

Melbourne Christians Call For End To Persecution

ON Saturday 7 February, some 300 Christians gathered opposite Melbourne Central Station to highlight the plight of persecuted Christians around the world.

Among the speakers, Elizabeth Kendal analysed the reasons for persecution, saying that religious freedom is a very precious thing and those who are blessed enough to be born and raised in a society that protects religious freedom as a fundamental human right can tend to take it for granted.



'I don't think there would be many people here in Australia who would actually like to live under such a system where you can be punished for not believing what the government tells you to believe,' Elizabeth said. You might think that's ridiculous! Why would any government do that? Well there are a number of reasons why governments all around the world are doing exactly that:

1. Political Gain

Ambitious politicians have learned to play the populist religion or ideology card for political gain and to use it to ride a populist wave to power. This is exactly what India's Hindu nationalists – or Hindutva forces – have done in India. Hindu nationalists were able to dragnet the Hindu vote by declaring that Hinduism is the religion of all Indians, who must return to the Hindu fold for the sake of social cohesion and national security, lest they put India at risk of internal fragmentation and foreign invasion.

Despite the fact that Christianity has existed in India for 2,000 yrs – and that many Indian leaders got their education in Catholic schools and had their tonsils removed in Catholic hospitals – Christianity is now existentially threatened in India and Christians are facing unprecedented persecution.

(Continued on Page 3)

Nigerian Baptist Leader Castigates International Community For Ignoring Terrorism In Nigeria

SAMSON Ayokunle, President of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, has castigated the international community for ignoring terrorist violence and attacks in the West African country. NBC is the largest Baptist World Alliance member organization in Africa with approximately 3.5 million members in some 10,000 churches.

'My consternation is in the attitude of the international community toward the huge destruction going on in Nigeria,' Ayokunle told the BWA. 'The earnestness with which they intervened in the ISIL attack in Syria and Iraq, or the Taliban problem in Afghanistan, is not shown in the case of Nigeria.'

He accused the world community of devaluing Nigerian lives. 'Does it not matter to the rest of the world if Boko Haram continues to kill hundreds of people every week? Are these people less human than those being killed in other places where they have gone to directly intervene? My people are being killed like animals and the whole world is just watching.'

VOLUME 77
NUMBER 13

ISSUE DATE:
15 February 2015

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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newlife
AUSTRALIA'S CHRISTIAN NEWSPAPER

Oh To Pray Like Paul!

WOULDN'T you love to have been a 'fly on the wall' when Paul prayed? I've just started preaching through Colossians, and of course have been confronted with Paul's magnificent prayer in 1.3-14, which is just one of his many prayers shared with the readers of his letters. I took five things away from this prayer:

1. 'Men Ought Always To Pray And Not To Faint.' (See Luke 18.1)

While he was in prison Paul had heard that there were good things and bad things going on in the Colossian Church, and his first line of attack was prayer, giving thanks for their faith and love which sprang from their hope. We might say that this was the springboard from which Paul would launch his campaign to correct their errors.

2. 'To God Be The Glory.' It is God who is filling them with the knowledge of His will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives. Since 'salvation is of the Lord' all glory for it attaches to God alone, and this prayer is full of glory and praise to God.

3. 'Accentuate The Positive.' Paul doesn't start with the problem. He starts with all the good things he knows about the Colossians, building rapport with them before getting to the difficulties.

4. 'Keep Your Ear To The Ground.' Paul was a great networker – some 80 people together with a number of churches are named by him in his various letters – and he worked in close co-operation with his associates. He was well-informed about what was happening throughout the Church. In some ways, we are the most well-informed generation of Christians there has ever been, with the internet bringing information to us virtually as it happens, the various Christian news services, publications of the mission societies, denominational journals *Eternity*, and (dare I say?) *New Life*. By the way, I do dare to say it because over the years a number of pastors have told me that their best-informed and most earnestly praying people are those who take *New Life*. No doubt there is a 'knock-on effect' as an item here or there leads them to further investigation on the internet. (Never be afraid to say: 'I read about it in *New Life*'.)

5. 'Give Thanks With A Grateful Heart.' Thanksgiving may well be the dominant theme of Paul's prayers. How dominant is it in ours? God's promises are 'exceedingly great and precious', His work is to be seen in all the Earth and known in the lives of all His people. Thanksgiving, then, is the key which first and best turns the key in the door of prayer.

May the Lord revitalise our prayer lives as we follow the example of Paul.

– Bob Thomas

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MATTERS FOR PRAYER

2. Social Control (From Page 1)

Too many leaders are too timid to uphold the law. They don't want to pick a fight with people who just might fight back! So they opt instead for denial – wilful blindness and deafness – or for appeasement. Far too many governments are too timid to uphold religious freedom and its siblings: freedom of speech and freedom of association. These governments tend to just ban everything that might prove divisive or offensive – especially anything that could offend or enrage belligerent or powerful interest groups. Yes – that's much easier than upholding the law and defending human rights. So it is generally the case that the more fragile a society is, or the more tenuous a regime or system's grip on power is, then the more repressive that government or system will be.

Not too long ago, Moslem Brotherhood leader Yusuf Qaradawi told Arabic TV, 'If they [Muslims] had gotten rid of the punishment [usually death] for apostasy, Islam would not exist today.' Repression is actually a sign of weakness – philosophical weakness. Only systems and ideas that can survive in openness and freedom can be considered strong, for freedom is actually the furnace in which systems and ideas are tested.

Take away freedom and you take away the right of people to search for and find truth. And truth is good for society and good for the world, for truth is that which accurately reflects reality, enabling us to find our way safely and avoid disaster. That is why religious freedom has been deemed a fundamental human right.

On 10 December 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the *Universal Declaration Of Human Rights*, which enshrined religious freedom as a universal human right that every human in the world should have. But increasingly today, religious liberty is being deemed nothing more than a Judeo-Christian construct that is not universal at all. Indeed, religious freedom is being deemed culturally offensive. It is also being recognised as un-Islamic; which is why Islamic leaders got together in Cairo in 1992 and adopted the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam – similar in many ways to the UDHR, but without religious freedom. It is also why in 2005, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Racism and Xenophobia, suggested that our human rights treaties should be amended.

