcing strict Sharia codes. Christians in Mosul had been paying jizya (protection money) to al-Qaeda for years. In 2008, the then Archbishop of Mosul, Paulos Rahho, was killed for refusing to pay jizya.

Now ISIS has released a 'Contract of the City' laying down the rules and penalties. Theft will be punished with amputation. Those who are corrupt face the penalties of Sura 5:33 [<http://quran.com/5/33>] ie death, crucifixion, cross amputation or exile. If police, soldiers and other government workers fail to repent they will be killed as apostates. All shrines and graves will be destroyed. Women should not leave their homes unless absolutely necessary, and if they do, must wear the niqab, the full black covering with a slit for the eyes.

Such conditions make it unlikely that the displaced Christians will ever return to their homes. Upper Mesopotamia's Christians are caught in 'the eye of the storm'.

Though they do not have their own army, they do have Yahweh Sabaoth, the Lord of Heaven's Hosts. – *Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin is a ministry of Elizabeth Kendal*

PLEASE PRAY THAT:

- God will 'frustrate the way of the wicked' (Psalm 146). May the Lord's enemies continue to divide and weaken Islam. 'Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while [God's people] pass by safely' (Psalm 141.10 ESV)

- aid, protect and provide for the thousands of displaced Christian families, along with those who give them shelter

- graciously open the eyes and hearts of all those Muslim families who are sheltering with Christian families in Christian churches, monasteries and schools across Nineveh; may Muslims, who essentially view God as a 'strongman' in the sky too transcendent to love or relate to humanity, be transformed by what they witness and experience of Christians finding and sharing grace through faith, assured of God's ear and His heart. May no Muslim be left unchanged.

- awaken the suffering-averse Church in the West to see and respond to the suffering Church before the Western Church's light is taken away.

KINGDOM BUILDING

FCC – Hard At Work In The Cause Of Christ

IT'S always a delight to receive *Congregational Communications*, monthly magazine of the Fellowship Of Congregational Churches, a denomination whose labours for the Lord are out of all proportion to its size. The July edition is no exception. Following are some of the activities planned over the next few months:

JUNIOR CAMP, 2014

The Junior Camp is planned for Monday, 30 June to Friday, 4 July on the theme: *Jesus, King Of The Jungle*. Junior Camp is a busy week full of activities, fun and friendships for the children, and with leaders who are committed to sharing the Gospel. Prayer is asked for the salvation of young lives.

MISSION AWARENESS DAY, 2014

Mission Awareness Day will be held at Kogarah Bay Congregational Church on Saturday, 25 October 2014, with guest speaker Simon Longden, National Director of Pioneers Australia.

FUNDRAISING CONCERTS IN LEICHHARDT

Leichhardt Congregational Church invites you to a Fundraising Concert on Saturday 26 July at 2 pm in Leichhardt Congregational Church, 68 Allen St, Leichhardt. Admission is free by ticket. A collection will be taken for SWAG (Salvation Within Almighty God Ministries) to Sydney's homeless and disadvantaged. RSVP: (02) 8095 8111. On Saturday 29 November at 2 pm there will be a concert featuring the Sydney Welsh Choir costing \$20. Then on Saturday 13 December at 2pm a concert will be presented by Sydney Street Choir.



The Sydney Welsh Choir

GROWING LIST OF ACCREDITED PASTORS

The Executive Committee of the FCC reports that Pastors Stephen Hitchins (Leichhardt), James Stone (Engadine), Frank Xue (Padstow Chinese) and Sidney Yip (Campsie Chinese) have successfully completed all the written and interview requirements for accreditation as FCC Pastors.

WEBSITE

FCC's website is www.fcc-cong.org for more information.

Invite A Spy-Turned-Evangelist To Speak At Your Church In August 2014

FORMERLY a Pol Pot spy, evangelist Barnabas Mam will be touring Australia in August 2014 to tell how he found Christ during Cambodia's terrifying genocide, and survived to help in planting more than 400 churches.

Converted to Christ while spying on a Christian evangelical meeting during Pol Pot's deadly regime, Barnabas Mam survived being arrested and sent to the Killing Fields, spending four years in captivity, fleeing Cambodia and spending another eight years in a Thai refugee camp. After returning home, Barnabas went on to help rebuild the church in his native land. Now regarded as one of Cambodia's foremost evangelists and church planters, Barnabas has helped to plant more than 400 churches in Cambodia alone.

Barnabas is available during August 2014 for media interviews and as a guest speaker to share his compelling story of faith and hope. Copies of his book, *Church Behind The Wire*, telling Barnabas' dramatic and inspiring story of faith in the Killing Fields, are available.

For bookings and more information, contact Joanne Yanco at Ambassadors for Christ International in Sydney: jo@afci.com.au or call 1300 723 993.

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- People equipped with sound training.
- People who come from a supportive church background.
- People who function well in a team setting.



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Australian Indigenous Ministries.
Trevor Leggott: 0413 128 460.
AIM Office: 02 4754 3833.

A CALL TO PRAYER ...

FRANKLIN GRAHAM: Praying For The Next Great Awakening

WHILE Doomsday appears to be knocking at our door, let me take you back to the early 1800's. Many think of it as 'the good old days,' but history tells us that society, even then, was as bad as it could get at that time.

