

Urgent Prayer Requested For SAT-7 Egypt Team



ON Saturday 10 October, Officers from Egypt's Censorship Department came to the SAT-7 studios with a search warrant and removed items of equipment, including cameras and computers used for editing. The Office Director, Farid Samir, was detained for six hours but then released. He faces four charges relating to operating a satellite TV channel without the necessary licences, although the SAT-7 Egypt office is a program production facility and not a satellite broadcast centre for any of the SAT-7 channels.

A hearing was held on Sunday 11 October at the Public Prosecutor's Office, during which it became clear that all charges are based on a lack of and/or incorrect information. A decision will be taken by the Public Prosecutor in the next few days concerning whether this case will go to court.

In the meantime, the confiscated equipment remains in police custody and the normal activities of SAT-7 in Egypt are severely disrupted.

The work of SAT-7 Egypt is carried out under the legal umbrella of the Coptic Evangelical Church but its services are in support of all the church denominations in Egypt.

Though facing challenges, the SAT-7 team in Egypt remains encouraged by the love and support they have received at this difficult time. SAT-7 asks for your continued prayers. As Farid Samir has written: 'Please unite with us in prayer so that we can complete our ministry – one based on love and which aims to serve our beloved country [Egypt]'

Vladimir Putin Vows To Defend Christianity

THE representative of the Russian Orthodox Church has told Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin of the urgent situation Christians are facing around the world in persecution hot spots, and has asked him to use his power to aid their situations. *RT Online* reported that Metropolitan Hilarion, foreign relation chief of the Russian Orthodox Church presented evidence and statistics (to Russian President Vladimir Putin) that stated, 'Every five minutes one Christian is dying for his or her faith in some part of the world.'

Christians face persecution in many nations; from church demolition in Afghanistan and bombings of churches in Iraq, to the violence against Christians taking place in rebellious towns in Syria. After delivering the facts, Metropolitan Hilarion asked Putin to make protection and defence of Christianity around the globe a major part of his foreign policy.

As reported by *Interfax*, Putin replied, 'You needn't have any doubt that that's the way it will be,' assuring Hilarion that Russian foreign policy would defend Christians from persecution abroad.

Putin's recent actions seem to confirm his promise. Last week, Putin vetoed a UN motion calling for Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad to step down. Syrian Christians received this as good news. Assad is of the Alawite sect of Islam. Alawites and Christians are both religious minorities in Syria. Syrian Christians feel that sharing this minority status means Assad will provide them with protection. A Syrian Christian woman even told *The Global Post*, 'Thank God for Russia. Without Russia we are doomed.'

– Clara Morris, Christian Post Contributor, via NACL

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New Micah Australia Movement – Christians Unite In Prayer Vigils For Justice

HUNDREDS of Christians from churches across the country have gathered in prayer vigils last week to pray for our nation's leaders and Australia's contribution to a world without extreme poverty. Almost 200 participants of Micah Australia's annual *Voices For Justice* event (10-13 October) joined with Federal politicians and local Canberra Christians in a public candlelit prayer vigil on the lawns of Parliament House.

Leading the vigil prayers were Gregor Henderson, Former General Secretary and President of the Uniting Church in Australia; Bishop Stephen Pickard, Executive Director of the Australian Centre For Christianity and Culture, Lt Col Kelvin Alley, National Secretary of the Salvation Army, and Dr Graham Hill, Vice Principal of Morling College. They were joined by over 40 local churches and Christian groups across Australia from all major denominations who simultaneously cried out for God's work of peace, mercy, and justice in Australia and the wider community of nations.

'If we define advocacy as speaking to the powerful on behalf of the powerless, then prayer itself is a form of advocacy as we cry out from the depths of our hearts to the God of grace and justice,' said Ben Thurley, National Co-ordinator of Micah Australia. 'Having Christians around the country praying in this way sends a powerful message to politicians and reminds them that we hold politicians to their highest calling which is to work for the common good and to protect the rights of the poor and needy both within our borders and beyond,' he said.

This year's *Voices For Justice* event also marked the public launch of Micah Australia, the successor to the Micah Challenge campaign, which has equipped Christians over the past decade to help ensure Australia does its fair share to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Micah Australia is a coalition of church and Christian organisations from all denominations with a mission to gather, inspire and empower Australian Christians to raise a powerful voice for global justice and a world free from poverty.

According to Ben Thurley, the global picture relating to poverty and sustainable human development has changed dramatically over the past decade and it has never been a more important time for Christians to be intentional and strategic in prayer and action for justice.

'Over the past year we have seen the largest ever cuts to the Federal aid budget, and yet a few weeks ago Australia joined the international community in unanimously adopting the new Sustainable Development Goals to fight poverty, address inequality and build a more secure, prosperous and sustainable world by 2030,' Ben Thurley said.

Christians involved in the *Voices For Justice* lobbying event combined prayer with action this week by meeting with over 100 federal politicians in Parliament House to discuss ways Australia will support the new global goals by restoring Australia's aid program and increasing emission reduction targets to tackle climate change.

