

CMI-AID Expands Work In Moldova

CHRISTIAN Mission International is an Australian mission working in former Communist countries under the leadership of Matthew Hillier. Their latest project is the setting up of Bethesda Christian welfare and outreach centre in Moldova. First they acquired a disused building, then drew up plans to develop it into a multifaceted ministry of welfare tethered to evangelism.

Matthew reports: 'In early December we expect to open Stage One of the Bethesda Centre. This includes the Sydney Café, the Children's Centre, Teachers Resource Centre and various ministry offices and worker facilities.



Bethesda Centre, Moldova – Artist's impression.

'The ground floor of the building will also be used for the Christmas outreach program, *The Story Of Christmas*. We expect Stage Two, which incorporates the Bethesda Medical Clinic, Dentist, Optometrist and main Bethesda Nursing Home, to open in the first half of 2016.

'We give thanks to the Lord for His wonderful provision which has allowed so much to be done on the Centre. Pray that it will be a useful tool to reach out to many in the community.

Why 'Sydney Café'?

Some may ask why a Christian Café and Bookshop in Moldova is called *Sydney Café*! This is a very valid question. In looking for a name for the Café we went through every possible biblical name that we could think of. We were looking for something that was the same in Romanian, Russian and English (like 'Bethesda' is) and to which a clear Gospel theme could be attached. We also looked for a name which would be easily remembered and identifiable with something, or a place, that everyone knows. We looked at words like 'grace' and 'hope' but these did not work. Words like 'eternity' were not suitable either.

So then we thought of places which are well known and to which a clear Gospel story is attached. After considering these things we agreed on 'Sydney' and the story of Arthur Stace. After hearing this story in Australia, one of our workers, Sergey, used it several times in Gospel work and found that people could identify with it because Arthur Stace was an alcoholic and poor – both things that people know well in Eastern Europe. And, of course, Sydney they know of, too. Most people in Moldova are religious and believe there is an eternity; the challenge in the Sydney Café message will be: 'Where will you spend Eternity?'. The story of Arthur Stace will be presented throughout the café, even with his copperplate 'Eternity' printed on the coffee cups!

For more information go to: www.cmiaid.org

VOLUME 78 NUMBER 11

ISSUE DATE:

1 December 2015

FILE: NL 2015-12-01

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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‘Only Christian Faith Will Save Europe’

ONLY Christianity can save Europe from the radical Islamists threatening it. This is the message retired Anglican Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali has for those who believe the answer to preventing more Islamic terrorism is promoting secular values.

Bishop Nazir-Ali, a convert from Islam himself, who is originally from Pakistan, and now works on behalf of persecuted Christians worldwide, writes in *The Catholic Herald* that there are points of similarity between the secular states of Europe today and the fractured Roman Empire when it was sacked by barbarians in the 5th Century.

‘The institutions, culture, achievements and values of Europe can most readily be understood with reference to the Judaeo-Christian tradition, its teaching on the value of the person, the common good and, most crucially, the necessity of self-criticism and renewal. This is the time to re-appropriate it, in its broadest sense, as the wellspring of our values, to celebrate it and to offer it to all people of goodwill as a basis for working together for an open but cohesive Europe,’ he wrote.

Though many historians have blamed Christianity for the fall of Rome because it challenged its secularism (which the historians say was a unifying force), Nazir-Ali contends Rome was never secular – it had ‘religions of the family, tribe, city or empire.’

All of these systems had different ideals and values. The invasions, however, occurred at a time where Christianity was beginning to unify the empire around shared ideals about life and faith and so, he writes, it was Christianity that saved western civilization in the Dark Ages following the destruction.

‘We have the same decadent and dilettante popular culture, where anything goes and ‘bread and circuses’ keep the population quiescent with a never-ending round of sports, entertainment and games of chance,’ Nazir-Ali writes. These things naturally lead to a cynical view of faith.

The answer, however, is faith – the Christian faith, he writes. ‘It is quite astonishing that some, instead of seeing Christianity as part of the answer to Europe’s predicament, are taking this opportunity to smear all religion by association, whatever the facts of history,’ Nazir-Ali writes.

‘The truth of the matter is that Europe needs to recover its grand narrative by which to live, by which to determine what is true, good and beneficial for its people. The nostrums of Marxism and Fascism have brought frightful suffering for its people. Now another totalitarian ideology threatens. A truly plural space can only be guaranteed by intrinsically Christian ideas of the dignity of the human person, respect for conscience, equality of persons and freedom not only to believe but to manifest our beliefs in the public space without discrimination against or violence to those who do not share them.

‘A truly plural space can only be guaranteed by intrinsically Christian ideas of the dignity of the human person, respect for conscience, equality of persons and freedom not only to believe but to manifest our beliefs in the public space, without discrimination against or violence to those who do not share them.