John Marshall, Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, wrote to President James Madison and said, 'The church is too far gone ever to be redeemed.' When we examine why, we find that preachers had stopped preaching the whole Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the people were not hearing God's Word.



What changed? Christians began to diligently pray for revival—and the result was the Second Great Awakening. When people's prayers stormed Heaven, and when the Bible was opened in the pulpits and the Word of God proclaimed by passionate preachers, the church was awakened from slumber by the Holy Spirit, who moved in hearts, spreading revival throughout the heartland of America.

Prayer is the key to reaching lost people for Christ, and I hope you will begin praying now for neighbours, co-workers, friends, and family who do not know Jesus Christ as Saviour. Make a point to pray for your church and other churches in your community, asking God to stir up an ever-increasing urgency for evangelism.

There have been several Great Awakenings in America's history. When I read about them, I always go back to the Old Testament, to a time in which Israel had once again turned its back on God. When its people came to their senses, they gathered and asked Ezra the scribe to bring the Word of the Lord to them. The Bible tells us that Ezra stood upon a pulpit of wood, and he opened the book in the sight of all the people (see Nehemiah 8). Our hope and desire and our prayer is to stir up followers of Jesus Christ to pray and ask for a great awakening of the church. Please pray with us that the Holy Spirit will use it to transform the hearts and lives of countless people who will realize the hope of eternity in Heaven.

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SMBC
Sydney Missionary & Bible College

HEART FOR ALL NATIONS 2014 APPEAL



God has a heart for all nations. SMBC prepares men and women to take the gospel to all nations. Each year, nearly half of SMBC's graduates go to nations where Christian resources are minimal and access to Bible teaching difficult. Others leave SMBC cross-culturally savvy and ready to minister the gospel of the Lord Jesus all around Australia in our multi-ethnic land.

A very generous supporter of SMBC has pledged a 'dollar for dollar' donation.

This means that for every dollar you donate to our tax deductible building fund between now and 31 July, up to our target of \$2M, they will also donate a dollar.

This is a fantastic opportunity to make your dollar doubly effective for God's work.

Can you prayerfully consider whether God has enabled you to support this work with SMBC's Heart for All Nations 2014 Appeal?

**All the details
can be found at
www.smbc.com.au/donate
or call the College
during office hours on
02 9747 4780.**

IF YOU CAN ONLY ATTEND ONE CONFERENCE THIS YEAR:

OXYGEN CONFERENCE: Come And Be Refreshed

OXYGEN 2014 is 38 days away, with delegates coming from over 400 churches, more than 10 countries, and every state and territory in Australia! Here is some important information as the conference approaches:

Plenaries

Across the nine plenary sessions at *Oxygen*, the following guest speakers will be preaching on the uniqueness and supremacy of Christ: John Lennox, Francis Chan, Paul Tripp, Don Carson and Bryan Chapell. Other guest speakers, Bob Kauflin, Nancy Guthrie and Kathleen Nielson, will be leading elective streams and teaching in the Oxygen workshops.

Book Packs

The organisers want *Oxygen* to be a blessing beyond August. Thanks to their sponsors, the first 2,500 *Oxygen* delegates will receive a book pack of best-selling titles! If you have friends and colleagues who are planning to attend *Oxygen* but haven't registered yet, please let them know so they don't miss out!

Allocated Seating

Oxygen delegates will be seated in zones according to registration date. Again, please let friends and colleagues know – the sooner they register, the better their seats.

Elective Streams

Speakers will be delivering six high-calibre elective streams on topics including *Preaching, Leadership, Disciple-Making* and more. Places in each stream are limited, so make sure you select your preferred stream now.

Workshops

The workshops are based on the feedback of *Oxygen* delegates. They will be highly practical and presented by experienced practitioners. You don't need to pre-register for Oxygen workshops.

– Jonathan Dykes, Executive Director, Katoomba Christian Convention,
PO Box 156, Burwood, NSW 1805



Support For Aboriginal Christian Leaders

The Victorian Indigenous Prayer Network warmly invites interested friends to the July NAIDOC prayer evening for our Aboriginal brothers and sisters in Christ – unsung heroes and heroines who are making a difference through their vital ministries to communities in 2014 – to be held on Wednesday, 2 July, at 7.30–8.30pm @ 17 Daniel St, Burwood (Melbourne). Phone Anne Green on (03) 9888 9873 or 0437 127 366 for further details.

'Wominjeka!' – which means 'You are Welcome!' in the Woiwurrung language.

DEAR FRIENDS,

We greatly appreciate those who have made donations to the work of *New Life*. We do like to acknowledge all donations, so when you make a donation via direct deposit into the *New Life* account, could you please also email Mignon at office@nlife.com.au

We're Encouraged!

One Of Australia's Major Mission Agencies has advised us they send each edition of *New Life* around to everyone in the office and to the members of their National Council.

Who Can YOU Forward *New Life* To?



