

Pray For AFES In Their Active Campus Ministries

THERE are three things worth knowing about and praying for with the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students team at Deakin University (Burwood) Christian Union. We, and the students we support, would love your prayers for ...

1. O-Week (Orientation Week). A new university year means a new year for us. Our first big opportunity to connect with people on campus comes in O-Week. We had lots of conversations with students at our table – and met even more people going out with free watermelon and a one-question survey: ‘What is the first word that you think of when you hear the word “Jesus”?’ Someone from another university shared that, ‘I had a live report back from someone re Deakin Christian Union O-Week and they had said you definitely knew CU was about and she really appreciated the sign from CU welcoming students onto campus. Look forward to hearing what God does in the midst of all your faithful efforts there as a team of staff and students this week.’ This was an especially good time for us to meet first-year students – and some of them have connected well with Christian Union. Our prayer is that they will connect with Jesus, grow in Jesus and stand for Jesus.

2. Engage Groups. Engage Groups have launched for the year. Engage Groups seek to engage with God’s Word, engage with God’s world, and engage with one another. We aim to spend every two weeks reading the Bible together and then another week sharing this message together on campus. Our series for this trimester is: *The Weekend That Changed The World*. These six studies explore the true Easter story (from Mark’s Gospel). We read the whole story (Mark 14.1-16.8) and went out to survey lots of students to ask what



The Deakin (Burwood) AFES Team.



O-Week in full swing.

they think Easter is about – before sharing how this true story literally changed the world. Our prayer is that Christians and non-Christians on campus will understand what God did through Jesus’ cross and empty grave.

3. One-to-One Ministry. A large part of how we serve our students at Deakin is to read the Bible with them one-to-one. We thank God for the student leaders, most of our non-Christian students and others who are part of this. We have found one study particularly helpful recently: *Uncover*. These six studies from *Luke*, with simple but supremely important questions about Jesus, have been used in universities across the world (search for them on *Youtube* for uccf uncover stories). Our prayer is that the Word of God will continue to increase and multiply (Acts 12.24).

– Darren Hindle

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On Being 'In The World But Not Of The World'

THE Bible is a Book full of promises, 'exceeding great and precious promises', in fact, and Christians rejoice in them. But it is also a Book full of challenges, and Christians are called to live by them as they live for Christ in the world today.

James 4.3,4 delivers one of those challenges: 'When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred towards God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.'

Jesus said: 'No-one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.' (Matthew 6.24).

Paul wrote: 'Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.' (Colossians 3.1,2).

The Bible makes a clear-cut division between living with Jesus as Lord and living for the things of this world. There can be no middle ground. It is interesting that in his letter, James is addressing people who have already aligned themselves with Jesus – they were professing Christians. But he was warning them in the strongest possible terms against the danger of compromise – having a foot in both camps, wanting the best of both worlds. He calls this 'adultery', that is 'spiritual' adultery, and perhaps even worse, and more destructive, than the physical variety!

It is true that we are born in a state of enmity with God. But those who have put their trust in Jesus are aware of what God has done about this. As Paul said: 'For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life!' (Romans 5.10).

We are now in a new relationship with God. We are married to Christ; we are His 'Bride'. If at this point we want to flirt with the world we are choosing to become God's enemies again. For James, this is unthinkable.

So here's a challenge: how does our daily life, our prayer life, and the motives behind our prayers, stack up with all of this?

– Bruce Christian,

Chaplain, Sutherland Shire Christian School, Sydney

MATTERS FOR PRAYER:

TURKEY: Church Seizures Reflect Ottoman Policy

AWARE that the neo-Ottoman Islamist AKP government of Recep Tayyip Erdogan is unwilling to accept any outcome in Syria other than regime change, many analysts expect Turkey will move to escalate the Syrian war. Meanwhile, in Turkey it is already escalating its military campaign against the Kurds and its covert campaign against its remnant Armenian and Assyrian Christian communities. In a sense the Genocide never really ended, as Christians are still being driven out – albeit quietly – primarily by means of deprivations and threats. 'In some ways,' wrote political scientist Dr Elizabeth H Prodromou and historian Dr Alexandros K Kyrou, 'Ankara's policies against Turkey's Christian citizens have added a modern veneer and sophisticated brutality to Ottoman norms and practices. ... In the words of an anonymous Church hierarch in Turkey fearful for the life of his flock, "Christians in Turkey are an endangered species".'