‘Instant self-gratification and endless entertainment will no more contribute to contemporary European survival than they did to ancient Roman survival. What is needed is an ethic of service, selflessness and sacrifice for the sake of the common good. Many will recognise this as the teaching of the Galilean Master, not of any paganism, ancient or modern, nor of any ideology, secular or religious.’

IRAN AND IRAQ: Pressure Mounts On Christians

IRAN: IMPRISONED FOR CHRIST

IRANIAN authorities first started harassing Maryam Naghash Zargaran (37) in February 2011, angered by her conversion to Christianity and her active involvement in Iran's house church movement. In early 2013 Maryam (also known as Nasim) was charged with 'Propaganda against the Islamic regime' and imprisoned for 19 days before being released on bail. In July 2013 the court pronounced Maryam guilty of waging an 'anti-security agenda to spread Christianity in Iran in order to pervert Iranian society from the way of truth [ie Islam]' and sentenced her to four years in Evin prison. Maryam suffers from a congenital heart condition and had surgery nine years ago for 'a hole in the heart'. Maryam's health has deteriorated significantly in prison. On 29 September 2013 she had to be hospitalised for urgent heart treatment. In late October 2015 she was granted medical leave again, but within days was ordered back to prison, mid-treatment. Maryam needs our prayers.

Middle East Concern reports that on 1 November security agents raided a house church in Varamin, south-east of Tehran, and arrested at least 13 of those present. The following day another Christian connected with the house church was arrested at his home in Tehran. MEC reports: 'Many of those arrested were formerly members of Emmanuel Protestant Church in Tehran, which was forced to stop its Farsi-language services in 2012, resulting in the formation of several informal house churches.' The condition and whereabouts of those arrested remains unknown. Family and friends are requesting prayer.

IRAQ: CHRISTIAN CHILDREN AT RISK

The Iraqi Parliament has moved to Islamise Iraq further with a new National Card law. According to Article 26.2 of the National Card law, '... children shall follow the religion of the converted parent to Islam.' In other words, if a Christian father decides to convert to Islam – say, to get a job or a second (Muslim) wife – then his children will be registered automatically as Muslims. Likewise, if a Christian mother – maybe a widow or divorcee – marries a Muslim man, then her children will automatically be registered as Muslims. Considering that Islamic law regards apostasy (leaving Islam) as a capital offence and obliges Muslim women to marry Muslim men, this move is significant. Christian children are at risk of losing their religious freedom purely because of a parent's decision. Christian and other religious minority MPs proposed the following amendment: 'Minors will keep their current religion until the completion of 18 years of age, when they have the right to choose their religion.' But this was rejected and on 27 October the law was passed in the Iraqi Parliament by a vote of 137 to 51. After the vote, religious minority MPs walked out of the chamber in protest.

On 6 November Chaldean Patriarch Louis Raphael I Sako met with Iraqi President Fouad Masoum who acknowledged that elements of the National Card law do conflict with the Iraqi Constitution and said he would try to seek a realistic solution. However, Article 2 of the Iraqi Constitution states: 'Islam is the official religion of the State and is a foundation source of legislation' and 'no law may be enacted that contradicts the established provisions of Islam ...' Because Iraq's laws must not contradict Islam – which defines religious freedom very differently from how the West defines it – and because Iraq is now more closely aligned to ascendant Iran than to the declining West, the prospects for a correction seem slight. Chaldean Bishop Rabban Al-Qas of Amadiyah and Zakho, a diocese in Iraqi Kurdistan, predicts that the new law will further accelerate the exodus of Christians. 'We are facing a genocide,' he said, 'in a country that knows only death and liberticidal laws.'

– Elizabeth Kendal, International Religious Liberty Analyst And Advocate;
Adjunct Research Fellow, Centre For The Study Of Islam And Other Faiths, Melbourne School Of Theology.

Please Pray That

- the presence of God's eternal and omnipresent Spirit will be palpable inside Iranian prisons – both to the believers and through the believers; may the Lord our Shepherd guide Iran's at-risk illegal house churches and the Lord of Hosts protect them;
- Jehovah Rapha, 'the Lord who heals you' (Exodus 15.26), will watch over, protect and preserve the lives of His precious, cross-bearing children in Iran and Iraq as they endure war, imprisonment, harsh conditions, displacement and separation from family and church friends because of the name of Jesus. Please pray especially for Maryam Naghash Zargaran – may the Lord uphold her;
- our sovereign God will intervene to protect and preserve Iraq's remnant Christians, especially vulnerable Christian children; may all wicked efforts to steal Christian children for Islam come to nothing. 'Let the little children come to Me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the Kingdom of Heaven.' (Matthew 19.14 ESV).