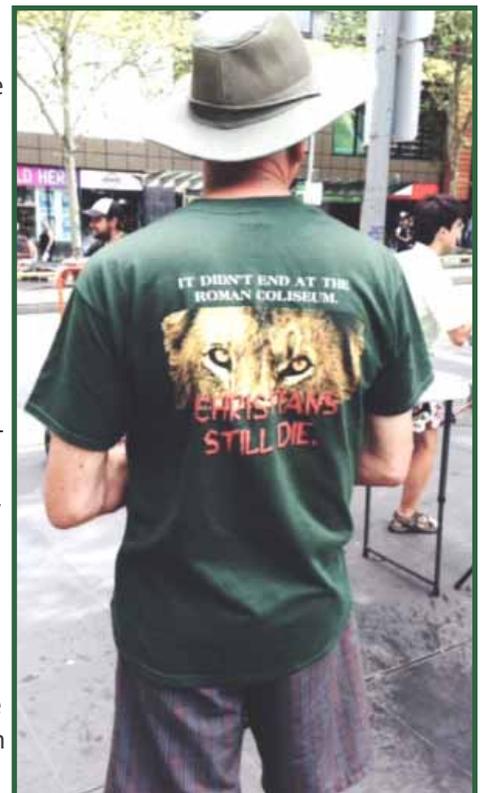
3. Curbing Christianity

This trend of declining religious freedom, has advanced alongside (and largely in response to) the trend of massive growth of Christianity in the non-Western world – growth achieved not through the revival of dead churches or through birth rate – but by conversions. Indians have been becoming Christians; Muslims are becoming Christians – so too are atheists and Buddhists.

Now these trends [growth of Christianity in the non-West and hostility towards religious freedom] have converged. And now all through the non-Western world Christians are coming under intense pressure. Christians are being repressed and murdered all across North Africa. They are being exterminated in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan and all across the Middle East. They are being repressed and violently persecuted all throughout Asia: imprisoned and tortured in Iran and Laos; marginalised and beaten in India and Vietnam; targeted for repressive measures in Uzbekistan and China; accused, terrorised, driven from their homes and even burned alive in Pakistan.

We live in a globalised world; we are not isolated. 'No man is an island,' said John Donne – and these days, no country is an island – not even Australia. We are part of a hyper-connected world: connected through skies, the oceans, the air we breathe. We need to stop treating religious freedom as if it is an expendable right – one that doesn't matter. Religious freedom does matter and a significant percentage of the migrants and asylum seekers coming to the West these days are fleeing religious discrimination and persecution. We must take the global decline of religious liberty seriously.

Even those who are anti-religious (including those who are vehemently anti-Christian!) must realise that when religious freedom goes, so too do freedom of speech and freedom of association. A regime or system that punishes people for peacefully practising a harmless, even benevolent faith, will eventually punish all dissent – which is why in Saudi Arabia (where Christianity is illegal) those who criticise the regime are flogged and imprisoned. Likewise in Vietnam (which maintains a stranglehold on Christianity) priests, lawyers and bloggers who criticise the regime are beaten and imprisoned. It's why Islamic fundamentalists (who kill Christians) also kill authors, publishers and cartoonists. To accept the loss of religious freedom is to advance totalitarianism and thought-crime from which no-one will escape. ALL who care about freedom need to get serious about promoting it, especially the Church – in fact the Church should be leading the way, not the least because so many Christians are this day facing not just escalating persecution, but an existential threat to their very existence as a people.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Have A Great Night Out To Help A Worthy Cause

RON Ellis, Organiser/Comperer of *Songs Of Praise*, held at Diamond Valley (Vic) Baptist Church three times each year with an average attendance of 400 to 500 people, invites you to *A Night With The Stars* at Diamond Valley Baptist Church at 7.30pm on Saturday 18 April.

Ron says, 'It is now 30 years since we built our unique, mud brick complex and it has served us well. However, our well-used building is in need of urgent attention. New boilers, improved lighting and room fixtures are required plus many other improvements to bring the building up to an acceptable standard. An Appeal target of \$100,000 has been set to enable our church to continue to serve our community for the next 30 years.

'To help move us closer to our target I have organised a *Spectacular Fundraising Concert*, called *A Night With The Stars*, featuring eight outstanding Christian performers. All Adult Tickets are \$30 and Children 15yrs and under \$10. We expect a sell-out of the 500 seats available, so please support our appeal by booking your tickets early to avoid disappointment. Tickets need to be purchased in advance! See the ad. on p.7 for names of performers donating their services to help us make the concert a success! And please spread the word among your friends, on your church notice board etc. Be assured, your support in any way at all will be deeply appreciated.'

Autumn Songs Of Praise will be held at the church at 2pm on Sunday 22 March 2015. This is a free event and includes a lovely afternoon tea.

For further information about both events, contact Ron Ellis on 0407 306 353, or by email: ron@ronellis.org

Meanwhile, Up At Katoomba ...

PAUL Tripp has accepted KCC's invitation to speak at Katoomba Easter Convention and will host a Gospel-centered Marriage Seminar using material that is based on his highly-regarded *What Did You Expect* seminar.

The KCC Easter Convention will be held from 3-6 April 2015 with Paul Tripp, Gary Millar, Kurt Peters and Mark Smith as speakers on the theme: *Death Is Not The End*.

For further information go to: easterconvention.com



Dr. John McClean - Vice Principal, Christ College

Paul Tripp has a great gift of applying the gospel to the struggles and temptations of the human heart. I've been impressed with Paul's grasp of the Scriptures, his ability to listen and his real care for individuals. His teaching is a fine example of good theology thoughtfully applied to real life.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The Presbyterian Inland Mission (PIM) is an inland and outback ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. It has an expanding network of patrol ministries, is responsible for a number of Mission Churches and has a developing range of caring, philanthropic and community assistance programs.

As a result of structural organizational change, the PIM is seeking to appoint a CEO. This is a newly created position.

Essential requirements for the role are developed pastoral skills, proven business experience, preparedness to travel extensively throughout Australia and, prior to commencement in the role, obtaining a current Working With Children Compliance Check.

The ideal candidate must be a change agent and have appropriate business experience.

In addition, a demonstrated ability to work with initiative and facilitate strategic change in management services and processes is crucial.

The successful candidate will be required to monitor and maintain compliance with legislative, policy and contractual requirements.

They must also be able to express a personal commitment to the values and beliefs of the organization.