BANGLADESH: Danger Looms For The Church

IN 1947, India was partitioned and Pakistan was established as a homeland for Muslims. In 1971, Bengali-dominated secular-leaning East Pakistan secured independence from Punjabi and Pashto-dominated Islamic-leaning West Pakistan in a Liberation War that cost Bangladeshis up to three million lives. While Pakistan subsequently Islamised, Bangladesh progressed as a secular democracy. The population being 90% Muslim, Bangladesh was never going to be immune from the global trend of Islamic radicalisation. Since the 1980s, masses of Muslims have been radicalised through Bangladesh's vast networks of mosques and madrassas (Islamic schools).

On 7 Oct 2001 the US commenced post 9/11 bombing raids on Afghanistan from bases in Pakistan. Fundamentalist clerics portrayed the war as a War on Islam, fuelling rage. When Bangladeshis went to the polls later that month, they threw out the secular government and voted in the pro-Pakistan, pro-Islam, Bangladesh Nationalist Party, to rule in coalition with some very radical Islamic groups. The result has been polarisation as secularists struggle against a rising tide of Islamic zeal.

In August this year a pro-secular, anti-Islamist Bangladeshi blogger was hacked to death. It was the fourth such attack in six months. Ansar Bangla (also known as Ansarullah Bangla Team), a banned terrorist organisation that is alleged to have links to Islamic State, has claimed responsibility. On Monday 28 September an Italian aid worker, Cesare Tavella, was assassinated in Dhaka's diplomatic precinct. This veterinary surgeon had been working with the Dutch church-run charity OCCI, which works to improve hygiene and alleviate poverty and food insecurity in rural Bangladesh. Then on Saturday 3 October, Japanese farmer Kunio Hoshi (coincidentally, a recent convert to Islam) was assassinated in Mahiganj Village, Rangpur District, in northern Bangladesh. The assassinations were virtually identical in that the victim was shot multiple times at close range by two gunmen who were then whisked away by a third person on a motorbike. Islamic State has claimed responsibility for both assassinations, warning, 'There will continue to be a series of ongoing security operations against nationals of crusader coalition countries ... they will not have safety of a livelihood in Muslim lands.'

The government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is rejecting claims that IS has made inroads into Bangladesh, preferring to blame her political opposition in the BNP. This is even though in September 2014 a British man of Bangladeshi origin was arrested in Dhaka and charged with recruiting Bangladeshis for IS. More IS recruiters have been arrested this year, including Sakhawatul Kabir, who was subsequently identified as the IS regional commander of operations in Bangladesh. The February 2015 issue of *Dabiq*, official IS magazine, includes an article lambasting Japanese policy and exhorting 'soldiers and patrons of the Khilafah everywhere' to target 'Japanese citizens and interests - wherever they may be found.' If IS is indeed seeking to recruit and raise its profile in Bangladesh, then danger looms for the Church. Just as 'nationals of crusader coalition countries' are easy targets because they are easily identifiable, the same is true of Christians. Christians are already known to the radicalised masses, who despise them as infidels, kafir (unclean) and apostates deserving death, and they gather together in homes and easily identifiable churches. We must be vigilant in prayer for the Church in Bangladesh.

– Elizabeth Kendal

PLEASE PRAY THAT:

- the Lord of Hosts will surround and protect His precious people.
- the rule of law will prevail in Bangladesh; may there be unity – as distinct from politicisation or appeasement in the face of escalating Islamic violence and threat. Pray for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina (Awami League) and for the Opposition leader Khaleda Zia (BNP), 'the warring widows'.
- the God of salvation, the hope of all the Earth, will intervene in Bangladesh to 'still ... the tumult of the peoples.' (Psalm 65.5-8).

Serious Plight Of Christian Refugees In Germany

WITH up to 10,000 mostly Muslim migrants arriving each day, police are warning that tensions are soaring in Germany's massively over-crowded migrant centres. Islamic Law is being enforced, while violence and rape are endemic, much of it driven by racial and religious hatred and a culture of violence.

Christian refugees, who are particularly vulnerable, are being abused and threatened. The head of the German police union wants migrants separated according to race and faith before someone is killed.

The German government is resisting, wedded as it is to the idea of a multicultural utopia. While some politicians insist that distinguishing between migrants would go against Germany's values, others write it off as a logistical impossibility.

PLEASE PRAY for a change in policy, and that God will intervene on behalf of His people.

Aussie Church To Help Upgrade Remote Area Of Papua New Guinea

Hume Ridge Church of Christ, Toowoomba, is heading up an infrastructure project in Papua New Guinea to support a remote area of 170 villages with a population of approximately 20,000. They have plans in place to deliver the *Gandep Project* over the next four years.