The mostly Kurdish city of Diyarbakir (majority Christian just 100 years ago) has been heavily shelled, no area more so than the historic, World Heritage listed Sur district on Diyarbakir's eastern fringe. After ordering residents out of Sur district, the government then seized 6,300 plots of land, including six churches: the Assyrian Orthodox Church of the Virgin Mary (built in the 3rd Century), the Mar Petyun Chaldean Catholic Church, the Surp (Saint) Sarkis Chaldean Catholic Church, an Armenian Catholic church, the Diyarbakir Protestant Church and the largest Armenian church in the Middle East – the magnificent, recently renovated and hugely significant Surp Giragos Armenian Apostolic Church. These churches are now the property of the Turkish state, which has no interest in their survival. Christians are deeply concerned that the government may be planning to raze Sur district and rebuild it entirely.

Unlike mosques, which are all state owned and run, these churches were the private property of their foundations, maintained and staffed through the donations of the faithful. Furthermore, they are an integral part of Turkey's cultural heritage – lest people forget that Anatolia, once part of the Byzantine Empire, was a land of Greek, Armenian and Assyrian Christians. Though a remnant survived the Genocide of 1915-1923, the pressure has never subsided. Few of the Greek, Armenian and Assyrian churches seized during the Genocide have been returned. Rejecting the pleas of Christians, the government prefers to use these historic churches and cultural treasures as warehouses, sports centres, stables for animals or squats for drug users. Occasionally the government sells them to investors and developers over the internet.

And so the state-sponsored cultural destruction continues, quietly.

This is the context in which many Muslims in Turkey are calling for Istanbul's (Constantinople's) famous 6th Century Byzantine Cathedral, the magnificent Hagia Sophia (Church Of Holy Wisdom) to be opened as a mosque. Pressure has been mounting since June 2012, when Iznik's Hagia Sophia (formerly the Hagia Sofia of Nicaea) was converted into a mosque and December 2012 when a Turkish court ruled that Trabzon's Hagia Sophia should be opened for Muslim worship. Since May 2013, when Muslims celebrated the 560th anniversary of the conquest of Constantinople, calls to 'complete the conquest' through the removal of all churches has become even more shrill. On 9 April 2015, as Eastern Christians prepared to celebrate Easter, Istanbul's Hagia Sophia hosted the first Qur'an recitation under its roof in 85 years. Today, as the government seizes control of six more churches, there are reasons to be concerned about the future of Christianity in NATO-member, and aspiring EU-member, Turkey.

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



Hagia Sophia Exterior



Hagia Sophia Interior



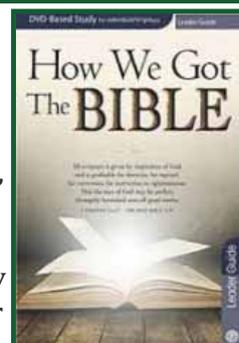
'Christ, the Wisdom of God'

PLEASE PRAY THAT GOD WILL:

- grace Turkey's Christians (including some 2,000 Greeks and 80,000 Armenians and Assyrians) with holy wisdom in abundance as they seek to navigate the difficult and dangerous days ahead. 'My soul melts away for sorrow; strengthen me according to Your Word! Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. Redeem me from man's oppression, that I may keep your precepts.' (Psalm 119.28,105,134 ESV)
- provide for, guide and bless advocate Ali Elbeyoglu, the lawyer for the Surp Giragos Armenian Church Foundation, as he appeals to the Council of State for a stay of execution and annulment of the expropriation of the hugely significant Surp Giragos Armenian Apostolic Church. 'For the Lord loves justice; He will not forsake His saints.' (Psalm 37.28 ESV)