If you genuinely want to contribute to the lives of those in inland and outback Australia by utilizing your pastoral, business and organizational leadership experience then you are encouraged to apply.

A competitive salary package is offered.

General enquiries and a confidential discussion can be made by phoning Rev Les Fowler (0427 521 083) or Rev Martin de Pyle (0420 981 267). Email: lfowler@internode.on.net for application information.

Closing Date for applications: 31 March 2015.

How To Face Up To The New Year

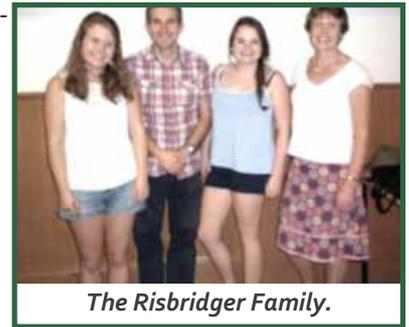
THE best way to start a New Year is with prayer and Bible Study, thus setting a pattern for the following months. Hundreds of Christians from all denominations did just that during the 97th Summer Convention at Belgrave Heights.

Will Renshaw was carried into the summer convention in 1926-27 as a baby, so this was his 89th convention! Will was BHC treasurer for many years. He has completed a book *Marvellous Melbourne And Spiritual Power*, giving an insight into the Christian legacy of our forefathers and their links with the Keswick Movement.

Each year more improvements are being made to the camping grounds and facilities. During 2014, new kitchens have been installed in the Lodge caretaker's house and Master's Manor; new bathrooms in The Lodge, new buildings at Diamond Valley Camp; car park has been extended; camping space enlarged and 25 trees removed, mostly with voluntary labour. Many young families availed themselves of the wonderful activities provided by OAC for their children. Between 60-80 primary-aged children enjoyed fun activities as well as learning about Paul's life and letters. The teen-agers studied the *I AM's* of Jesus' life as they participated in many challenging and interesting sessions.

This summer, as the speaker from UK, John Risbridger, is Chair of Keswick Ministries in England, the Victorian Council invited representatives from many Australian conventions to spend a few days with him prior to the summer meetings. The CEOs and chairmen from Katoomba, Mt Tambourine and Wimmera took advantage of the offer, and the time shared was full of inspiration, prayer, encouragement and the sharing of ideas. The first meetings of the convention were on New Year's Eve.

John Risbridger, Pastor of the Above Bar Church, Southampton, was accompanied by his wife Alison, and daughters Nicola and Anna. John grew up in a godly home, next door to the church. He never knew a time in his life when he was not aware of God's love. As a teen-ager at a holiday camp, he was impacted deeply by the words of the hymn *All To Jesus I Surrender*, and surrendered everything to the Lord at that moment. (Continued Page Six)



The Risbridger Family.

New Life Columnist Recognised For Advocacy Of The Persecuted Church



WITTENBERG Seminary in Canada has awarded Elizabeth Kendal an honorary Doctor of Ministry degree for her many years of advocacy for the persecuted church.

The citation reads: 'Elizabeth Kendal has worked tirelessly to give persecuted believers a voice by researching and writing about religious liberty abuses that are often ignored by mainstream media. Her prayer bulletins are known worldwide for their detailed and reliable information, and their urgent call to the Church of Jesus Christ to stand in the gap for their persecuted brothers and sisters.'

A well-deserved honour. – Ed

The Presbyterian Church of Victoria Administrative Assistant / Receptionist

The Presbyterian Church of Victoria invites applications for the position of Administrative Assistant/Receptionist working in the office of the General Assembly, located in the Melbourne CBD.

The position is for 4 or 5 days a week.

The primary responsibilities are to provide secretarial support to the Clerk of Assembly and the General Manager; and other administrative functions within the office.

Essential Selection Criteria:

- Excellent computer skills including a high level of proficiency in Microsoft Word and Excel.
- Experience in office administration.
- A warm and friendly personality.
- Flexibility and initiative.
- A positive attitude and ability to take responsibility for work
- An active commitment to the Church's Christian ethos.

Contact Details:

Applications should be addressed to:
The General Manager,
Presbyterian Church of Victoria,
Assembly Hall,
156 Collins Street, Melbourne Vic 3000.

Closing Date: 4 March 2015.

Email: pcvoffice@pcvic.org.au

Phone: 03 9650 9311 Fax: 03 9654 5018

(Continued From Page Five) At the age of 14, John was baptized. During his time of study at Nottingham University, his faith matured as opportunities for service became available through the Christian Union.

'All We Need'

The convention theme was *All We Need*. John showed us how Daniel coped when his faith was under pressure. Meanwhile, Peter Adam led us in studies on *Colossians*. When under pressure, all the Colossians needed was Christ.

Daniel: Coping When Faith's Under Pressure

The first day began with John Risbridger introducing us to Daniel, who maintained A Distinctive Faith In An Alien World (Daniel 1.) Neither a preacher nor a priest, but a government servant, Daniel was a believer in the right place, at the right time, doing God's work. Like the exiles, we are called to live out Biblical faith in an alien world. Intellectually, culturally and spiritually, Daniel was expected to comply with Babylon's life-style. Today, we face similar pressure, from all sides, to conform to the world's standards, and like Daniel we must draw lines in an alien world. We must respond like Daniel who resolved not to defile himself. He did not withdraw or become a passive victim of his circumstances. He learned everything he could about Babylon, but would not touch its food or drink. Even with such a meagre diet Daniel and his friends excelled in their work. If we never draw the line, we have already been defeated, but by choosing holiness and justice we will be a blessing to others.

God's plan exposes the helplessness of paganism and the sovereignty of God over history. A courageous faith is a praying faith: Daniel faced a difficult situation with prayer and showed up the phoney power of idolatry. Daniel and his friends faced an enraged pagan dictator, yet they would rather die than dishonour God. God did not keep them from the flames, but came to them in the fire in a pre-incarnate revelation of Christ. While not everyone is miraculously saved (many martyrs have suffered death by fire) their ultimate victory is in Glory. He is with us in the fire or flood, and in the end, even Nebuchadnezzar gave praise to the Most High God.

Walk Thru' The Bible Back In Action

WTB has returned to Victoria and Al Watson was making people aware of the renewed ministry as he manned a stall at the Belgrave Heights Easter Convention. It is a unique method of remembering the Old or New Testament with actions, key words, humorous cartoons and lots of fun.