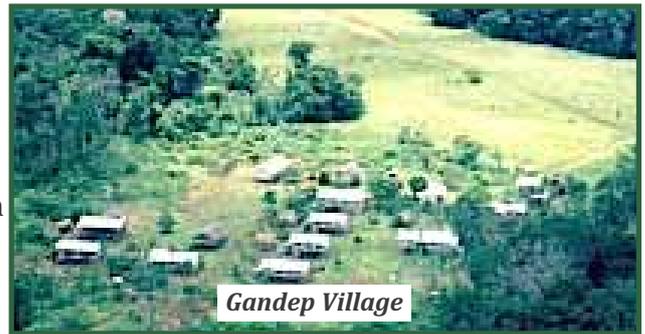
The project is being undertaken in consultation with PNG tribes and is aimed at supporting and improving their current lifestyle, providing improved access via air and road to support emergency, medical, educational and trade outcomes. Gandep (pronounced Garn-dep) is the name of a neutral, multi-tribal, community meeting point and trading post for the remote villages in central north PNG on the Ramu River.

Access to medical and education facilities is difficult, as local trade routes to Madang (a town of approximately 30,000) take up to three days to navigate each way and involve walking, canoeing and vehicle transport.

The Gandep project involves fundraising to purchase plant, machinery and materials to upgrade the airfield, construct two bridges and road approaches, and 15km of road. It will require approximately \$2 million and rely on many volunteers. \$500,000 has already been raised. The project is looking for trades people and labourers to join the volunteer team.

The Hume Ridge Church of Christ is also now inviting interested companies and individuals to make tax deductible contributions.

More information can be obtained from Jim West, the project leader, on 0428 661 130, and at <http://www.gandepproject.org> and www.facebook.com/GandepProject. – Stan Hunt.



Gandep Village

Daniela Ortiz Goes To LittWorld For Strategic Training

SPARKLIT (formerly SPCK Australia) has the opportunity to send promising publishing professionals to *LittWorld 2015*. At this unique gathering of emerging Christian publishers, they will receive strategic and intensive training. Daniela is the business manager for Christian publisher Certeza Argentina. At *LittWorld* she will acquire valuable skills and learn from the experience of other Christian publishers. In turn others will be encouraged by her ideas and insights. She will leave *LittWorld* as a member of a global family.

Where The Gospel Is Preached, Books Are Needed

‘When I saw how God uses books to change the lives of young people, I decided to devote myself to the production and distribution of good Christian literature. I want to make sure that God’s message reaches Spanish-speaking people through books that are biblical, engaging and practical’, Daniella says. ‘I have worked with Christian publisher and bookseller Certeza Argentina since I was a student. I now work full time and was recently appointed business manager. Over the years I have collaborated in every area of ministry. I know what the team needs to grow and operate with excellence.

The Big Picture

‘Participating in *LittWorld* will give me the opportunity to take time away from my daily concerns and pressures to refocus, review and evaluate my role. At *LittWorld* I will receive training that will impact my current and future work with Certeza Argentina. I expect to be inspired and encouraged by the people I meet.

Visit www.sparklit.org for further information.



PLEASE JOIN US

For

Open Doors’

Day Of Prayer For Syria

St Margaret’s

Presbyterian Church,

Cnr Hotham St/Denman Rd,

Balaclava,

2-4pm

Saturday 17 October

Hungarian Holocaust Survivor Comes To Faith

SUSANNA is 93-years old and has lived in Budapest all her life. She survived the Holocaust when, tragically, everyone else in her immediate Jewish family perished.

Now physically frail and confined to a wheelchair, Susanna's mind is still clear and she has a Christian friend who took her to Christian Witness To Israel's Israeli folk dancing evangelistic event.

Susanna enjoyed the music and testimonies but when team member Barbara told her of the love of Jesus and His promise of eternal life to those who repent and put their trust in him, Susanna gave her life to Him.

Please pray for Susanna and for those who are helping her to grow in her new-found faith in Jesus.

– *Christian Witness
To Israel*



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Contact: If you believe you are compatible with the mission of 96threeFM and have the requisite skills and experience for this role, please send your 1 page expression of interest and CV [email only], addressing the selection criteria, along with the names of at least two confidential referees to the attention of the General Manager; peter@96three.com.au

FAITH AND WORK:

How Are You Travelling? – Women Challenged At Belgrave Heights

How Are You Travelling? was the question asked by the speakers at the Belgrave Heights Tenth Women's Convention held on 12 September. Paper boats and suitcases were everywhere and a visual reminder of the theme.

Over 500 women plus a number of babies attended and went home with a greater understanding of how we can travel with God. Cathie Hillman shared from 2 Corinthians 3.12-18 on *What Is In Your Bag?* and encouraged us to clean out the baggage and to know freedom in Christ. Lisa Watson shared two sessions taken from the life of Paul: *It's All About The Journey*, from Acts 9, and *How Paul Came To Faith: Looking Forward, Looking Back* from Philippians 3, and the people he met along the way. MP3 and CDs are available from Belgrave Heights on these sessions from www.bhc.org.au



BH Auditorium – packed for the Tenth Women's Convention.