'Fear not, for I [the Lord] am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. Behold, all who are incensed against you shall be put to shame and confounded; those who strive against you shall be as nothing and shall perish.'
(Isaiah 41.10,11 ESV)

Gold Coast Church Wins State Planning Award

THE Planning Institute of Australia (QLD) has announced that the 2015 winner of their Wendy Chadwick Encouragement Award is the Gold Coast's CrossLife – a Baptist Church. CrossLife received the award for its Lakeside Community node in Stockland's Highland Reserve development in Upper Coomera, a key suburb in the Gold Coast northern growth corridor. The judges considered it demonstrated an innovative approach and has potential as a delivery model across Queensland, especially for communities where normal commercial approaches may not be sustainable.

Situated next to the central lake and parklands, Lakeside was opened in 2013, and includes a small community centre, child care centre, and small local retail tenancies proven to be socially adaptable and financially sustainable. Uses were carefully selected to complement each other, enhance the community they serve and provide the community facilities that are sometimes lacking in new housing estates.

The CrossLife Highland Reserve congregation meets weekly in the community centre and the church has an active role in the community through the *Young Discoverers* child care centre and supporting the businesses who serve the residents from the node. CrossLife worked for many years with Stockland and the GCCC northern growth corridor social infrastructure group to see this first community node come to fruition.

Matt Hunt, CrossLife Lead Pastor, says, 'Its great to see something we have worked towards for many years come to fruition for the betterment of the community. We are called as a church to serve the needs of our local communities, and we are thankful to the Gold Coast community and our partners to be able to do so.'

'Stockland sees Lakeside as a very successful model for the delivery of a community hub,' Gareth Richardson, Stockland Development Manager said. 'The key to this success is that CrossLife had an end-to-end design and delivery process where they drove the design process and remained operators of the facility, which now includes a cafe, convenience retail, child care and community meeting room.'

The award is a great encouragement for local efforts to invest in the community social infrastructure within the growing housing developments that dominate the Gold Coast.

New Bishop Of Tasmania Elected

THE Anglican Diocese of Tasmania has elected a new Bishop to replace recently retired Bishop John Harrower. Dr Richard Condie is presently Vicar of St Jude's Carlton, one of Melbourne's largest Anglican churches. He is also Archdeacon of Melbourne, and sits on a number of national boards including the Anglican Relief and Development Fund (Australia). He was previously a lecturer at Melbourne's Ridley College, Assistant Minister in Murwillumbah, NSW, and a research officer with the Queensland Police Department. Bishop Harrower retired in September after 15 years in the role. Dr Condie is expected to be commissioned as Bishop of Tasmania in the first half of 2016.

**Read: *Can The Theory Of Evolution Survive The Attack Of Science?*
by David Holden, at www.defenceofthefaith.org**



For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:23 NIV

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Whose leaf shall not wither - Psalm 1

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 1.30pm - Panel
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 - Salvation Army former editor On Fire
 Blogging - Dr Rowland Croucher
 - The Pastor's Pastor, John Mark Ministries
 Editing - Sheelagh Wegman
 - Editor, Tasmanian Anglican
 Platforms - Dr Bruce Redman
 - Salvation Army Head of Media
 * each 14 min / breakout 4 groups
 3.30pm - afternoon tea
 4.00pm - Vision — Bob Thomas
 4.20pm - Mark T — Planning for 2017 - 4.30pm close

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Sheelagh Wegman is a freelance editor dealing with a variety of publications including production of the Tasmanian Anglican magazine.



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Date

Saturday 16 April 2016
11.00am start - 4.30pm finish

Email RSVP

Tuesday 12 April 2016

Name, State, Publication,
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Rev Bob Thomas editor New Life and Dr Mark Tronson chair Well-Being Australia met in August 2015 to ponder a day to offer evangelicals the latest in "online" - the result is "One Day in Melbourne—Evangelicals Online" The day is industrial, the philosophy is gospel.



Bob



Mark

Draconian Law Would Ban Peaceful Speech

'THE passage of the Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (Safe Access Zones) Bill 2015 was a tragedy for this state,' FamilyVoice Victoria director Peter Stevens says of a law passed to prevent gatherings outside abortion clinics by pro-lifers seeking to persuade mothers to keep their babies. 'It is a draconian law. It contravenes a basic principle of the rule of law that there must be certainty, generality and equality. The opportunity for a citizen to know in advance whether an intended action is lawful or not is crucial for a free society. Arbitrary law, which leaves citizens uncertain about the legality of their actions, is the device exploited by tyrants to impose a reign of terror. At its core, legal certainty recognises the importance of human dignity and enables citizens to live autonomous lives in a community with mutual trust. Advice I have received indicates that peaceful pro-life communication could now be forbidden in every part of Melbourne,' he said. 'What kind of tyrannical monster has our parliament become?'