CHRISTIAN WRITERS' CONFERENCE

Lake Dewar Lodge, Bacchus Marsh
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For details:

www.christianwritersconference.dx.am

Or email:

conference4christianwriters@gmail.com

CHURCH AND NATION

Federal MPs Join Christians In Shining The Light On Global Tax Dodging

PARLIAMENTARIANS have met face to face with over 200 Christians from across the country to discuss Australia's opportunity to lead action against corporate tax dodging which is draining vital revenue from developing nations. Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer, Steve Ciobo MP, and Shadow Assistant Treasurer, Dr Andrew Leigh MP, addressed the group of Micah Challenge advocates on Australia's response to multinational tax dodging at a special event in Parliament House on 24 June.

Mr Ciobo told participants at the event that Australia is passionate about achieving outcomes on the issue of multinational tax dodging at the upcoming G20 Summit in November. While acknowledging that the process might not be straight-forward, he said he was confident of a global desire for reform and believes there is the political will necessary for action. Acknowledging this as an important issue for both Australia and people suffering in developing nations, Mr Leigh also indicated Labor's support for global and domestic policy change on multinational tax dodging. Both MPs thanked the Christian constituents from over 70 electorates for coming to Canberra to raise the issue with political leaders and assured them their voices are being heard.

As part of the *Voices For Justice* event, these passionate advocates, ranging from high school students to retirees, have conducted over 100 private meetings with MPs and Senators while in Canberra. With Australia perfectly positioned to lead action against financial secrecy and tax dodging at the G20 summit in Brisbane later this year, Micah Challenge advocates have been seeking to ensure that the decisions made by the world's most economically powerful leaders will directly benefit citizens of poor nations.

'Most people don't realise that the vast majority of money flowing out of developing countries is not stolen by corrupt politicians and dictators, but is rather pulled out by large multinational corporations who exploit loopholes in the global tax system to shift their profits away from the countries they operate within,' said John Beckett, National Director for Micah Challenge Australia. According to Mr Beckett, while multinational tax dodging and corruption impacts all nations, including Australia, developing countries suffer the worst.

Strong Community Support For School Chaplains

ON 19 June the High Court of Australia ruled that Federal Government laws permitting the funding of the National School Chaplaincy Program were unconstitutional. The Court found that chaplaincy services did not fall under the Commonwealth's power to make laws that provide 'benefit to students.'

Within hours of the decision being handed down, Prime Minister Tony Abbott re-iterated his support for the chaplaincy program, and the government is confident that the program will continue to be funded via conditional grants to State governments.

'There is overwhelming community support for continued federal government funding of school chaplaincy, as well as strong support from school principals and teachers around the country who see the value added by school chaplains to the school community every day,' the President of the NSW Council of Churches, the Rev Dr Ross Clifford, said. 'What we would like to see is the Federal and State Governments working together to ensure the continuation and funding of the excellent National Schools Chaplaincy Program in its current form for the benefit of students in all 2,900 state schools across Australia.'

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SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

OAC Ministries Australia Unfairly Portrayed On A Current Affair, 11 June

THE Board of OAC Ministries Australia expresses their frustration with the segment aired on *A Current Affair* on 11 June 2014, about 'fundamentalist extremists' in government schools in Victoria. There were numerous inaccuracies in the public portrayal of OACM, which need correcting:

1. The footage ACA ran to show OACM as 'fundamentalist extremists' was actually footage declaring ourselves to be the opposite. The footage showed 'a spokesperson' for OAC Ministries being misinterpreted out of a context which had nothing to do with schools. The video clip is online <http://missionplatform.com/#!/a/oac-ministries/outreach-specialists-the-missing-link> as part of a website listing reputable evangelists for churches looking for various ministries. The video makes sense in that context: for those with a Biblical background, it is perfectly possible to use the word evangelist in a positive sense. That is, 'someone who (ethically and appropriately) brings good news.' The speaker was actually saying that 'evangelism' is thought of in such negative terms so often that people fearfully avoid it, but in its Biblical meaning it is a good thing – and this is what OACM specializes in doing for churches. We are actually normal everyday Aussies who work hard to present good news in sensitive and interesting ways. Lifting that clip out of that context and putting it in a schools context, with a dastardly spin, was most inaccurate. ACA clearly implied evangelist to mean someone who coerces, proselytizes, and manipulates children to join their religion, in schools. That is not what OAC Ministries does.

2. ACA also made the untrue accusation that 'OAC Ministries was banned from all Victorian schools in 2013 because for years prior they had been coming into our schools without permission and delivering the kind of religious instruction that the department of education described as "completely unacceptable".' We were not banned, and we did have permission as far as anyone knew (ACCESS, us, school principals, and government). Our staff were all accredited SRI presenters, via the government-approved accrediting body, ACCESS Ministries. In 2013 it came to light that ACCESS could not accredit our organisation, even though it accredited our individuals. Hence our presentations were not covered. Thus, even though our RE presentations were perfectly ethical and educational, we voluntarily ceased presenting in Victorian government schools until our accreditation can be addressed with integrity. The Department of Education and Child Development in Victoria has never commented on our religious instruction material, much less ever called it 'completely unacceptable.' They trusted our accreditation by ACCESS as we all did. We delivered hundreds of seminars per year for decades, and ACCESS are on record as having received no complaints about our school seminars – which would be strange if we were such extremists! The truth is, we seek to teach with excellence in religious education, and act with integrity in all aspects of our behavior. Our presenters are well trained and equipped for our presentations, which are repeated and constantly refined to avoid unethical conduct, and to maximize educational value.