Electives dealt with issues that challenge women: *Travelling With God* – learning to hear God's voice – Cathie Hillman in a practical way showed how God speaks to us today and the ongoing results; *Travelling With Others* – Kara Martin had us thinking through integrating our faith and how that flows into our relationships with others (when people see us do they see Jesus?); *Travelling With Kids* – raising kids/parenting – Kate Ryan led an interactive workshop to help parents empower their children so they will be strong resilient young people with character and Godly wisdom; *Travelling With Depression And Anxiety* – Ali Burley and Helen Teifer led in very sensitively on this topic and shared a number of helpful resources that can bring change; *Travelling With Singleness* – Anthea McCall and Claire Bonner led this workshop and encouraged each lady no matter the stage of the journey they were on; *A Story Of Hope – Domestic Violence* – Zoe Broomfield, who led the counselling team that was available all day, shared the signs to look for and how to support women dealing with this issue.

The music team led by Laura McAllister did a great job lifting our hearts in praise and worship to God. Eunice Kim shared a powerful testimony of God's grace and His enabling in a dark place and her keyboard playing of *It Is Well With My Soul* was inspirational. Belgrave Heights looked great on a Spring Day and the facilities were excellent. Mark your calendars now for Saturday 10 September 2016. See you there.

– Kay Brown, Member, Belgrave Women's Convention Committee.

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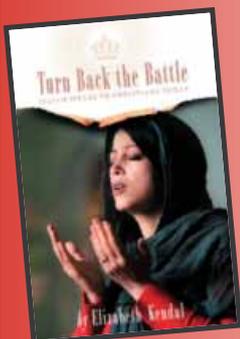
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Churches Call For Alcohol And Gambling Reform

NSW Premier Mike Baird announced recently that he opposes alcohol advertising appearing on the uniform of Australia's cricket team. 'Mr Baird has said that more should be done to address alcohol-fuelled violence, and he certainly seems to get things done,' NSW Council of Churches Public Affairs Director, Rev Rod Benson, says. 'His discussions with Cricket Australia appear to have resulted in the absence of alcohol-related advertising during the latest Big Bash competition. We hope similar gains can be made in other sports,' Mr Benson said.

The NSW Council of Churches strongly supports efforts to curb alcohol advertising on sport uniforms and in televised sports broadcasts. We support public health and harm minimisation measures aimed at reducing alcohol-fuelled violence, such as earlier pub closing times, lock-outs, and raising the legal drinking age.

The Council also endorses the findings of a recent wide-ranging NSW Legislative Council inquiry into the gambling industry, and has urged the NSW Government to press ahead and implement all of the recommendations contained in the inquiry report. The NSW Council of Churches believes that gambling regulations should be framed with the core goals of public health and harm minimisation. 'Laws and regulations relating to gambling should be crafted in the best interests of NSW citizens. Public interest must trump private profit. The time has come for action,' Mr Benson said.

'Hit-And-Miss' Abortion Drug Should Be Re-Examined By Health Minister

THE Tabbot Foundation's revelations that it can't keep up with demand for its over-the-phone service prescribing the abortion drug, raises concerns about women's health and that of unborn babies. The Australian Christian Lobby today renewed its call for Health Minister Susan Ley to intervene to stop over-the-phone prescriptions on the grounds the drug poses a risk to women's health. 'It also poisons unborn babies to death,' ACL Managing Director Lyle Shelton said.

In 2012, the Therapeutic Goods Administration told the Senate that of 832 women who took the drug since 2006, 599 required surgery to remove the poisoned unborn baby after it failed to produce a miscarriage. Mr Shelton said even the pro-abortion former head of the Australian Medical Association, Dr Andrew Pesce seemed to be urging caution in comments made recently to the ABC.

About 10 to 20% of women who have a medical abortion using mifepristone will not completely miscarry and require a subsequent surgical procedure. The last thing I want to see is women who've taken this pill end up with pain and bleeding and end up in an ED department in a busy hospital on a Saturday night needing to take several hours to get through a busy system which isn't part of an integrated care plan,' Dr Pesce said.

'There are known problems with this drug. I can't imagine why this was approved for use in the first place let alone being available over the phone without a doctor's consultation,' Mr Shelton said. 'While an unsupported pregnancy is an uncertain time for many women, talking to someone selling a potentially dangerous drug over the phone was no way to make a life-defining choice. Abortion is in the spotlight in the US due to the Planned Parenthood baby-parts-for-sale scandal, yet the industry here has gone completely the other way and launched over-the-phone sales of a pill for killing unborn babies.'

Mr Shelton was also concerned that many women report being pressured into abortion by male partners who do not want the responsibility of raising their child. 'Is it possible a male could be holding the phone to the ear of a woman, coercing her outside the privacy of a doctor's surgery, into terminating the life of his child?'