ACL Pressures Woolworths To Stop Profiting From Pokies

THE Australian Christian Lobby has backed calls made by the Alliance For Gambling Reform for the retail chain Woolworths to exit its damaging \$1 billion-plus pokie empire. As Woolworths directors faced shareholders at the company's annual general meeting, ACL managing director Lyle Shelton urged shareholders to pressure the company directors to exit the family-damaging gambling industry. 'It is time for Woolworths to exit the industry or support reforms proposed by the Australian Christian Lobby and the Alliance For Gambling Reform,' Mr Shelton said. 'Woolworths, which owns 96% of the gambling business AHL Group, is making an estimated \$1.2 billion dollars a year off the backs of the poorest Australians. I'm sure the average Australian would be shocked to realise that the grocer who puts food on the table for some families, takes it off others through their gambling profits.'

He said that Woolworths owns or operates approximately 12,000 electronic gaming machines through the ALH Group's 323 poker-machine pubs, in which it is the major shareholder. 'If Woolworths were serious about their "family friendly" direction, they should not involve themselves in the socially harmful pokie business,' Mr Shelton said.



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Spectacular Church Growth In India

CHRISTIANITY in India is growing faster than government leaders will admit, and the spiritual changes are reshaping a nation that has been identified with Hinduism for thousands of years, according to author and former editor of *Charisma News*.

J. Lee Grady says that what is most remarkable about the growth of Christianity in India is that the people spreading the Gospel most aggressively are not foreign missionaries but indigenous evangelists who have been stuck at the bottom of the oppressive caste system. For instance, Prasad, who is a Dalit, otherwise known as an 'untouchable,' defying his background, planted a church in a major city in southern India 20 years ago. Today he oversees more than 100 churches in his region, and he provides hot meals to 1,500 poor children every day at 20 feeding centres where the Gospel is served along with rice and vegetables. The cruel 'untouchable' label, that marks Dalits as outcasts who deserve to be at the bottom of the spiritual scale of human worth, was pinned on Prasad when he was growing up. Even though India supposedly outlawed the caste system years ago, Dalits still suffer horribly through social stigma, denial of education, bullying and discrimination in housing and jobs.

Mr Grady says that despite the continued oppression, a miracle is occurring in India that will shake the world in our lifetime. – Source: *Breaking Christian News*

Bishop Huggins Calls For New Gun Amnesty

THE Bishop of the North West Region in the Diocese of Melbourne has called on the Australian government to introduce a gun amnesty amid 'heightened fears of terrorist attacks and vastly increased gun crime in Australia.' Bishop Philip Huggins says that the 1998 Australian gun amnesty, which followed the Port Arthur massacre, was 'immensely successful' but that 'the number of guns in the community has been rising steadily' since then. He says one way to minimise the risk of a Paris massacre here is to gather the guns and destroy them. The alternative is a creeping fear, with the continued reports of gun violence. Bishop Huggins is calling on the Australian Government to receive the guns, then destroy them publicly to prevent them being corruptly re-circulated.

How To Make Your Christmas Giving Count For Eternity

MORE and more mission agencies and denominational mission departments are making it possible for their supporters to buy 'Christmas presents' aimed at helping folk in the various areas where those agencies are at work. Such Christmas presents help people to make a significant difference in the life of a native missionary and those who need to hear the good news of Jesus Christ with a simple, practical gift.

For example, Christian Aid Mission's Annual Christmas Gift Catalogue offers opportunities to help some of the poorest Christians in the world – those on the frontline of ministering to their own people. They need wells in Africa, livestock and dairy animals in Latin America, grain and blankets in Syria, Bibles in Ukraine, bicycles in Sri Lanka and buildings for worship in India – gifts that benefit whole communities, many yet without a witness for Jesus Christ.

Catalogue gifts also include coats, hats, gloves and shoes. Christian Aid says 100% of the gifts will go to the project designated. Christian Aid Mission is assisting more than 1,500 ministries in

more than 130 countries that are reaching the unreached for Christ.

Contact Christian Aid Mission or your own mission society to find out how your Christmas gift can count for eternity. –Source: *ANS*

God Still Opening Closed Doors

For Brother Andrew

FOR decades, a missionary known as Brother Andrew has had one mission – to bring the Gospel to some of the darkest places on Earth. In 1955 he made his first of many trips behind the Iron Curtain, delivering Bibles and encouraging the Church in the communist world. He became known as 'God's Smuggler'.

In a 2014 webcast hosted by his ministry Open Doors, Brother Andrew shared that in the 1970s he sensed communism was dying and a new evil was rising to take its place. Today, his ministry to the Persecuted Church stretches to 60 nations, and encourages Christians to reach the Muslim world. Brother Andrew still takes risks to preach the Gospel, having visited the leaders of groups like Hezbollah, Hamas and the Taliban, and he scoffs at being called courageous. 'I think we should be afraid **not** to be bold for Jesus,' he says.

HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE

All Martyn-Lloyd Jones Sermons Available FREE In MP3

THE MLJ Trust has announced that all 1,600 recorded sermons by Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones are available to download, at no cost, to anyone who wants to listen to them! There are no exceptions, so the *Ephesians* sermons, *Romans* sermons, etc will all be available. All one has to do is join the MLJ Library (membership is free) and start to download! Simply go to the newly updated site at <http://www.mljtrust.org> and click on *MLJ Library*.



The MLJ Recordings Trust, in existence for 30 years in God's grace, will become completely dependent, on the voluntary donations of brothers and sisters who feel called to support the ministry while downloading sermons. But, after much prayer and discussion, it was felt that as the world of low-cost distribution through the internet was now far-reaching enough that most people around the world (even in developing countries) can gain access to this ministry through a computer, and as many other ministries have had a positive experience shifting to a voluntary donation approach to on-line sermons, this change might be in accordance with God's will.

- Jonathan Catherwood

Beware False Media Reports

PASTOR Daniel Nalliah, National President of Rise Up Australia, reports that the Reclaim Australia Rallies held nationwide on 22 November were once again a great success with thousands attending the rallies across the country. He says that, contrary to the media reports, the rallies were very peaceful, except for some minor protests by the Left-wing socialists. 'Patriotic Aussies came carrying their Australian flags. It was so great to see them waving their flags and singing the National Anthem. There was not a smell of racism. Once again, a big thank you to the police who did a great job in keeping the socialist protesters, who were hell bent on disrupting the peaceful

Reclaim rallies, away from us.' Pastor Daniel Nalliah addressed the rally in Sydney and was very well received. Go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKrMCS-FaN3o> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fn2F5y3tSf0> for further details.

FEBC Australia Christmas Catalogue

FEBC, radio programs still bring good news of great joy to people who may otherwise never hear the eternal truth of Jesus Christ. You can help in their fine work through their new Christmas Catalogue for 2015 with eight gifts that can make an Eternal Impact to the lives of many. Go to: FEBC-OFFICE@febc.org.au for further details.

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GOOD NEWS FROM ABROAD

Assyrian Protestant Church In Turkey Re-opens After Six Decades

ONE of the oldest Protestant Churches in the Middle East has been reopened after sitting in ruins for nearly 60 years. The Mardin Protestant Church in Turkey has reopened for services, the first in 60 years. There is just a small population of Protestants, or Christians of any denomination, remaining in this part of Turkey, a region that a century ago was home to a substantial number of Christians. Photo: Learn more: <http://ow.ly/UMuRo>



Rev Ender Peker presides over the first religious service at the church in Mardin's Artuklu District.

LOGOS HOPE Brings Christian Hope To Myanmar

SAILING in to Myanmar ahead of the recent elections, the *Logos Hope* brought a wave of opportunity – from the ship's five millionth visitor to a special event for monks and nuns. Crew and staff were able to share knowledge, help and hope during the first visit of an Operation Mobilisation ship since the *Doulos* (now retired) in 2002.

The leader of OM's partner organisation in Myanmar, Rev Dr Go Chin Zam says thousands of people queued for hours just to meet the international crew and access the books on board. He says the book fair was full all the time, with shelves empty every night.

Just over 102,000 people visited the ship, and 124,195 books were purchased (of which almost 30,000 were Bibles or other Christian literature). More than 6,000 people attended programs on-board. One of these was a special event for around 100 monks and nuns from a Buddhist school who were invited on board to learn more about the purpose of the vessel and meet the crew and staff.

Logos Hope also sent out teams to visit orphanages and childcare centres for abandoned children in rural villages.

OM ships are well known for their work providing educational and Christian literature in ports around the world.

Ramon A Williams - Worldwide Photos -

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China Holding Secret Conference On Growth Of Christianity

CHINESE authorities have reportedly been hosting a secret conference in Beijing to discuss the rapid growth of Christianity in the country. Authorities have not publicly outlined the agenda of the event, called *The Sinicisation Of Christianity*, but it is expected government officials, leaders from state-sanctioned churches and academics will be attending.

There are thought to be more than 100 million Christians in China, with a growth of 7% every year. If this estimate is correct, this outstrips the Communist Party's membership of 87 million people. The Pew Research Centre in America has said China has 67 million Christians.

There are fears the *Sinicisation Of Christianity* conference will look to increase Communist government control on the Church in China. More than 1200 church crosses have been taken down, and other houses of worship completely demolished since 2013. This, and the detention of Christian human rights lawyer Zhang Kai since August, led to calls for UK Prime Minister David Cameron to challenge Chinese President Xi Jinping on religious persecution in his country when he made a state visit to the UK in October.