Prestigious Award For Book About The Bible

TIMOTHY Paul Jones' book, *How We Got The Bible*, has won a prestigious award from the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association – the 2016 Christian Book Of The Year Award in the Bible Reference category – on 3 May at the industry Awards Night in Nashville, Tennessee. Gretchen Goldsmith, CEO of Rose Publishing, says Dr Jones has a unique ability to communicate the history of the Bible in a way that is easy-to-understand for the average Christian. A professor and associate vice president at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Dr Jones recognised that many Christians are unaware of the history of the Bible and unable to confidently answer questions about their faith. With dramatic stories, time lines, charts, and illustrations, he answers the most pertinent questions about biblical reliability.



– *Christian Newswire*

Turnbull/Morrison Budget Omits School Chaplaincy Funding

SCHOOL chaplaincy funding is missing from the Federal Budget's forward estimates but chaplaincy providers say they're not surprised and still hold out hope for funding beyond the Government's 2018 commitment. James Flavin, CEO of Generate Ministries, the largest school chaplaincy provider in New South Wales, says it was unlikely renewed funding for the national program would appear in this year's budget, and he wasn't expecting it.

Peter James, spokesperson for the National School Chaplaincy Association, and head of Scripture Union QLD, says they have only ever had a four-year commitment from the Government for the program. The Budget papers are very clear that that funding continues, with three of those four years to go with the current funding. He says that in all states, demand is more than the funding provides for, and school chaplaincy providers continue to look for alternative funding to meet that demand. It's important for Government to hear from school chaplaincy supporters about the value of the program currently serving over a million children across the country. – *Eternity News at biblesociety.org.au*

Christmas Card Competition

SONGS Of Praise, the world's longest running religious television series, has launched a UK-wide Card competition to raise money for *BBC Children In Need*, calling on all budding artists to dig out their paintbrushes. The competition will give amateur artists the opportunity to have their artwork featured on a Christmas card which will be sold during the festive period to raise money for the charity. Welcoming entries from people of all ages and abilities, the public are being encouraged to reflect artistically on what Christmas means to them. Entries will be judged on their originality, creativity, public appeal and their ability to capture the spirit of Christmas. *Songs Of Praise* have long been supporters of *BBC Children In Need*, broadcasting *Children In Need* special programs and appeal films to their audiences for over 20 years.

– *Inspire Magazine*

What Does 'Faith' Mean?

WORDS like 'faith' that Christians use all the time, mean one thing to believers and another thing entirely to the unbeliever, Australian Christian leader Phillip Jensen told the recent *Together For The Gospel* conference in the US Bible Society's *Eternity News* reports that Mr Jensen told the conference, 'Sin in Australia basically means a religious view that is against sex. Faith basically

means superstition, repentance means feeling sorry, justification means rationalisation.' He says that when preaching the Gospel the message received is more important than the message you send. 'Preaching justification by faith for your sins' is a wonderful truth, but an unbelieving Australian would not have the faintest clue what you are talking about.' Mr Jensen has an issue about using the word 'faith' in particular. He says It only means superstition to the Western world. In his Gospel tract *Two Ways To Live* Mr Jensen uses the word 'trust' instead of 'faith'. He suggests that 'trust', 'rely' or 'depend' are good substitutes for 'faith'. – *Eternity News at biblesociety.org.au*

Are You Reaching The Unreached?

AN alliance of globally focused ministries has designated Sunday 15 May as the *International Day For The Unreached*, a one-day event intended to inspire and mobilise Christians to reach out to more than 2 billion people around the world who have yet to hear the Gospel. The event is sponsored by the *Alliance For The Unreached*, a group that includes *Reach Beyond*, *Bibles For The World*, *Operation Mobilisation* and *The Seed Company*. Wayne Pederson, *Reach Beyond* president, says they want to remind people that there are literally millions of people around the globe in desperate need of the good news of Jesus.