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Annual Reformation Day Service

Sunday 25 October 2015

at 3.30pm

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

Speaker: Rev Botros Botrosdief

Sermon: *Why We Celebrate Reformation Day*

Rev Botros Botrosdief is the pastor of Mayfield (Mernda) & Whittlesea Presbyterian Churches – Both the English and Arabic congregations.

Rev Botros is from Egypt.

Please Note: The Italian Fiesta is held in Lygon St, Carlton, on the same day. We suggest you park away from the church, near a bus stop or station and take public transport to the city.

Melbourne Central Station is the closest station to the church.

Parking will be very limited in Carlton area.

He Will Be Assisted By:

The Choir of the GRII Indonesian Church,
Lygon St, Carlton.

Enquiries:

Victorian Protestant Federation,

Phone: (03) 9329 8483.

CELEBRATING GOD'S BLESSINGS ...



Samaritan's Purse, the international aid organisation founded by Evangelist Franklin Graham, celebrated its 20th Anniversary in Australia and New Zealand in September. Graeme Pearson, Chair of Samaritan's Purse in Australia and New Zealand writes:

WHAT a time of blessing the past 20 years has been! *Operation Christmas Child* was our first and still is our largest program. My wife, Bette and I had the privilege of starting the program in Victoria. We had just retired from our business roles and decided that processing shoeboxes in our garage would be a great way to start the next season of our lives. So in 1996 we processed 1,500 gift-filled shoeboxes in our home, and Bette handwrote thank you notes and receipts to each box donor.

Since 1996, Samaritan's Purse Australia and New Zealand has supplied 3,700,876 shoeboxes filled with gifts to children who may never have received a gift in their lives. What a joy for the receivers and, of course, the givers. More recently, many children who receive shoeboxes are also invited to attend *The Greatest Journey*, a 12-week discipleship program that teaches them about Jesus and the Christian faith. It is thrilling to note that a majority of students finish the course and approximately 30% accept Jesus as their Saviour. This has led us to build churches and train leaders.

In the early 2000s, Samaritan's Purse started development projects so we could meet the physical, emotional, economic and spiritual needs of victims of war, famine, natural disaster, poverty and disease with the aim of demonstrating God's love and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. These projects have provided education, health and nutrition services, clean water and sanitation, assistance for people at risk, and animals and agriculture livelihoods.

More recently, we have resourced a Disaster Relief program where we respond to domestic and international disasters and help people to rebuild their lives. The journey of Samaritan's Purse over the last 20 years has seen remarkable outcomes, but none of it could be achieved without thousands of dedicated volunteers and supporters who give so generously of their time and finances. We praise God for their faithfulness over so many years.

As we embark on the next 20-year journey, we do so knowing we have highly effective programs in place, and support from donors and staff, to continue to provide life-changing outcomes for each person in desperate need whom we meet. Do keep praying for and supporting Samaritan's Purse!

Go to <https://www.samaritanspurse.org.au> for further information.

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BSB: 033-112; A/c No: 16-8239 (Please also notify us by email).



Busy Time Ahead For Mike Raiter

MIKE Raiter, Director of Centre For Biblical Preaching, reports that he is having a busy October, which began with 'CV', an annual conference for people, young and old, who are considering full-time ministry.

This was followed by three weeks in Malaysia in partnership with *Our Daily Bread Ministries* conducting Preaching Workshops and speaking at evening Bible conventions. ODB have recently published Mike's daily devotional on *Colossians, Growing Strong In Christ* then he will return to Malaysian Bible Seminary for a three-day preaching intensive. All these workshops will be on *Preaching The Sermon On The Mount*. During Mike's time in Malaysia he will also speak over a weekend at the Evangelical Free Church in Kuala Lumpur on Romans 9-11 as part of their Missions Month.

To receive Mike's regular prayer letters go to: jsugars@cbp.org.au

ACL Concerned At Visa Denial To Anti-Abortion Campaigner

THE Australian Christian Lobby has expressed concern that the Turnbull Government acted hastily at the request of the abortion lobby to deny a visa to an American pro-life advocate.

ACL Managing Director Lyle Shelton said extensive media coverage has not revealed evidence of Mr Newman acting violently or inciting violence. 'There are many people in public life who have written or said things decades ago they now regret. Despite his wrong-headed view expressed 15 years ago, it appears Mr Newman's record as a respected pro-life advocate since then has been exemplary, with no evidence he has resorted to or incited violence.

Mr Shelton was concerned that the campaign to bar Mr Newman from Australia was instigated by Terri Butler, MP, who is a member of the pro-abortion group Emily's List through which, Mr Shelton says, she receives campaign money because of her pro-abortion views.

'That is fair enough in a free society, but it is a relevant motivating factor in her campaign to stop Mr Newman from speaking in Australia and the public should be allowed to know this, Mr Shelton said. Mr Newman is a board member of the Centre for Medical Progress which exposed US abortion provider Planned Parenthood's sale of dismembered unborn baby parts.