3. We are frustrated that ACA did not contact us at OAC Ministries, but instead went to air using our name in a way that insulted our good reputation. We expected that fair-minded journalism would seek all sides of a story, rather than freely promote the extreme views of just one group. It seems clear that 'Fairness In Religion In Schools' was the

group whose cause was being freely promoted on this occasion. The 'victim parent' depicted in the ACA segment is the FIRIS Campaign Co-ordinator. The other parent was co-founder of FIRIS. The extreme angle taken by ACA was standard lobbying from FIRIS. It appears that ACA simply ran the story fed to them from the zealous FIRIS campaign team, with little journalistic effort.

We believe, with many other Christians, that what the ACA segment needed was a much more truthful and balanced view of the overall picture. We gladly admit to believing 'that Jesus is a real person,' as most fair-minded people, both religious and non religious, would agree. We also believe that Jesus Christ enriches the lives of all who trust in Him. So as educators we teach that Christians believe such things, but without the co-ercion or any of the manipulations suggested by the ACA story.

OACM takes issue with a number of other aspects of the program, but space prevents giving answer here. Clearly ACA should give more attention to a fair and proper dealing with Christian organisations such as OACM. – Ed.

www.oac.org.au/vic/

Visiting WA? Perth?

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Melville	(08) 9417 1976
Peppermint Grove	(08) 9384 9186
Southern River	(08) 9332 1829
West Leederville	(08) 9310 5935

'...We...know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.' (Galatians 2.16)

GOOD NEWS FROM ABROAD

Renovation For FEBC Kazakhstan

FEBC Kazakhstan has been operating in limited conditions in a building damaged by age, neglect and weather. Since moving in last year, the team have been preparing programs in a simple, large 'studio' box within the building. They made temporary repairs to the leaking roof and replaced the old coal-fired equipment with hot water heating, using gas and new piping, but this was only the beginning of a long list of upgrades the building urgently required.

Australian Workparty Transforms Building

In a climate that seesaws from above 40 degrees in summer to below -40 in winter, buildings have to be kept at a reasonable temperature and not left unattended for years as this one had been. Burst frozen pipes had left considerable water damage. Ground water and condensation had also left their mark. Concerned FEBC Australia friends offered to fund and bring a team of volunteers to the country to help restore sections of the building and the property to provide improved accommodation and broadcast facilities.

God brought together a team of 11 men from across Australia – tradesmen, an engineer, a technician and experienced renovation and DIY handymen. Only a few of the men knew each other prior to the trip, but from the start there was unity and fellowship in work and spirit. These trades missed their local well-stocked giant hardware store back home, but they laboured creatively and enthusiastically in spite of limited tools and materials. Working in a Central Asian culture was a new experience for them all, but their enthusiasm and willingness to learn was seasoned with patience and laughter along the way.

The small Kazakh team did all they could to enable the whirlwind of visitors to work effectively on their seemingly impossible list of tasks. They were profoundly encouraged by all that was accomplished in the two-week visit.

Tools and equipment have been stored for a future workparty if that proves possible. They would love to complete the top floor, the basement area and other planned goals. Pray that this work will facilitate a new chapter of radio work within this country, both in extending the programs produced and in equipping more staff for the work of bringing quality Christian radio programs to the people.

– www.febc.org.au/



Simon, an electrical contractor, refurbishes a light unit. Damaged and burnt out lights throughout the building were repaired and replaced.

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Bank: Westpac. BSB: 033-112. Account Number: 16-8239.

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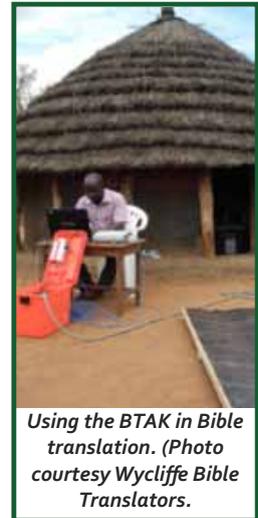
Bible Translation Goes On In Nigeria Despite Boko Haram

WHAT started as a home-grown movement for Sharia law in northern Nigeria is now a full-scale insurgency. Boko Haram attacks have terrorized this part of the country for years. In April, the insurgents kidnapped over 200 schoolgirls, which earned them both ignominy and notice. It's been more than six weeks since the kidnapping, and seemingly little progress has been made in bringing the girls back home. Wycliffe Associates President and CEO Bruce Smith says this group of girls is not just a headline to them. 'Unfortunately, to us they're not 'unknown faces.' They're family members of some of the people that are directly involved in Bible translation in that part of Nigeria.' Boko Haram wants to implement Sharia law throughout the north, and in their quest to accomplish this, nearly three and a half million Nigerians have been displaced inside the country last year.

Since April, the insurgents have stepped up the frequency and brazenness of its attacks on villages in the region. For translation partners, this is a continuing and immediate threat to their families. As a result, 'They have essentially all abandoned their homes, and they're sleeping out in the woods and in surrounding areas because they're afraid of being attacked directly. We still have staff that are living and working in Nigeria. Bible translation is a high priority need there. They have more than 300 languages that have been identified that have not one verse of Scripture and need to be started.'