Faith Gives Strength Under Persecution

KENNETH Bae, a Korean-American missionary who served a 735-day prison sentence after the North Korean government claimed he was part of a Christian plot to overthrow the regime, has revealed that his faith in God gave him the strength to survive during his captivity. In an interview with CNN's *New Day* program, Mr Bae described the physical and verbal abuse he endured during his imprisonment.

He said one prosecutor repeatedly told him, 'No-one remembers you. You have been forgotten by people, your government. You're not going home anytime soon. You'll be here for 15 years. You'll be 60 before you go home.' While in captivity he worked from 8am to 6pm, carrying rock and shovelling coal. His health deteriorated rapidly, and he lost more than 27 kilos. The 47-year-old missionary said he knew everything possible was being done to secure his release, and he adjusted to life in the North Korean prison by depending on God.

– *Breaking Christian News*

Sound Bible Teaching Draws Indigenous And Non-Indigenous Christians Together

A NEAR record crowd assembled at Morrow's Farm in Katherine, NT, for the 49th annual Katherine Christian Convention over the May Day long weekend. Bible Society's *Eternity News* reports Indigenous and non-indigenous people travelled thousands of kilometres to be part of what has become the premier Christian gathering in the Top End.

With an emphasis on sound Bible teaching and a focus on unity across cultural and denominational affiliations, organisers say the conference once again demonstrated true reconciliation as found in Jesus Christ. They say the Indigenous church is under-resourced yet growing in strength and commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ.

This year's theme was *Grace And Law*. Keynote speaker Jono Wright delivered five Bible-based messages. A major challenge for a speaker at the Convention is the diversity of the audience, many of whom speak several languages while English may be their fifth or sixth.

– *Eternity News* at biblesociety.org.au

'Find A Need And Fill It'

THEY couldn't find an addiction therapist within a 60 kilometre radius of their town, Kutno, in Poland, so two ladies from a church planted by Operation Mobilisation decided to become therapists themselves. Zosia and Monika went back to school and finally received the required qualification as addiction therapists. After the ladies graduated, the church launched a new ministry, *Consultation Point*, an addiction counselling service that provides assessment, counselling, information and treatment services for people in need.

The counsellors are receiving a lot of enquiries after this service was advertised in the media, and they say it is distressing that the vast majority of people who are looking for help are young. Church leaders say that after so many years of ministering to people struggling with addictions, they realised that while addiction is a problem on its own, it is a symptom of deeper problems and more personal issues.

Consultation Point has already proven to be a service very much needed in Kutno, where with God's help the church is helping people trapped in addictions

– *OM International*

When Freedom Of Information Isn't Free

THE Queensland Government has thumbed its nose at community concerns surrounding the controversial so-called *Safe Schools* program, refusing to release the names of schools that have signed up to teach children that their gender is fluid.

Australian Christian Lobby spokesperson Wendy Francis says the Federal Government should immediately defund and pull the program out of schools, as the Queensland and other state governments ignore the Federal Government's directive to clean up the program and ensure parents were made aware of which schools were part of the program.

The ACL was informed by the Queensland Department of Education and Training that its *Right To Information* request for the names of the schools had been denied, despite more than 11,000 Queenslanders signing an e-petition calling for the school names to be released.

The ACL has been told it must still pay a \$347 processing fee for the *Right To Information* request, even though no information was released.

– *My Christian Daily*

ACCOMMODATION WANTED:

A recently returned missionary is looking for a house-sit in East/South East suburbs of Melbourne, preferably close to a train station.

If you (or someone you know) are planning to be away for 6 months to 1 year (or even longer) and don't want to pack up your house and rent it out, please consider having this responsible, clean, returned-missionary house-sit for you!

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CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

Schools Ministry Group – 25 Years Serving SA School Communities

A SERVICE of celebration and thanksgiving was held on Monday evening 8 February at St Peter's Cathedral North Adelaide to celebrate 25 years of Schools Ministry Group serving South Australian school communities.