In the 1980s, as a Victorian WTB instructor, Al Watson taught the seminar in weekly lessons to his grade 5/6 SRE class. Two years later one of those students approached Al in the street and went through all the key words and actions for the Old Testament. This confirmed to Al the amazing power of the fun-filled, action-packed, Biblically sound method of learning the whole Old or New Testament story.

Since Al returned to Melbourne he has set up the WTB office at PO Box 650, Dromana, Vic, 3936, phone: 0418 368 866. Al says that one of the biggest problems in the Church today is Biblical illiteracy. He has a real desire to motivate people to understand the origin of their faith. Walk Thru the Bible helps people gain a working knowledge of the Bible story after only one day. The strategy is to start with a six hour seminar, which is followed by the pastor speaking on the overall view of Scriptures for six weeks. Quiet time notes will be available for the congregation to use and weekly cell groups will discuss and pray through the themes.

— Barbara Prout ('Mrs DP')

Peter Adam, Vicar Emeritus of St Jude's, Carlton, and Canon of St Paul's Cathedral, is no stranger to the convention. He has spoken at least three times previously.

As a young person, he came to faith slowly. The father of one of Peter's teachers was a believer, whose life spoke to Peter, who thought, 'Whatever that man has, I want.' He started his search by diligently attending church and reading the Bible. In June 1967, aged 16, he met Harry Scott Simmons, who explained the Gospel to Peter. He was converted in 20 minutes and met weekly with Harry during the next three years for prayer and Bible study. Soon after, he started travelling with his friends to the convention at Belgrave Heights. Peter trained at Ridley College, Melbourne, and was ordained at 23. He then spent 10 years studying and ministering in England. After returning to Melbourne, in 1982, he became Vicar of St Jude's for 20 years. From 2002-2012 he was principal of Ridley College.

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Colossians: Christ Supreme

PETER Adam's theme was *Colossians: Christ Supreme*.

Faith, Hope And Love (Colossians 1.1-14)

God's Word should instinctively change our lives, without us necessarily remembering the sermon. Not only are people fed by a message, but they should be trained to help and encourage others. Colossians is the least important of the cities Paul addressed, yet these believers lived in Christ. They were bound up with Him, united and joined together as one body. Because we are in Christ we need to walk as Christ walked, bearing fruit and growing. The world says you can make it alone; you can be anything you want to be. But our power comes from God; it is God alone who transforms lives. The Colossians became people of faith, love and hope because they were anchored in Christ.

Christ Supreme In Creation And Reconciliation (Colossians 1.15-23)

If your prayers are too small, everything else will be too small – praise, thanksgiving, church, confidence, understanding and evangelism. If your prayers are too small, other things will fill the vacuum – heresy, neglect, and most importantly, forgetting Christ and His pre-eminence. The Colossians did not deny Christ, but they were gradually drifting away from God's beloved Son, His Kingdom, the Son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Christ is the first-born of all creation. He created all things and holds the whole universe together through His power and will. This is Christ's world. The safest place to be is in the hands of Christ.

Proclaiming Christ, Receiving Christ (Colossians 1.24-2.7)

Paul is a servant of the Gospel who honours Christ and points others to Him. He is also a servant of the church who rejoices in his suffering. Suffering is the normal state of the Christian. Most Christians in the world are facing persecution, and it is coming to Australia, a country which tolerates everything except Christianity. But suffering strengthens us. The persecuted believer is the persecuted Christ and He identifies with His servants.

Don't Be Taken Captive (Colossians 2.8-23)

There is no neutral ground. Beware of wrong-thinking or attractive words. The Colossians tried to fill the gap left by their small conception of Christ with hollow philosophy and empty deception. Remember that 'addition is subtraction' – when we add to Scripture, we subtract from God's Word. We need to depend on Christ in all our activities. Ask the question, 'Is Christ fully honoured in every sermon, Bible study, prayer time, worship and service?' You have been given fullness in Christ...v.10. If we know the heart and mind of Christ we know God! We are one with Him.

Put Off The Wrong, Put On The Right (Colossians 3.1-17)

Since you have been raised with Christ, you are now in Him. You live in Him, so look not within, but up to the things above. You have died, and your life is hidden in Christ. You must be heavenly minded to be any earthly use. Otherwise you will serve self, not God. We need to set our minds on Christ who is ruling at God's right hand; the place of greatest honour, glory and power in the universe. It is said of the great Scottish minister Samuel Rutherford, 'He had his feet on the ground, his hand to the plough and his heart in Heaven.'

(Continued Page Eight)

Spectacular Fundraising Concert

A Night With The Stars!

FEATURING Eight Outstanding Christian Performers

Saturday, 18 April 2015
7.30pm (sharp)

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309 Diamond Creek Road, Plenty (Melway 11 D7)

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AWARD WINNING ILLUSIONIST

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OUTSTANDING MUSIC THEATRE
PERFORMER, WEDDING SINGER

(Continued From Page Seven)

Our Daily Lives (Colossians 3.18-4.6)

Every person is an image of God. Humans have the capacity to think. The danger is to think too highly or too lowly of ourselves. We are living advertisements for God. Because of this, we have a profound effect on those around us. God's plan is to bless us so we can bless others. God regards our daily lives of very great and eternal importance. So let us always do good things to encourage others, not evil which will pull them down. Human relationships matter most to God.

The Gospel Team (Colossians 4.7-18)

Never read the Bible without turning the words into prayer. The purpose of the work of Christ is to produce godly lives and Gospel ministry. God depends on ordinary people praying, working, giving. Paul encouraged the Colossians to think beyond their own church to the Global Gospel Team. Be thankful for all those Christian friends who have enriched your life. In 1902 the Torrey Mission in Melbourne had a great and on-going impact on the city. Every home was visited twice and prayed over. The record shows 8,600 people committed their lives to Christ. God's salvation is for all people, but they can only be reached through global ministry. Paul's co-workers was so thankful for the ministry of his friends and fellow labourers – 80 are mentioned in his epistles. As John Calvin said: 'The church is a team to be trained to forward and enrich the Gospel in the world.'