Currently, only state-sanctioned churches are permitted to exist in China, forcing millions of Christians to worship in house or underground churches. Dr Scott Pacey, the deputy director of the Chinese Policy Institute at the University of Nottingham, told Premier News Hour: 'They want to regulate [Christianity] to make sure that religion doesn't conflict with state goals. Christianity has experienced quite a lot of growth in China in recent decades. That growth is obviously something that will be of interest to them and something that they feel they need to keep an eye on. The underground churches are really expanding quite a lot.'

'In the 1980s when the regulations on religion were relaxed following the Cultural Revolution, there was a tremendous search for values that started to go on and this was a result of the disillusionment with Maoism. The rise of Christianity stems in part from that, but it's also a search for values in society when the totalistic worldview that existed before is now starting to change quite a lot.'

– Aaron James, *Premier Christian News*

UZBEKISTAN: Christians Fined, Bibles Seized

TEN Christians have been fined by a criminal court in Uzbekistan for meeting together without state permission. The court ordered that their confiscated Bibles and church songbooks be destroyed. In a separate incident, a believer in capital city Tashkent was bullied by police for carrying a Bible in his bag, and fined by a court. The same court also ordered that the believers' personal Bibles, Easter greetings cards, and church songbooks, all of which had been seized by Uzbek authorities, be destroyed.

The Christians had been meeting together without the required state registration when authorities raided their meeting on 26 April. They recorded the names of the believers, questioned them, and filmed the worship service, said Forum18. Children were also present at the meeting. The authorities filmed a man who said he was speaking on behalf of the Karshi City Education Department. The Church 'poisons the minds of the children and deprives them of their bright future,' he said. The head of the Karshi Education Department later confirmed to Forum18 that this man was unknown to them. Authorities again

raided a meeting on 2 August, asking why the Christians were continuing to meet. They promised court action would soon be taken.

– *barnabasfund.org*

KENYA: Christian On Run From Muslim Relatives

PLEASE pray for a brother in Christ in Kenya who has had to leave his family and flee his home for fear of being killed. Hassan Ali says his in-laws were among a group of men armed with knives who came to his door in Witu, Lamu County, earlier this month, demanding to see him. He escaped through a window when he heard the visitors questioning his wife about her faith. His wife and their children, aged seven and four, have been taken back to live with her relatives. Her parents are reportedly insisting the children attend a madrassa (Islamic school).

Hassan was raised as a Muslim but became a Christian about ten months ago. He believes that local Muslims may have noted his lack of attendance at the local mosque. Meanwhile, two weeks previously, Islamist extremists set fire to two church buildings in Tiribe near Mombasa on 30 October.

WITH CHRIST: Doris Elizabeth Pfeffer, a former staff member of Wycliffe, was promoted to Glory on 14 November 2015 aged 99 years. Doris and Arthur Pfeffer were missionaries at SIL Bible Translators in Ukarumpa PNG in the 1960s, where Arthur worked in the sawmill and Doris in the print shop. In Beaudesert Doris and Arthur had conducted three Sunday Schools in different districts each Sunday. While they had no children of their own they were fondly regarded as second parents by many. They were sent out from the Beaudesert Baptist Church.

Doris went to be with the Lord and to be reunited with her loved husband Arthur in the early hours of Saturday 14 November 2015. Arthur died 6 May 2004. Many were enriched spiritually by knowing them and would give thanks to God for them.

– Phillip Hohl

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Getting On With The Job

READ ACTS 2:1-13

PENTECOST (meaning ‘fifty’) was one of the three great festivals of **Judaism**; 50 days after the completion of the barley harvest, it was a time to give thanks to God for the completion of the harvest. Later, it came to commemorate the giving of the Law to Moses at Mt Sinai.

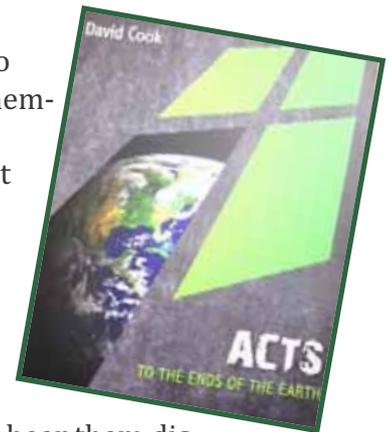
The Festival was all about fulfillment, completion and finality. It is most fitting then that the Holy Spirit should be poured out on the Church at this Festival. His coming is the evidence that Christ is risen and has ascended to God’s right hand; His work is now complete.