But the translation projects have not stopped. In fact, it's quite the opposite, says Smith. 'The desperation of the situation actually increases their motivation for getting God's Word translated because they realize that the political and religious solutions are not working. They need some truth that's going to change hearts, change perspectives, in order to make any difference for the long haul.' Translators use a BTAK (Bible Translation Acceleration Kit) which includes a small, portable netbook computer satellite communication terminal solar panel battery and power supply. Their dedication is heartening. Many members of the translation team survive as subsistence farmers. Before the uprising, they were already teetering on the brink of poverty. For them, the Boko Haram insurgency is devastating, explains Smith. The work ahead is staggering. Even if the movement was stopped in its tracks today, there is devastating emotional, psychological, and spiritual trauma. 'This has fundamentally changed their community and changed their family relationships. Just pray for God to intervene and to bring the Holy Spirit, the comfort, and the counsel that they need from His Word and from other Christians in their community. The message of God's love turns despair to hope, anger to joy, and violence to peace.'

– Ruth Kramer, Mission Network News



Using the BTAK in Bible translation. (Photo courtesy Wycliffe Bible Translators.)

VIETNAM – Pastors And Bible Students Attacked By Mob

A GROUP of pastors and Bible college students were brutally attacked by a large mob who stormed the building they were meeting in on Monday 16 June. Pastor Nguyen Hong Quang, a prominent church leader, was holding a pastors' retreat and summer school for ethnic minority Christians at his school in My Phuoc, Binh Duong province, when several hundred people, including police, other officials and 'hired hands' broke down the gate. The building was pelted with rocks, damaging its roof, and its gate and doors were torn off. The crowd then stormed the building, attacking pastors and students and ransacking the interior. Release contacts report that 20 pastors and students were 'brutally beaten' in the two-hour raid. Pastor Quang suffered injuries to his head and chest and was left with broken teeth. The injured were reportedly barred from seeking medical help. Pastor Quang, a human rights lawyer, and five other leaders in his church became known as the 'Mennonite Six' when they were imprisoned for 'resisting officers of the law' in 2004. In 2010, officials bulldozed his home and a Bible college he ran in Ho Chi Minh City, beating him unconscious.

– <http://www.releaseinternational.org>

Sudan's Death-Row Mother Freed Again In Ongoing Saga

MERIAM Ibrahim, the Sudanese mother imprisoned for six months and released from death-row charges for apostasy, was later released for the second time. She had been re-arrested less than 24hrs after being freed by the court, after being driven to the airport in a US Embassy car with her family. Ibrahim, along with her family, was hoping to travel to the US via South Sudan, which gained its independence from Sudan in 2011, as there are no direct flights. This time she was released from police custody and is currently in the US embassy with her family, said Ibrahim's lawyer, Mohaned Mustafa. Ibrahim was released on the condition that she remains in Sudan. She told BBC Arabic that her 'future is in the hands of God', and that she just wants to spend time with her young family. Ibrahim, who until Monday faced a death sentence for leaving Islam, was freed when the court threw out the charges. She, her husband and two children attempted to board a plane in Khartoum, only to be detained as Sudanese authorities scrutinised their travel documents. Despite the emergency travel documents issued by the South Sudanese authorities being confirmed as genuine, Sudanese officials have accused her of forging the travel documents.

New Bishop Of The Northern Territory

DR Greg Anderson has been elected the sixth Bishop of the Northern Territory. The Board of Electors chose Dr Anderson to replace Bishop Gregory Thompson, who became Bishop of Newcastle. Dr Anderson has been the Head of the Department of Mission at Moore Theological College, Sydney since 2007. He has had a long standing interest in the Aboriginal church and in ministry in the Territory. In the 1990's, he and his wife worked with CMS as missionaries in the Northern Territory. As well as training indigenous leaders at Nungalinga College in Darwin, he was Indigenous Ministry Development Officer for the Diocese of the Northern Territory.



The Principal of Moore College, Dr Mark Thompson, welcomed the appointment, yet expressing sadness at his departure from the college. 'It is very good news for the Anglican Church of Australia that Dr Greg Anderson has been elected as the sixth Bishop of the Northern Territory. Greg is a godly and gifted teacher and pastor. We are very sad to see him leave the College since he has made a terrific contribution as the Head of Department of Mission and a vital member of the community.' Dr Thompson said. However his love for the Northern Territory and Indigenous people in particular is well known, so it is no surprise that he should be elected Bishop of the Northern Territory. We will continue to pray for Greg, Annette and the family as they prepare for this very important ministry.'

New Moore College Faculty Member Appointed

THE Governing Board of Moore College has approved the Principal's nomination of Rev Dr Lionel Windsor to the faculty from 1 January 2015. Dr Windsor is a graduate of the College who is currently serving as Assistant Minister at St Augustine's Anglican Church, Neutral Bay. He completed a PhD in New Testament studies at Durham University in the UK in 2013. Dr Windsor has been teaching Greek as a visiting lecturer at the College in 2013 and has been wonderfully received by students and faculty alike. He has authored a number of scholarly and popular articles and is a prolific blogger.