Raising Mission Awareness And Commitment

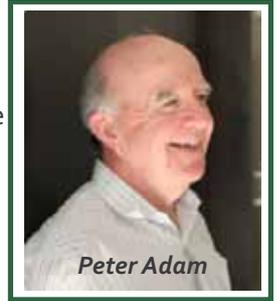
The vision of the convention is to see spiritually mature Christians, whose faith and practice is anchored in the Bible, serving as Spirit-filled, pure and powerful witnesses for Christian family, church community and the world, so cross-cultural ministry has always been a major part of the convention's ministry. Countless young people have committed their lives to overseas missions during the Summer and Easter meetings.

As usual, the foyer of the auditorium was used by many of the agencies affiliated with Missions Interlink to display their stands of literature, visual aids and saleable items. Representatives were always available to answer questions and make known their prayer needs.

One service at each convention always has a global focus, and the offering is distributed among the Mission Interlink societies. This year they received \$4,291. John Risbridger challenged us this year with his message: *For Jesus And The Gospel: Missional Faith In A Needy World (Mark 8.27-91)*.

He said that the world admires sacrificial determination in sport, business, politics. Isn't following Jesus more important than these? John challenged us with the motto of C.T. Studd, who gave up a cricketing career, and his family fortune, for the work of missions. Jesus was not a military conqueror or a preserver of Jewish culture. To be our Messiah He had to surrender His life to God; a sacrificial offering for the world! When people honestly answer Jesus' question, 'Who do people say I am?', their lives begin to change. If He was just a prophet, an historical figure or a myth we could forget Him. But His claim to be The Son of God is true, so we must obey Him and embrace Jesus' teaching and accept Jesus' challenge. Jesus walked the path of self-denial. As His disciples, we too must walk the same way, asking ourselves: 'Does God have all my life, or just the leftovers? When I give my time or money, does it cost me something? Will I give my all for the sake of the Gospel?'

– Barbie Prout ('Mrs DP')



Jesus said to him: "I am the way, the truth, and the life.
No one comes to the Father except through Me."

John 14:6 NKJV

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VISITING MELBOURNE?

You're welcome at The Faith Factory:

ST KILDA: Cnr Alma Rd/Barkly St. Every Sunday 11am & 7pm;
Living Stones Korean Presbyterian Church. Every Sunday 12.30pm;

BALACLAVA: Cnr Hotham St/Denman Rd. Every Sunday 9.30am.

MINISTER: Rev Bob Thomas 0417 592 646

You're Welcome At The Faith Factory

– A Friendly, Caring, Bible-Believing Christian Fellowship –



New Faces On Ministry Journey

THE Governor of New South Wales, General David Hurley, was one of the proud parents in the over-capacity crowd which squeezed into St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney, on Saturday 7 February to witness the ordination of 37 new deacons. The governor's daughter, Caitlin, joined men and women from across the diocese being ordained and taking up a variety of ministries including prison chaplaincy, university chaplaincy, church plants with the Department of Evangelism and New Churches, and parish work. General Hurley and his family were among the parents and family members who were asked to stand as the congregation prayed for their future ministry.



Before taking their vows, Acting Dean, Canon Chris Allan, spoke on the *Parable Of The Banquet*, from Luke 14. 'To my brothers and sisters who're about to make very serious promises, remember who it is that Jesus has invited ... there's no A-list crowd with Jesus,' Canon Allan said. Jesus isn't interested in reputations or qualifications or the degrees on the wall. Have a heart for the lost. – www.sydneyanglicans.net

Come Up To The Downs For Easter

THE 2015 Darling Downs Easter Convention promises to have a very exciting program, with two great speakers, John Mackay and Graham Hooper, who will be covering the subject *The Centrality Of Christ*. The theme will explore evangelism as the missing link and explore how to close the gap between the discipleship we so long for and the reality of our daily living. Go to the [website www.ddcc.net.au](http://www.ddcc.net.au) or Facebook page www.facebook.com/ddcc.inc or email publications101@gmail.com for further information and to register.

'Free The Children' – Abp Davies

THE Archbishop of Sydney, Dr Glenn Davies, says the situation of children in detention 'should concern every Australian' and he has supported calls for an overhaul of the current system. The Human Rights Commission Report says 'Current detention law, policy and practice does not address the particular vulnerabilities of asylum seeker children nor does it afford them special assistance and protection. Mandatory detention does not consider the individual circumstances of children nor does it address the best interests of the child as a primary consideration.'

Dr Davies says governments of both parties have struggled with the issue of refugee and immigrant arrivals and says unfair political criticism has marred what should be a bi-partisan debate. The archbishop said it should be acknowledged that according to the latest figures there were 211 children still in detention, a dramatic fall from previous figures and a ten-fold decrease from its peak. 'Every Australian should be concerned at the plight of children in such extreme circumstances,' he said. 'Governments must clear the way for the necessary checks to be done and then for the children to be quickly removed from detention, with their parents. It would only cause further heartache for families to be separated from each other at a time when they need each other the most.'



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'Vicar Of Baghdad' To Start Jerusalem International School Of Reconciliation Studies

IN a recent update from the Middle East, Canon Andrew White, the popular 'Vicar of Baghdad' from St George's Church in the Iraqi capital, has announced he is to launch an international school to study reconciliation issues. 'One of the good things about being in Jerusalem is engaging with many of the visitors here,' he writes. 'One of the things that has become clear here is the level of interest that there is in reconciliation issues and broader Middle East studies. It is clear that normal visits and pilgrimages here do not really provide a foundation in this complex subject. We have therefore decided to establish The Jerusalem International School Of Reconciliation Studies.'

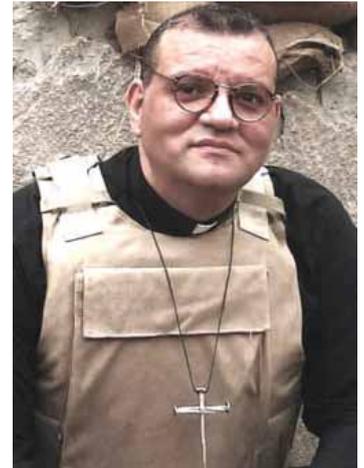
The school will start with one course to run during September this year and will provide an in-depth introduction to Middle East Conflicts, Terrorism, Judaism, the Isaiah 19 Highway and other issues. The course will be taught by a variety of outstanding speakers from a variety of backgrounds. 'You are very much encouraged to sign up for this course. There are limited places available and it will be based on a first-come, first-service basis', Canon White said.