The coming of the Spirit is associated with the sound of wind (v.2, cf John 3.8) and the sight of fire (v.3, cf Exodus 3.2). The effect is that the 120 were filled with the Holy Spirit (v.4 cf Jeremiah 31.33, anticipating this day) and they speak in tongues, so that the different language groups of vv. 9–11 hear them disclosing the wonders of God in their own language. Luke records the range of responses – ‘bewilderment’ (v.6), ‘utterly amazed’ (v.7), ‘amazed and perplexed’ (v.12), and mockery (v.13).

We may argue about tongues here, but note that the recipients did not speak in inarticulate sounds. The word ‘tongue’ in v.6 translates the original word ‘dialect’ and is in parallel with v.11 when the word used is ‘glossa’ or tongue. The ideas are parallel—the ‘tongue’ here is a dialect; here are people speaking in dialects without having attended language school.

The focus of these verses is that God has come to live within His people and the immediate effect of this is the reversal of the scrambling of languages that occurred with the building of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11). The Holy Spirit has come upon the Church and He enables effective witness. He is the Spirit, after all, who Jesus said would empower for witness (Acts 1.8).

Matthew Henry says the significance of this event ‘is to dignify and so to distinguish these men as messengers from Heaven and therefore like Moses at the Burning Bush, the crowd will turn aside and see this great sight.’ Acts 1.22.



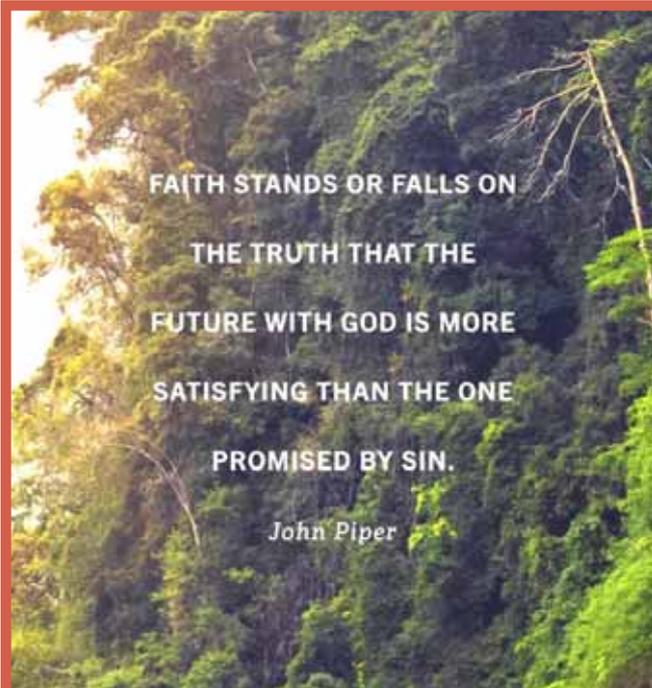
FOR REFLECTION:

HOW do you think the Holy Spirit helps you in your witness?

What do you think wind, fire and tongues might symbolise about the Holy Spirit’s ministry?

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BOOKS WORTH READING

INTRODUCING MAJOR THEOLOGIANS: From The Apostolic Fathers To The Twentieth Century, Michael Reeves, Nottingham: IVP, 2015. ISBN 978-1-78359-272-2.

MANY Christians are suspicious of theologians – not without some foundation in some cases – but the work of theologians when done faithfully and well is a power for good in the life of the Church, as this book serves to demonstrate. We join Michael Reeves, time-traveller, as he visits 13 plus major theologians over the last 20 centuries, culminating with J.I. Packer. In each case, there is a brief biography, followed by a quick jog through each theologian's major works, all with the aim of whetting our appetite to read them for ourselves. Finally, Reeves provides suggestions of how to get to know the theologian better and a timeline of the life and work of the one introduced.

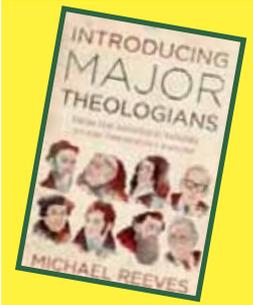
Reeves starts with the Apostolic Fathers (so-called) who were really post-apostolic. Certainly the inspiring story of Polycarp is well worth reading. We are introduced to the apologetic writings of Justin Martyr then Irenaeus in refuting the Gnostics and Marcion showed the continuity of the one divine plan of salvation that runs through Old Testament and New Testament. In a real sense, Irenaeus is the first to write 'biblical theology'. We meet Athanasius who was exiled five times for his faithful insistence on the full divinity of the Son of God.

Augustine is the fountainhead of Western theology, both Catholic and Reformed, for like most great men he could at times be profoundly wrong as well as profoundly right. Western theology is a footnote to Augustine. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, is a wonderful example of trying to think through the rational ground and structure of faith, believing that by his reason alone he could prove the existence of God and the truths of the Incarnation, Trinity and Atonement. No doubt he was over-confident of his reasoning powers, but he was right to think that the Christian Faith is rational. Thomas Aquinas sought to reason, not from first principles (as did Anselm), but from natural knowledge (for he was a disciple of the philosophy of Aristotle). Whatever we may think of the details of his theology, he is always crystal clear. That is true of great thinkers generally. It is the second-rate thinker who confuses hearers and readers!