Rev Dr Lynn Arnold AO, Chair of Schools Ministry Group, led the service which was attended by more than 400 people including local, state and federal MPs, the Leaders of Christian Churches in South Australia, Chaplains, Volunteers, and members of the public from both metropolitan and regional areas. Pastor Bill Vasilakis, representing the Leaders of Christian Churches, prayed for and commissioned the Chaplains, Volunteers and Schools Ministry Group staff.



The history of Schools Ministry Group was recounted and many stories of the impact of this vital work shared. The audience was captivated by Willunga Primary School Principal Mick Underwood as he shared about the increasing number of students coming to school with a range of social and emotional issues: 'As a school Principal I often had to manage these issues'. Mr Underwood conducted some research to find out how he could further help the students and found Professor Martin Seligman's *Positive Psychology* PERMA framework, which he adopted for his school. 'In 2007 when funding for a school Chaplain became available I jumped at the opportunity as I saw the role fitting perfectly within the PERMA framework. Our Chaplain Sue is a wonderful support for those children who find life a struggle. Over the last 8 years we have experienced the unexpected death of seven parents. Sue's role was and is vital in supporting those families during the most difficult of times. Every school needs a Chaplain!'

In 1991 Schools Ministry Group was formed out of the combined Christian Churches to offer seminars and Chaplaincy Services to schools. Angela Jolly, Executive Director of Schools Ministry Group said 'Today SMG provides over 330 schools across South Australia with Chaplaincy Service. It continues to offer seminars and interactive workshops for primary and high school students, and contributes to the positive wellbeing of children with its Community Services. In addition over 1000 volunteers support the Chaplaincy Service by helping in their local schools with breakfast clubs, lunchtime activities and mentoring.' For more information phone Cathy on (08) 8378 6834 or see ad. p.10.

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Ramon A Williams
- Worldwide Photos -
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HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE

New Book On Charles Wesley's Hymns

REV Murray Adamthwaite has written an insightful book on Charles Wesley and his hymns. Raised in the Methodist tradition, Wesley's hymns are dear to the author's heart, but all who love sound doctrine and evangelical faith share that love.

Through The Christian Year With Charles Wesley is a handsome volume, enhanced by Dr Alan Harley's *Foreword* and the author's *Preface* both of which bring a fresh glance at this remarkable man who rejoiced in the Kingship of the Lord, fervently desired to have not one but one thousand tongues to sing His praise, marvelled that he had gained an interest in the Saviour's blood and was happy if with his latest breath he could but sing His praise. The book is available from the author, ph (03) 9773 5448. Email: mra@archist.com.au

Expand The Kingdom

- 2016 Hillsong Conference

ALL Christians can be involved in building and ex-

tending God's Kingdom, according to Lead Pastor of Hillsong Church Australia Joel A'Bell. Speaking ahead of the annual Hillsong Conference, 5-8 July, Pastor A'Bell said it is easy for people to become so distracted by everyday life, that they push their spiritual calling into the background. 'The reason Pastor Brian and Bobbie Houston started Hillsong Conference almost 30 years ago is very simple - to champion and build the local church, and by the church, I'm referring to the biblical meaning, which is the people. Hillsong has lost count of the number of testimonies and stories received over the years of changed lives and fulfilled destinies from people who have attended the conference. Our conference mandate is to invest into other churches, and to provide every person with opportunities to not only grow closer to God but to allow Him to empower us to truly do what He has called us to do.' For Conference Information go to <https://hillsong.com/conference/sydney/>

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or by phone on (03) 5335 8252.

All applications will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Vale Dr Noel Vose – Baptist Statesman

NOEL VOSE was the most prominent and admired Western Australian Christian leader of his generation, and the greatest statesman Australian Baptists have produced.