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Hindu Extremists Focus On Christian Influence In Nepal

CHRISTIANS are being blamed for 'corrupting the country,' according to a smear campaign by a radical Hindu group in Nepal. Todd Nettleton, spokesman for the Voice of the Martyrs USA, explains, 'Christianity is seen as a foreign religion. "This is something that the foreigners brought. This is undermining our nation. It's undermining our culture." So the radical Hindus in Nepal paint that picture and push that agenda.'

At the heart of the issue, the Constituent Assembly drafted a new Constitution and rejected a proposal to revert to a Hindu state, declaring that Nepal was a secular state. That announcement was met with outrage and violence from Hindu nationalists. Nettleton recounts the most obvious signs of ire. 'Two churches were bombed. Thankfully, the bombs exploded late at night. Nobody was there. Nobody got hurt. [In] the third church, a bomb was planted, but it didn't explode.' Both churches suffered structural damage. Regarding the third bomb, however, 'The police came and took it to the police station, and unfortunately, it exploded in the police station. A policeman was badly injured in that.'

Nettleton adds, 'I think the fact that one of these bombs exploded in a police station and not in a church raised the attention level and perhaps raised the intensity level of police to perhaps find the culprit(s).' Nettleton confirms there have been arrests made in connection with the bombings in Nepal's Jhapa district. However, he asks, 'Did they get the right people? How seriously are they going to pursue this, taking them to trial and making sure that justice is done?'



*One of the churches bombed.
(Photo courtesy VOM USA)*

EGYPT – Bishoy Boulous Left Off Prisoner Pardon List

PLEASE pray for Christian prisoner of faith Bishoy Armia Boulous who remains behind bars, even after the Egyptian Government released 100 prisoners in an amnesty. Among those officially pardoned by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi were two Al Jazeera journalists jailed after reporting unrest in 2013. Bishoy was detained for reporting attacks on churches in Upper Egypt but has now served his sentence; he should have been released in May.

Bishoy has also been charged with 'blasphemy' over his attempt to change his religious status on his ID card. His lawyer asserts that the time allotted for investigations into this charge has elapsed, and has filed a formal complaint with Egypt's attorney general about Bishoy's ill treatment and continued detention.

Bishoy was raised as a Muslim and is also known by his former name, Mohamed Hegazy. He was arrested in December 2013 in Minya during a period of anti-Christian violence there. The security service claimed he was working for The Way TV, a US-based TV channel.

Please pray for Bishoy's release. Pray that he and his wife and children will know the Lord as their stronghold (Nahum 1.7). *– Release International*

PAKISTAN – Top Military Officials Warn Christians Of Islamist Terror Plans

LIFT up in prayer Christians across Pakistan as the threat of targeted anti-Christian terrorist attacks surges to a new level. Senior officials in Pakistan's military and government have told Christian leaders to take extra precautions after jihadi groups, some with links to Islamic State, threatened to attack believers in churches, schools and hospitals. One pastor was told

that he should no longer take his routine morning and evening walks, and others were cautioned not to meet with unknown parties. Pakistani Taliban splinter groups which claim to have made alliances with the leader of IS, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, are making targeted plots aimed at Pakistan's tiny Christian minority, say authorities. The threat of attack is particularly high in Pakistan's north-western Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region, which borders Afghanistan.

In June, Jundallah (the group that claimed it was behind the devastating twin suicide Peshawar church bombing in 2013) announced that its militants 'will attack kafir Shiites, Ismailis and Christians.'

Police officials rarely stand up for Christians; instead, they are often complicit in anti-Christian attacks. But Pakistan's beleaguered Christian community is hoping that the military will step in to protect them in the face of the heightened threat.

– Barnabas Fund.

BANGLADESH: Pastor Survives Knife Attack In His Own Home

THREE men pretending they wanted to learn about Christianity attacked a Bangladeshi pastor in his home with a knife on 5 October. Pastor Luke Sarker, aged 52, survived the attack with minor injuries, but in separate attacks, two foreigners were killed last week by suspected Islamist jihadists.

INDIA: Evangelists Arrested And Accused Under Anti-Conversion Law

THREE Indian evangelists were arrested on Saturday (3 October) in Satna district, in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh, accused of violating the state's anti-conversion law after Hindu nationalists stirred up trouble when the evangelists were invited to Motawa village by a local Christian to show a film.

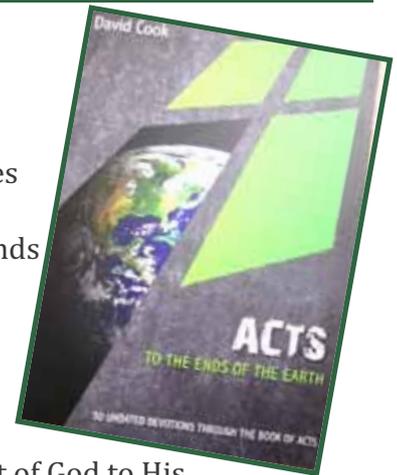
Facing A Task Unfinished ...