The writings of Luther are always entertaining and provocative, as he tears down the theological edifice of the Roman Church and proclaims 'the theology of the cross', showing that God's gift of righteousness is received by faith and we make no contribution to our salvation. The much-maligned John Calvin is exonerated as a master exegete of Scripture, a faithful pastor (and no spiritual tyrant), a brilliant teacher of doctrine, and a humble Christian. As for Calvin's famous doctrine of election, it is really Augustine's, it is not the centre of his system of doctrine, and it is only used by Calvin as a pastoral comfort for believers like you and me.

The ponderous Puritan John Owen deserves a place in this volume, and his writings amount to a call for Christians to be Trinitarian in belief and practice, such that we worship, have fellowship with, and serve all three Divine Persons. Unfortunately, all that most people know about Jonathan Edwards is his (infamous?) sermon, *Sinners In The Hands Of An Angry God*, but he is now acknowledged as America's greatest theologian (and philosopher). His writings are marked by the extraordinary penetration of his thinking as he carries a train of thought to its ultimate conclusion (sometimes with amazing results!).

Schleiermacher set the tone for modern (liberal) theology, and his work will not be celebrated by readers of *New Life*. He argued that Christianity was not about doctrine but was a living expression of God in Christ. *(Continued on p.14)*



'The work of theologians when done faithfully and well is a power for good in the life of the Church, as this book serves to demonstrate'.

BOOKS WORTH READING

This, of course, is a false distinction – clearly it is both. He then tried to develop new doctrines out of God-consciousness, which, for him, was what religious experience is about. This is obviously not the way to go about things, however Schleiermacher explains the course of theology over the last 200 years. The application of Bible-believing Christians is not to sink into a ‘dead orthodoxy’ that provides an excuse for those who want to throw the bath out with the bath water.

For good or for ill, the theological scene in the Twentieth Century was dominated by Karl Barth, whose monumental (but unfinished) 13 volume *Church Dogmatics* is a preached theology and thoroughly Christ-centred. One does not have to be a Barthian to agree that a theology that cannot be preached is not worth believing.

Finally, it would not be possible to understand modern evangelicalism without a knowledge of J.I. Packer. He is a great ‘theologizer’, namely one who is adept at thinking and teaching about God. No-one has worked harder than Packer at giving theology a good name and putting it at the service of the Church worldwide. If this reviewer is allowed to give one final reminder, it is to note that Reeves wrote this book to whet our appetite to read these theologians for ourselves. ‘Take up and read!’

– Greg Goswell

CHRIST SET FORTH As The Cause Of Justification And As The Source Of Justifying Faith, Thomas Goodwin, The Banner Of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 2015 (First Printed 1642). ISBN 978-1-558-5.

CHRISTIANS are bidden in Hebrews 12.1,2 to ‘run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith ...’ (ESV). As we search the Scriptures to this end, men such as Thomas Goodwin come to our aid in setting Christ before us in all His risen power.

Living from 1600 to 1680, Goodwin was taught and influenced by such worthies as Richard Sibbes. A lecturer, preacher and pastor, he was a prominent member of the Westminster Assembly, a personal chaplain to Oliver Cromwell and President of Magdalen College, Oxford.

While the thoroughness of the Puritans can easily exhaust the modern reader, perseverance in reading them pays rich dividends for us in our personal spiritual growth in knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures, especially for those of us who have a responsibility to feed the flock of Christ. As Scott Berggren says in his *Foreword*: ‘(Here) is a guidebook for keeping one’s heart and faith pointed in the right direction, towards Christ Himself. In it Goodwin pushes aside anything that might displace Christ in one’s heart. In chapter after chapter he sets forth the glory of Christ and His work as Mediator as the only object of one’s faith and affection.’

No doubt the publishers have modernised and abridged the text to some extent from the original Elizabethan English in which it was written, but perhaps more work could be done in this regard. One of the tensions facing an editor is to balance the desire to let the author speak for himself on the one hand with the desire to help him along on the other, but I think that to bring a 17th Century author before a 21st Century reader, Thomas Goodwin could do with the same treatment that Banner has given to the likes of John Owen and William Gurnall.

That said, Thomas Goodwin is an important link in the chain of the Bible-believer’s Apostolic Succession, remembering John Knox’s assertion that we are in the Apostolic Succession in that we hold to the doctrines of the Apostles, and he remains one whose work abides and enriches the soil of faith in the heart and mind of the believer.

– Bob Thomas

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