Special Event At 'Celebrate Messiah'

ON Wednesday 9 July and Thursday 10 July at 7.30pm Dr Darrell Bock, Research Professor of New Testament Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, will be at at Beit HaMashiach to speak on *Focus On Israel*. Dr Bock will also speak at Shabbat Service, 10.30am Saturday 12 July. Beit HaMashiach Messianic Congregation is at 206 Bamba Rd, Caulfield South, Melbourne.

Interserve's Great Day Away

SATURDAY 11 October is the date for Interserve's Great Day Away, a great day of fellowship, food, learning and prayer. The Key-Note Speaker will be Chris Mulherin, a former CMS Missionary and current lecturer at Ridley Melbourne. He will be sharing an inspiring Biblical message. Workshops will be led by Interserve Partners Pete and Prue and Suzanne. There will be an opportunity to pray together for Kingdom work. Worship band *Cloud Of Witnesses* will lead in worship. Stories and updates will be brought by some of Interserve's short term work-

ers and Culture Connect members. The meeting will be held at Melbourne School of Theology, 5 Burwood Highway, Wantirna, Melbourne. For further details go to:

<https://www.interserve.org.au>

AIM Calls For Prayer

AFRICA Inland Mission asks for prayer for the Prayer Summit in South Sudan on 6-8 July. This will commemorate the third Anniversary of the Republic of South Sudan, founded in July 2011. Bishops and AIM leaders from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Congo and South Sudan will attend and pray for this region. Pray for God's anointing on this gathering.

Also, please pray that God will bring many to AIM's Australian conference day in Sydney on 30 August. Topics will include: *The Growing Tsunami: The Kingdom Is Coming Among Muslims!* Pray that all attending will be blessed to hear what God is doing in Africa!

Please pray too for the ongoing financial needs of AIM in Australia and New Zealand. Praise God for the initial response to AIM's Chairman's inaugural appeal, seeking funds to assist in staffing the Australian and New Zealand offices. Pray that more will join in partnership.

www.aimint.org/au/

Faith Comes By Hearing Surpasses One Million Biblesticks And Proclaimers Produced

OVER 40 years ago, Faith Comes By Hearing began offering Audio Bibles on cassette tapes. When CDs came into existence, the ministry also took advantage of the advancement in audio players. Less than a decade ago, they again adapted to technology and developed their own digital playback devices: the BibleStick for individual use, and the Proclaimer for group listening. Today, the ministry is pleased to announce they have produced and distributed over one million units.

'WITH CHRIST ...'

Beatrice Marguerite ('Madge') Sugden

BORN in Deniliquin on 20 August 1917, Madge Sugden went to school in Rochester, and in 1931, at 14 years of age, she was converted under the ministry of the Brethren Evangelist Norman Blinston.

From 1936 to 1941 she trained as a nurse at the Austin Hospital in Melbourne and completed her Staffing Year before training as a Midwife at the Royal Women's Hospital, where she won the Erving Buzzard Prize, and then completed a Staffing Year at the Royal Women's. In 1943 Madge completed an infant welfare certificate.

From 1943 to 1944 Madge was a student at the Melbourne Bible Institute (having been rejected by the Army on medical grounds).

From 1945 to 1946 she was a Sister Tutor at the Queen Victoria Hospital.

In 1947 Madge went to Belgium to learn French and get the requisite certificates, such as Tropical Medicine, to nurse in the Belgian Congo. From 1949 to 1955 she worked as a nurse and missionary in the Belgian Congo with Unevangelised Fields Mission, now part of Pioneers. During this time she adopted and dearly loved an orphaned baby and was deeply distressed when she was unable to bring him back to Australia due to the White Australia Policy.

In 1955 Madge returned home on furlough and remained in Australia to care for her parents until their deaths. During this time she was a Sister Tutor at the Ballarat Hospital, a Sister Tutor for the Diploma of Nurse Education in the Alfred Hospital, a Sister Tutor at Peter MacCallum, and an Administrator at the Mercy Hospital. Also during this time she was very active in missionary work, visitation and deaconess work, taking practical jobs in church and community. Madge was interested in social welfare and civic and public activities, including being a Major in the Citizens' Military Forces.

She was at various times a member of the Heidelberg Presbyterian Church, the Pleasant Street Church in Ballarat, the Malvern Baptist Church, Armadale Baptist Church and St Kilda Presbyterian Church, to each of which she made a considerable contribution in line with her strong faith and deep devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Early on Saturday 14 June 2014, Madge Sugden was called Home to enter into the joy of her Lord and fulfil her long-held desire: to see her Saviour face to face.



New Life Website: www.nlife.com.au

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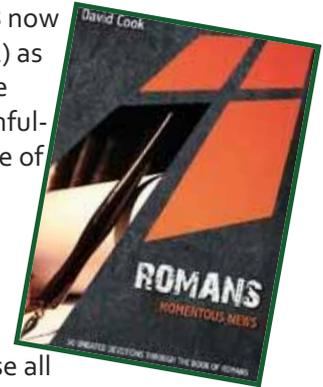
Did God's Faithfulness Fail? Romans 9.1-29**FOR REFLECTION:**

WHY should God's unconditional choice of the Church surprise us, since He chose Israel unconditionally?