READ ACTS 1.1–11

THE opening two verses here are very similar to Luke’s introduction to his *Gospel* (Luke 1.1–4). Both verses are addressed to Theophilus and *Acts* takes up where the *Gospel* left off, that is, with the resurrection of Jesus.

In vv.4-8, Luke records Jesus’ final words to His disciples before He ascends to His Father. The disciples’ question of v.6 is a natural one. As resurrected Messiah, will Jesus now bring down the curtain of history, restore Israel to her rightful place and reign over all creation? Jesus makes it clear that before this happens, there is more to be done, but it is not merely human work, it is Spirit-empowered witness.

So they are to wait (v.4) and they will receive power (v.8) – this is the gift of God to His people of which John was speaking (v.5) – the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The effect of this baptism is that the Holy Spirit will enable the Church in its witness. Our witness today is one part of a two-part witness. We witness. but as we do, the Holy Spirit also witnesses with us (see John 15.26,27).



Jesus then ascends to the right hand of the Father (v.9). The proof of this, says Peter, is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2.32,33). The disciples are reminded that just as Jesus has gone up, so He will come down. These heavenly messengers, similar to those who announced the resurrection (Luke 24.4), also now remind the church that there is a limited time to work, until Jesus returns (vv.10,11).

Jesus spoke of His ascension in Luke 22.69. His resurrection was the means to His ascension, and His ascension means His total exaltation to the right hand of God where He intercedes for us (Romans 8.34). He now occupies the highest place (Philippians 2.9), He bestows gifts to His people (Ephesians 4.11) and from the place of exaltation He will return in triumph to bring in the new Heaven and the new Earth.

It is little wonder that Paul encourages us to set our hearts and minds on the things above where Christ is seated at God’s right hand (Colossians 3.1–3).

FOR REFLECTION:

THINK of the ways that Christ’s ascension can be a source of blessing for you.

What is He doing at the Father’s right hand?

What do you think the ascension meant to the Lord Jesus?

What are you to be doing with the gifts He has given you until he returns?

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Quotable Quote:

DOCTRINE IS NOT JUST A BUNDLE OF THE CHURCH’S OWN IDEAS, THOUGHTS, AND DREAMS ABOUT GOD, BUT IS A DECLARING OF WHAT GOD HIMSELF HAS SHOWN AND TOLD US.

JIPacker.com

Seen On Facebook:

“TO KNOW JESUS IS THE SHORTEST DESCRIPTION OF TRUE GRACE; TO KNOW HIM BETTER IS THE SUREST MARK OF GROWTH IN GRACE; TO KNOW HIM PERFECTLY IS ETERNAL LIFE.”

— JOHN NEWTON

NEWTON ON THE CHRISTIAN LIFE BY TONY REINKE

HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE

Calls To Ban Christian Groups In Wake Of Islamist Terror Are Misguided – ACL

CALLS to ban Christian prayer groups and chaplains from government schools in the wake of the Islamist-inspired terrorist killing of Parramatta police finance worker Curtis Cheng are a knee-jerk reaction and risk throwing the baby out with the bath water. Australian Christian Lobby Managing Director Lyle Shelton said there is no evidence that the religion of Jesus, who told His followers to 'love your enemies', is causing violence in the Australian community.

'It is quite bizarre to suggest that Christian prayer groups and chaplains be banned from schools in the wake of Islamist terror,' Mr Shelton said. He is concerned that some people with an anti-religious agenda were using the tragedy to push that agenda.

'The school chaplaincy program is very popular in school communities around the nation and complements the great work of existing school-based professional counsellors,' he said. 'At a time when young people are vulnerable to radicalisation, surely it makes sense to have people in schools modelling Jesus' injunction to 'do good to those who hate you. This kind of support and role-modelling is part of the answer to violence and extremism.'

Mr Shelton said Christians understood this was a difficult time for the millions of Australian Muslims who also reject violence.

Life@Work Annual Conference

It is just two weeks until Melbourne Bible Forum's annual conference for Christians in the workplace – two nights aimed at encouraging and empowering them in their workplace life and witness, Wednesday and Thursday, 28, 29 October. All the details plus registration can be found at:

lifeatwork.org.au/conference

Pastors Conference

CITY Bible Forum is also holding a Pastor's Conference on Thursday 29 October 29 from 10am-4pm at the Metropolitan Hotel, 263 William St, Melbourne. The cost, including food and drinks is \$70.

New Christian Democratic Party

State Manager

THE Hon Rev Fred Nile, Hon Paul Green and Rev Dr Ross Clifford are pleased to announce the appointment of Greg Bondar as the new State Manager of the Christian Democratic Party, who will be based in CDP's head office in Parramatta. Greg Bondar has been CEO of various national and international Not-for-Profit organisations and was a senior adviser to the Minister for Transport and Regional Development in Canberra from 1996-1998 in the first term Howard Government.