He explained that The Jerusalem School Of Reconciliation Studies is designed as a forum for introducing people to the radical complexities of reconciliation at an international level. 'The course is based in Jerusalem and includes the opportunity to enter into the nature of a life lived in many a conflict. The course will provide the opportunity to engage with many who have been involved in the complexities of the Middle East conflict in Israel and the West Bank. It will include visits to places such as Hebron, Bethlehem and Jericho as well as much of Jerusalem,' he said. 'The visit we are recommending is not a pilgrimage or tour of the Land of the Holy One, though it will provide opportunities to encounter people and places never seen on the normal tour or pilgrimage. This is an opportunity to seriously encounter issues of conflict and reconciliation.'

The cost will be in the region of £UK1,000 for the two-week residential course, and a diploma will be awarded at the end of the course. Each participant will be responsible for arranging their own travel to

Jerusalem. For further information please contact Lesley, Canon White's personal assistant, email: lesley@frrme.org. If you are interested in participating in the course, please contact his assistant at that email address.

– Michael Ireland, Senior Correspondent, ASSIST



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PERSECUTION WATCH

Heart Wrenching Letter To Family From Now-Dead Hostage

KAYLA Mueller wrote her family a heart-wrenching letter nearly a year ago. According to a story on www.foxnews.com the letter was possibly written from the bowels of a Raqqa, Syria, building that US special forces raided on 4 July 2014, only to learn Mueller – and at least three other hostages who were later killed – had been moved days earlier.

'If you could say I have "suffered" at all throughout this whole experience it is only in knowing how much suffering I have put you all through,' wrote Mueller, a 26-year-old aid worker from Arizona who was kidnapped in Syria by ISIS in August 2013. 'I have a lot of fight left inside of me. I am not breaking down and I will not give in no matter how long it takes,' Mueller said in the newly released letter. 'I know you would want me to remain strong. That is exactly what I am doing. Do not fear for me, continue to pray as will I and, by God's will, we will be together soon.'

Fox News said Mueller's parents confirmed their daughter died while in the hands of the terror group, though they did not say how or when she was killed. A source familiar with the communications told *Fox News* that the terror group sent Mueller's parents a photo, taken from the neck up, of their daughter to prove she was dead.

'We are heartbroken to share that we've received confirmation that Kayla Jean Mueller has lost her life,' *Fox News* reported Carl and Marsha Mueller, of Prescott, Arizona, said in a statement. 'Kayla was a compassionate and devoted humanitarian. She dedicated the whole of her young life to helping those in need of freedom, justice, and peace.'

The family received information from their daughter's ISIS captors over the weekend that was authenticated, according to US officials. The family received a private message from Kayla's ISIL captors containing additional information,' *Fox News* reported National Security Council spokeswoman Bernadette Meehan said Tuesday.

– *Jeremy Reynolds, Senior Correspondent for ASSIST News Service*



Kayla Mueller displays a poster for aid to Darfur

BURMA: Soldiers Rape, Kill Two Christian Teachers

TWO young Christian Kachin women who were working as volunteer teachers for rural village children in Shabuk-Kaunghka in Shan state, Burma (Myanmar) were raped and killed by Burmese soldiers on 19 January.

- Uphold the loved ones, colleagues and students of these two women, pray the Lord will minister to them as they come to terms with this tragedy.
- Pray for those in authority investigating this case, may they seek justice. Pray more will be done to protect minority groups in Burma and stem the on-going tension and unrest.
- Ask the Lord to strengthen the resolve of His children in Burma to love, serve and follow Him even through great trials and suffering. Pray He will pour out His Spirit and grow His church throughout this nation.

– *Voice Of The Martyrs*

INDIA: Police Arrest Christian Protesters

POLICE in India's capital, New Delhi, have arrested hundreds of Christians demonstrating against a recent string of attacks on churches.

- Pray for the swift release of the Christians arrested during the demonstration.
- Pray that Christians in India will continue to make a stand for the Gospel and proclaim it boldly.
- Pray for the Christians affected that they will exemplify the love of God through consistent love and prayer for those who persecute them (Matthew 5:43-48).

– *Voice Of The Martyrs*

Grenade Attack in Northern Kenya Injures Eight

AT least one Christian was among eight people injured in a grenade attack in northern Kenya last week in an area where Somali Islamic extremists launched deadly anti-Christian attacks in December and November, sources said.

– *Michael Ireland, ASSIST News Service*

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e-mail: rlgmedia@ozemail.com.au

HELPFUL NEW COMMENTARY

1 & 2 KINGS, Lissa M. Wray Beal, Nottingham: IVP, 2014

THIS is a massive new commentary (600 pages plus) in the distinguished *Apollos Old Testament Commentary* series, published by IVP. Dr Wray Beal is Professor of Old Testament at Providence Theological Seminary in Canada. Her doctoral work was on the Jehu narrative in Kings.

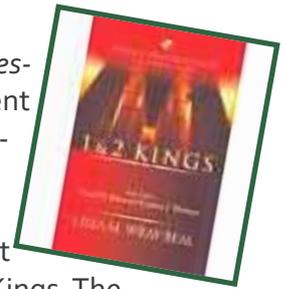
The commentary opens with a survey of the sad story of national and religious decline as recounted in Kings, but God's involvement and His promises mean that it is not a story without hope. The author is right to underline the historical character of 1 & 2 Kings. The commentary works with Edwin Thiele's mechanism of dealing with the (apparent) chronological discrepancies in the regnal data in the biblical text. She argues that its history is linked and points forward to Jesus Christ as the promised king in David's line. The Books of Kings provide a prophetic commentary on the events that cover the monarchical period in the Southern and Northern Kingdoms. Every king was to a greater or lesser extent a failure (exempting Hezekiah and Josiah), but we find in Christ the perfect King that God's people need. Without the New Testament, the Old Testament would be an unfinished story.

As the author shows, in Kings, David is used as a model of good governance and the law of Deuteronomy 17 is also a benchmark. The better kings sought to reform the religious life of the nation. How the book ends and its key themes suggest that it was written for God's people in exile, aiming to explain this tragedy and to give hope for the future. It is pleasing to see that the commentary also views the inspired text as having a message for the Church today.