Do you think we have a problem with Romans 9 because it is hard to understand or because it is hard to accept?

PAUL'S elated confidence at the end of chapter 8 now turns to 'great sorrow and unceasing anguish' (v.2) as he thinks about Israel's obstinate resistance to the Gospel. Does this represent a failure of God's faithfulness to keep His promises to save Israel or a failure of His Word (v6)? The answer is no, God always intended to save a remnant of Israel, even from among Abraham's children He chose Isaac, not Ishmael, and Jacob, not Esau (vv7-13).

Does this election mean that God is unjust? (v14) No, says Paul. It is not a justice issue, because all deserve condemnation. God is sovereign in the exercise of His mercy and the exercise of whom He hardens, like Pharaoh (vv15-18).



If that is the case, then, why does God still hold us responsible, if human unbelief is a result of God's hardening of the human heart? (v.19). Such an argument is the equivalent of clay complaining to the potter about the use to which it is put. The potter makes different vessels out of the same lump of clay (vv.20-21).

Why does God act like this? Why doesn't He just elect everyone? He did this to glorify Himself (vv22-24); the unbeliever by his stubborn resistance elevates God's patience, the believer by his undeserved acceptance elevates God's mercy.

Paul then quotes Hosea and Isaiah (vv25-29) to show that it was always God's intention to save a remnant of both Jew and non-Jew. Those who love the Bible but have a problem accepting the doctrine of election will have an obvious problem here. It is an affront to pride to be told that we made no contribution to our own salvation; salvation based solely on the electing mercy of God and that is undeserved.

Spurgeon said this is 'the most comforting doctrine of all'. Rejection of this truth robs both God of the sole glory due to Him for our salvation and the believer of the 'sweet, pleasant and unspeakable comfort' that comes from knowing our salvation is God's decision and He will never change His mind.

Here is the antidote to every vestige of self-righteousness: there is nothing here for us to feel superior about, for God chose us despite ourselves, not because of anything we have done. Here is the great motivation for prayer and evangelism: God has an elect, we don't know who they are (Acts 18.10). We must take the Gospel out in the assurance that God knows who they are and will call them to faith when they hear the Gospel.

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

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(Courtesy Rev Iain Murray)

**Read *The Judgment of God, And A Place Called Hell* by David Holden,
at www.defenceofthefait.org**

BOOKS WORTH READING

WEAKNESS IS THE WAY: Life With Christ Our Strength, J.I. Packer, IVP, Nottingham, 2013, ISBN 978-1-84474-871-6

WEAKNESS is a reality that we all know. At the heart of weakness is a knowledge of personal inadequacy. We have all experienced a sense of weakness in physical, emotional or spiritual ways. Packer writes: 'in many respects, and certainly in spiritual matters, we are all weak and inadequate, and we need to face it'. Packer explains to us the weakness that Paul expressed in his writing of 2 Corinthians. He shows how this letter is different to any other of Paul's in our Bible. In 2 Corinthians Paul has to restate and argue for his credentials as an apostle of Christ. He must prove again that he should be listened to by the believers in Corinth.

After explaining the nature and reality of our weakness Packer devotes a chapter each to *Christ And The Christian's Calling*, *Christ And The Christian's Giving* and *Christ And The Christian's Hoping*. This book is not a commentary as such, but Packer looks closely at the text of Scripture and provides various illustrations to make its meaning clear. Through each topic our human frailties are exposed and Packer explains the way Christ works through our weakness. Many years of Christian ministry experience underpin his writing, and it would be true to say that his own ageing has made him conscious to a greater degree of this weakness.

Take the time to explore and think deeply upon this theme of our weakness and the strength of Christ.

FINISHING OUR COURSE WITH JOY: Ageing With Hope, J.I. Packer, IVP, Nottingham, 2014. ISBN 978-1-78359-089-6

EVERYTHING in our society encourages us as we grow older to slow down, do less and indulge ourselves. But is this how we should be living as Christians? There is a danger that churches behave 'as though spiritual gifts and ministry skills wither with age. But they don't; what happens rather is that they atrophy with disuse.' The insights of Packer, himself well into his eighties, are not just for the older members of churches but for all ages to ponder. He states quite clearly that he is writing of those who are in reasonably good health.

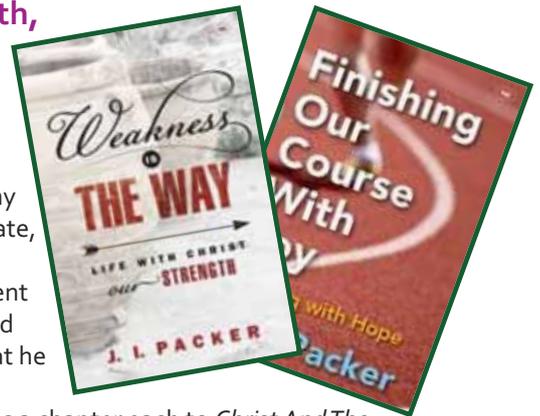
Age should bring with it wisdom. This is a great gift to the church. Many years of experience in living the Christian life equip a person to help those younger. Yet often there is an inability or unwillingness for different age groups in churches to mesh together, a problem exacerbated by the recent phenomenon of age-specific services of worship.