Greg is a committed Christian, who brings political, corporate, and Not-for-Profit experience and knowledge to the role of State Manager. His extensive ministry work includes active participation as Parish Councillor, Hospitality Ministry Leader, Leader of the Annual Men's Retreat, Leader of the Men's Home Group, and former Anglican SYNOD Representative from St Martins Anglican Church, Blakehurst.

Knowing J.I. Packer – In His Own Words

J. I. Packer stands as one of the greatest theologians of the 20th Century. Ever since the publication of *Knowing God*, an international best seller, Packer has exerted a steady influence on contemporary evangelicalism.

In honour of his life and legacy, Crossway is producing a short video documentary entitled *J. I. Packer: In His Own Words*, that will premiere on Tuesday, 3 November, accessible free-of-charge at JIPacker.com

There you'll also find other videos featuring Packer discussing timely topics related to the Christian life, including *The Nature Of Saving Faith*, *The Importance Of The Church*, *The Centrality Of Sound Doctrine*, and *The Person Of The Holy Spirit*.

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 –



BOOKS WORTH READING

PURE JOY: Rediscover Your Conscience, Christopher Ash, Nottingham: IVP, 2012. ISBN 978-1-84474-585-2

'DO you know the joy of a clear conscience?' This is the opening question asked by Christopher Ash, who works for Proclamation Trust as the Director of the Cornhill Training Course, writing about the joy of a clear conscience in everyday living and on the day of death. This is a neglected topic and has not had this kind of popular but serious Christian treatment since O. Hallesby's, *Conscience* (1933). Perhaps we steer away from this topic due to a fear of falling into moralising, but Christopher Ash gives all he says about the conscience a solid Gospel basis. Each chapter in this practical book has 'real life' examples to illustrate the points he makes.

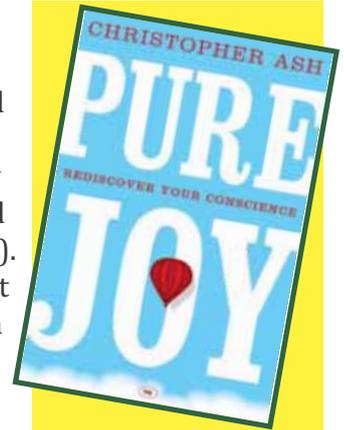
Ash starts by helping us understand what the conscience is, namely an inner voice that is unreliable but at the same time indispensable. It is the moral self-awareness that approves or condemns our actions, words and thoughts. It is a God-given moral umpire, though not infallible and so it cannot be simply equated with the voice of God. However, God in the Bible appeals to our conscience, a faculty that is part of the image of God in every one of us. Ash reminds us of 1 Corinthians 4.1-5, where it is plain by what Paul says that a clear conscience does not necessarily mean that we are in the right, for since humanity's fall into sin, 'our inner moral wiring is full of wrong connections' (p.33). That is the importance of the Bible. Every time we read it, we are re-educating and recalibrating our conscience, for we have the opposite problems of the hardened conscience and false guilt. Scripture is the only reliable guide to truth, but it is never right to go against our conscience or to pressure someone else to do so.

'A guilty conscience casts a long shadow', and Ash provides a detailed analysis of how this works, with a nagging conscience not letting us forget, making us want to hide, making us restless and so on. In fact, a guilty conscience is the worse affliction a person can have. On the other hand, an awakened conscience, a new sensitivity to and horror of, is a good sign and the start of the process of conversion. It is 'godly sorrow' that leads to repentance and life, as the repentant person recognises that the root problem lies in a broken relationship with God and that they are a sinner by nature, not just that they happen to do wrong things.

The importance of all this, Christopher Ash says, is that the Gospel begins with the pain of an awakened conscience, and so faithful preaching must seek to convict people of sin and stir up the workings of conscience. Otherwise preaching will just swell heads and turn those who listen to preaching into Pharisees. Ultimately, of course, a stirred conscience is the work of God's Spirit.

The persistent rejection of conscience leads to 'hardness of heart', and Ash gives a frightening description of the pathological process by which this happens. It makes chilling reading! He also exposes some of the diabolically clever ways we try to deaden an annoying conscience. The right time to repent is always now! The only thing that can make us happy is a completely clear conscience, and that is only possible through the work of Jesus, and Christopher Ash uses the book of *Hebrews* to good effect in explaining how this works. It is to the cross we must go (and go again) to appropriate for ourselves what Christ has done in bearing our sin. 'We go on in the Christian life by daily acts of repentance and faith', and Ash has some wise words of counsel about how that is done. It is the combination of good theology and pastoral wisdom that makes this such a good book. Realism and sage advice (all based on Scripture) are the marks of this helpful book that will assist its readers (if we are honest with ourselves and follow his advice) to gain a clear conscience and keep a tender conscience.

– Greg Goswell



'It is the combination of good theology and pastoral wisdom that makes this such a good book.'

'Realism and sage advice, all based on Scripture, are the marks of this helpful book that will assist its readers ... to gain a clear conscience and keep a tender conscience.'