There are 470 pages of detailed commentary. Dr Wray Beal is a valuable guide to mainstream evangelical interpretation on Kings, and this is one of the most substantial evangelical commentaries on Kings published in recent years. Despite its thoroughness, it is disappointing that no use is made of David Bostock's excellent study of the Hezekiah passages (Paternoster Monograph). This is a notable omission, for if he had been used, it might have tempered her (to my mind) unfair criticism of Hezekiah (2 Kings 20). This commentary is well worth purchasing and using. However, I must say that the author often simply reflects what people generally think key passages mean rather than giving them fresh scrutiny and reinvented interpretation.

— Greg Goswell

'Without the New Testament, the Old Testament would be an unfinished story.'



Boko Haram To Face Regional Force; Nigeria's Polls Postponed

AN 8,700-strong regional force is being formed to destroy Boko Haram. Comprising troops from Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Benin, the force's expected deployment is in March. Boko Haram has driven some 1.5 million Nigerians from their homes, with around one million in Maiduguri and some 155,000 in Niger, Chad and Cameroon where Boko Haram has escalated its attacks recently. The Nigerian elections have been postponed to 28 March and the Opposition is protesting vigorously. Concerns are that if opposition elements riot, then the insecurity will only benefit Boko Haram. Pray for the Church in Nigeria's mixed, volatile Middle Belt and for vulnerable Christian communities.

— Dr Elizabeth Kendal

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WITH CHRIST

Dr Dale Kietzman, Great Unsung Hero Of The Church, Passes On To His Reward

DR Dale Kietzman, one of the great unsung heroes of the Church, died peacefully in the early hours of Thursday, 12 February 2015, at his Pasadena, California, home, at the age of 90.

'Dr Dale,' as he was known to his many friends, played an incredible role in the global Church during the nine decades of his extraordinary life. He was the US director of Wycliffe Bible Translators, helped to start non-profits in the US for Brother Andrew, Corrie ten Boom, ASSIST Ministries, to name just a few, and up until his passing, had dedicated many years of his life helping the indigenous people of Latin America, in latter years through Latin American Indigenous Ministries (www.laim.org),

which he co-founded. Tim Aschmann, the son of Herman P. Aschmann, says, 'Dr Kietzman is a man who will be remembered for his dedication to help indigenous people to see and interpret God through the eyes of their own culture. His vision will continue. He was very vital in continuing my father's work.'

ARTHUR DEANE passed away peacefully on 2 January, aged 92. As a past principal of Sydney Missionary & Bible College his ministry had influenced many lives. One former student has written: 'He was a very gracious man, and a great Bible teacher.' Arthur also had a long association with Africa Evangelical Fellowship with whom he served as a member of the Australian Council, and also as International Director. For many years he also conducted a Bible devotion ministry on HOPE 103.2 radio in Sydney. His wife Phyllis went to be with the Lord in 2003. He is greatly missed by his children – John, Stephen, Geoff (SMBC Board Chairman) and Anne, his nine grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.

– John Freeman



Dan Wooding (left) with Dale Kietzman.

Dale Kietzman, born in Gary, Indiana, was a Wycliffe Bible translator in Peru and Brazil, helped to co-found Wycliffe Associates, and even has a university in Douala, Cameroon, named after him called The Dale Kietzman University (www.dkuniversity.org). In the early days of Wycliffe, he was in the first class at Summer Institute of Linguistics Jungle Camp in Chiapas, Mexico.

– Dan Wooding, Founder, ASSIST News Service

PART-TIME PASTOR NEEDED

Temora Baptist Church Is Seeking A Pastor For Three Days A Week.

Temora is a rural town of about 5,000 people (7,000 in the Shire). It is situated an hour's drive north of Wagga Wagga in the Riverina.

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What Do You Think Of The Government?

Romans 13.1-7

AUSTRALIA is probably the most cynical electorate in the world. We don't think highly of politics, politicians or government. Paul probably had every reason to share this attitude in Nero's Rome. Yet he says that authorities are established by God (v1), instituted by Him (v2), God's servants (v4, 6), and an agent of wrath (v4). Therefore, the believer is to submit to authorities (v1, 5), pay their taxes (v6) and give them appropriate respect (v7).

Paul could have used the word 'obey' instead of submit. By his use of this word we recognise that there is something voluntary and mutual in the relationship: the state has obligations and so do we. Unlike First Century Rome, we live in a democracy whereby every three or four years we vote for those who will govern us. Apathy and ignorance of politics can be subtle forms of rebellion against God. We are to vote intelligently, seek truth and make assessments based on biblical conviction and not be swept along by the media.

We can write to newspapers, lobby for the good, even join a political party! Christians have a variety of attitudes to government:

- Ignore them – we are not of this world or its political system.
- Total adherence – the government is equivalent to God.
- Overthrow the government – it is an agent of evil.
- Limited jurisdiction – recognising as does the Lord Jesus in Matthew 22 that the state and God have appropriate claims on us, but God's authority and claim must always have the priority.

FOR REFLECTION:

Compare the motivation of unbelievers and believers in their thinking about submission to authorities.

What extra dimension influences the believer in his/her thinking about government and the payment of taxes?

But here's a word of caution: by all means if you believe you can share the Gospel by joining a political party, do so, but don't idealise the party. All parties, like religious denominations, have something commendable about them but in the end they are all imperfect human groupings. God is a God of order and the authority is an instrument of such order. The party is an instrument of serving human need, just as the denomination is an instrument of serving the Gospel's broadcast. When either ceases to do that and so compromises you by turning you away from doing either, then it is time to leave, for we have a higher loyalty: to God and His purpose.



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Quotable Quote:

'We are not under the Law as a means of justification; we are under the Law as a rule of life.'

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– Terry L. Johnson
 – banneroftruth.org

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BOOKS WORTH READING

MARVELLOUS MELBOURNE AND SPIRITUAL POWER – A Christian Revival And Its Lasting Heritage, Will Renshaw, Acorn Press Ltd, PO Box 258, Moreland, Vic, 3058.

WILL Renshaw has done a wonderful job of meticulously researching and recording the history of evangelical church life in Melbourne. He has quoted countless historical documents, yet woven them all together in a very challenging and thought-provoking story.