Packer encourages older people to think again as to how they will live their lives. He understands that 'adjusting to the effects of ageing is a spiritual discipline in itself' but he also explores the dangers of this phase of our lives when the responsibilities of younger years and often the relationships of younger years have ceased to exist. It can be a time of loneliness especially as we head into the 'oldest old' group (85+). He advises us to carefully plan our time and to live more than ever as if each day is our last. While that should be our attitude at all stages of our lives it becomes ever more real as time goes on.

Certainly, there seems to be a move to rethink how older people are viewed in work places. So too, we in church life should think clearly about how we challenge our older members to live lives of useful ministry for as long as they are physically and mentally able.

These books by Packer, who over the years has given the Christian Church so much clear thinking, stand with other books published in the last decade by Christian leaders of great experience and wisdom. At the latter time of their lives these men continue to guide and give insight for those who read their books. I think, for instance, of John Chapman's *Making The Most Of The Rest Of Your Life* and John Stott's *Radical Discipleship*.

– Both books reviewed by Mignon Goswell



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BOOKS WORTH READING

GOSPEL BASICS: Trusting, Following, And Winning Christ. Andrew A. Bonar, Edinburgh, Banner Of Truth, 2011, ISBN 978-1-84871-123-5.

THIS is the latest in a number of books by Andrew Bonar (1810-92) republished by the Banner of Truth Trust (it was first published in 1878). He was the friend and biographer of the saintly Robert Murray M'Cheyne (*Memoirs And Remains*) and Bonar's own diary is another devotional classic. What Spurgeon wrote in his own review of this book is quite true: 'There is always life and sweetness about the writings of Andrew A. Bonar' (*Sword And Trowel*, March 1879).

To the original work has been added D.M. McIntyre's discussion of Bonar as a preacher (pp ix-xxi). From his analysis of his preaching, certain things stand out: the influence of Bonar's own conversion experience on his preaching; his simplicity and clarity (the fruit of his deep study of God's inspired Word in the original languages); his sermons were full of Christ. Some 16 examples of his preaching follow, and it is earnest, heartfelt and searching Gospel proclamation.

The opening sermon starts with the striking statement: 'You may go to Hell asleep, but you cannot go to Heaven asleep'. His warning of sinners always had as its aim to draw them to salvation. He speaks of the 'cup of wrath' that Christ drank for sinners at the cross. He explains what it means to 'come' to Christ. There is a warmth, vitality and fervour in Bonar's way of speaking to the unconverted. Every preacher of the Gospel should read this book, for one danger faced by preachers is that they might scold sinners and so drive them further from the Saviour who loved them enough to die for them. The sermons of Bonar are the perfect antidote to that problem.

— Gregory Goswell

READING THE HISTORICAL BOOKS: A Student's Guide To Engaging The Biblical Text, Patricia Dutcher-Walls, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014.

ISBN 978-0-8010-4865-4

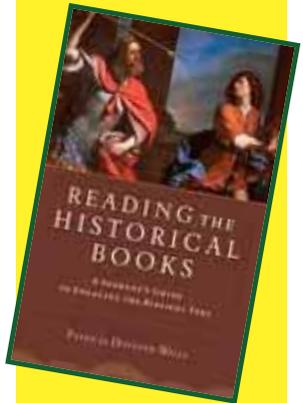
PROFESSOR Dutcher-Walls teaches Hebrew Scripture at Vancouver School of Theology. The word 'engaging' in the subtitle of this book is important to note, as the focus is not on just explaining the content of the books *Joshua* through to *Esther* but on helping students of the Bible interact with the text of Scripture at a deeper level. To that end, she assists her readers to gain certain exegetical skills and to become more aware of the cultural and historical background of the Old Testament historical books.

She introduces the dynamics of biblical narration, whose conventions are often different from modern ways of telling a story. She aims to increase our sensitivity to the theological interests of the biblical authors and to the conventions of ancient history writing. The author encourages (and exemplifies) respect for the text, without insisting that the Bible is the inspired Word of God (though she says nothing to undermine that belief), for her target audience is wider than students enrolled in Evangelical theological colleges.

The first chapter is about discovering the context of the text, focussing on what the biblical texts themselves reveal about the political, religious and social background of their writing. The next chapter helps us become better readers by explaining such features as plot development, characterisation and point of view. We discover, if we did not know before, that the Bible is extremely well-written in terms of its value as literature. The third chapter gives us the tools to discern the biblical author's message and teaching, so that we do not just read our own ideas into the text. Next, she explains how the historians of the Bible make use of available sources, how they decide what they select for inclusion in their account of events and how they provide quotations for historical characters. What is particularly pleasing in her presentation is that Professor Dutcher-Walls does not see the Bible's literary qualities, theological commitments and historical accuracy as trade-offs but instead shows that they are fully compatible with each other. As John 'Rabbi' Duncan once said, 'The Bible says the best things in the best way'.

'There is always life and sweetness about the writings of Andrew A. Bonar'

— Spurgeon



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