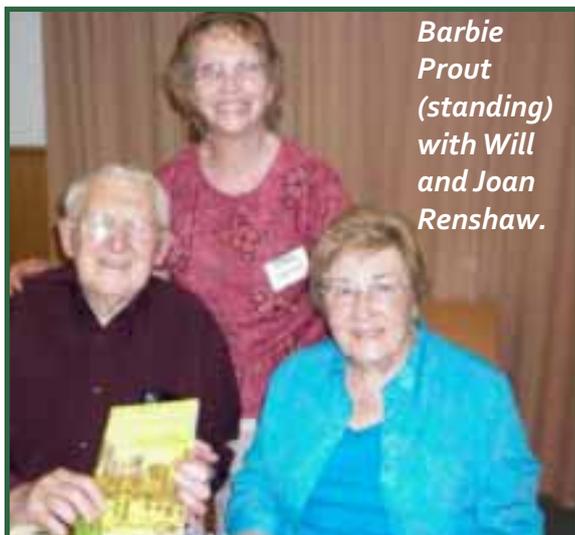
Few Christians today are aware of the tremendous spiritual heritage that is ours as Melbournians. The list of abbreviations (p. ix) is helpful to people not familiar with the initials and name changes of the many groups. For example, within four months of John Batman settling near the Yarra River, 28 year old Henry Reed (a Wesleyan Methodist lay-preacher) held the first church service, in 1835. That same year, John Pascoe Fawkner held a service to praise His Maker for the safe arrival of his family. The first church, a wooden hut, was erected in William St in 1836.

Melbourne's population grew to half a million in its first 50 years. The discovery of gold brought untold wealth and economic growth as well as greed and corruption. In 1889, Rev John MacNeil enlisted a band of ministers to pray for revival, culminating in the spiritual awakening of the early 20th Century. At the Torrey-Alexander Mission, (1902) held in the Exhibition Buildings, the weekly attendance was 250,000. Every home in Melbourne was visited twice.

Hervey Perceval Smith, a very influential businessman, and manager of The Federal Hotel, was converted at this time. He was greatly influenced by the Keswick Convention in England. He was a founding member of the Melbourne Gospel Crusade and opened up the entertaining rooms at The Federal for prayer meetings and Bible Studies. He was instrumental in forming the Upwey/Belgrave Heights Convention, Melbourne Bible Institute and *New Life Christian Newspaper*. As well as being on the board of many missions, he helped establish Keswick Book Depot, and edited *The Keswick Quarterly*. In 1926, after moving to the Victoria Coffee Palace, Little Collins St, he still made rooms available for Christian ministry. Weekly, he was involved in open-air preaching in the city and helped with the country van ministry. The day before he died, in 1947, he presided over lunch at The Lodge with the Belgrave Heights Council.

Will Renshaw's own family was at the forefront of this spiritual growth. It is amazing to read the extracts from the diary of Mary Anne Bedford, who sailed unaccompanied from Liverpool in 1864, aged 23, to marry her fiancé, David Renshaw. One of their children, David Ernest Renshaw, was a founding member of MGC and Upwey Convention.

Will Renshaw might be the oldest living attendee of the Upwey/Belgrave convention. He was carried in as a baby during the 1926-1927 Christmas Convention. The summer of 2015 was the 89th Summer Convention he had attended!



Barbie Prout (standing) with Will and Joan Renshaw.

I thank God for guiding Will in the writing of this book about the marvellous spiritual heritage of 'Marvelous Melbourne'. May we be challenged to pray for revival, hunger after holiness and the fullness of God's Spirit, as did the men in these pages.

Highly recommended, especially for those who love the ministry of Belgrave Heights Convention, Mission Interlink, *New Life* and the numerous other ministries that were founded in the early years of Melbourne, through the prayerful work of godly men.

– Barbie Prout ('Mrs DP')



'I thank God for guiding Will Renshaw in the writing of this book about the marvellous spiritual heritage of 'Marvelous Melbourne'.

May we be challenged to pray for revival, hunger after holiness and the fullness of God's Spirit, as did the men in these pages.'

'BELIEVE IT OR NOT'

'Uncomfortable' Students Call For Ban On Bibles

ABERYSTWYTH University students said the Bible made them feel 'uncomfortable', and Bibles could be removed from university halls of residence because they're 'inappropriate for a multicultural environment' (according to dailymail.co.uk 11 February 2015). Travelodge motel chain has also removed Bibles from its rooms, and Gideon Bibles have been banned from student halls by the University of Huddersfield and now students in Aberystwyth are pushing for thousands of Gideon Bibles to be removed from university accommodation. A poll conducted by the students' union claims that more than half of students felt that having the Bibles in university accommodation as a matter of course was 'uncomfortable' or 'unacceptable'.

Student John David Morgan raised the matter at a student council meeting that 50 people attended in January. He claimed that 'the inclusion of Bibles in university bedrooms is inappropriate in a multicultural university such as Aberystwyth.' He went on to say: 'It could be offensive for some, and the university should provide a safe space for students to explore and develop their beliefs in a neutral environment.'

New Lenten Study Book By Peter Jensen

DR Peter Jensen in his Lenten study book, *Power And Promise*, explores God's faithfulness and sovereignty from Adam to Abraham. The opening chapters of the Bible are a majestic introduction to God, His Word, and the world as we know it. In *Power And Promise*, the former Archbishop of Sydney marvels at the intricacies of the rich landscape that is Genesis 1-15. With 40 daily devotions and questions for group discussion and personal reflection, this book is an ideal resource for challenging Christian faith, devotion and obedience in the lead-up to Easter. For more information contact: Lauren Russell,
E: lauren.russell@youthworks.net | P: (02) 8268 3313.

A spokesman for The Christian Institute said: 'It is hard to imagine how a person could actually be offended by a Bible simply being in their room. The Gideons have been supplying Bibles free of charge for over a century now, providing support and encouragement for Christians and non-Christians alike. Banning the Bible because some people might be uncomfortable with it would be a huge overreaction. Students who feel uncomfortable having a Bible in their room could instead see this as an opportunity to try and engage with it. Local evangelical churches and the Christian Union will be only too happy to help them.'

If the motion at Aberystwyth University passes, all Bibles in university bedrooms will be removed at the end of the current academic year.

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TURN BACK THE BATTLE: Isaiah Speaks to Christians Today.

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

www.turnbackthebattle.com