Born in Western Australia on 23 December 1921, Noel grew up in the Great Depression, in a humble family that moved regularly in order for his father to look for work. By the time he was 15, he had attended some 18 different schools. He left school at 15 and joined the public service working in the Post Office in various country towns before moving to Perth. In the 1940's work at the Post Office involved dealing with military codes, and in 1943-1945 he served in the Air Force itself.



Although Noel's parents did not attend church, they had sent him to Sunday school. He was converted at the Methodist Church in Northam (a town about 100 km from Perth) aged 15. When he moved to Perth he began attending Maylands Baptist Church, beginning his life-long association with the Baptist Churches.

During the Air Force years Noel felt called to the ministry. He studied at the NSW Baptist College under the leadership of Principal George H. Morling. After completing his studies there, he went on to do BA and MEd degrees. He then went to the United States to do postgraduate studies in Chicago and Iowa. His doctorate was on the Puritan theologian John Owen.

Noel was ordained in 1951 and pastored small churches in Fremantle and Dalkeith. Though at heart a pastor and an evangelist, he was moved by the need for training amongst Baptist pastors, who at that stage had no formal training available to them. The WA Baptist College began in 1963 with Noel as its principal and sole faculty member.

From 1975 to 1978 Noel became President General of the Baptist Union of Australia, attending the Baptist World Assembly in 1975. In 1980 he became President of the BWA, which brought him to international prominence. He served in the role for five years, and in that time travelled extensively, meeting with secular and religious leaders, and gaining an extraordinary perspective on the work of Baptists across the globe.

Noel's beloved wife Heather died on 5 June 1990, while the couple were on a visit to the United States. He missed her every day of his life. On his retirement from the College in 1991, Noel continued to have an extensive ministry of preaching, mentoring, pastoral care and advising. He continued in retirement to be what he always was at heart – a pastor.

Noel was a man of deep learning and a consummate statesman. Though Baptist by conviction and evangelical in theology, he had a generous ecumenical spirit and worked with people of a wide variety of backgrounds. He wasn't simply diplomatic – he was curious. He wanted to understand and to learn from people whose traditions were not his own.

Noel Vose was always the most interesting man in the room. But he had that uncanny ability to make other people feel interesting, because he was always so interested in them. Noel was called Home on Monday 2 May 2016.

'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labour; for their deeds will follow them"' (Revelation 14.13)
– Rory Shiner, Senior Pastor of Providence City Church, Perth.

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Rome's Trevi Fountain Dyed Red For The Blood Of The Martyrs



ROME'S iconic tourist spot, the Trevi Fountain, will run red on Friday to represent the blood of Christian martyrs. The Christian charity *Aid To The Church In Need* is behind the idea and hopes that the event will shine a light on Christian persecution all over the globe. **Colouring the Trevi Fountain red will be an opportunity to highlight the existence of martyrdom, Christian martyrdom, and to send a prayer to God for persecuted Christians and all those who are oppressed. Many of the earliest Christians were martyred in Rome, including, it is believed, the Apostles Peter and Paul. Christians are currently suffering violent persecution in a number of countries all over the world, for example in Iraq, Syria, Somalia, North Korea, Nigeria and China.**

– Hannah Tooley, Premier News

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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

INDIA: Convert Hanged Upside Down, Left For Dead

THIRTY year old Joginder Gold still cannot walk, a month after Hindu extremists in Uttar Pradesh tortured him for three hours to try to force him to reconvert to Hinduism. They hanged him upside down by his feet from a tree, then beat his soles and pushed a stick into his mouth. After the assault at a farm house near Varanasi city, they left Joginder for dead in a shallow pit. A villager rescued him and called the police.

On the same day, 30 miles away in the city of Jaunpur, extremists attacked 57-year-old Pentecostal pastor Samuel Marikuda Joseph, punching, kicking and beating him with sticks. They demanded he stop holding worship services.

Sadly, extremists appear to be able to make such attacks with impunity: police initially refused to take action against Joginder's assailants and it was only when local Christian leaders approached higher officials that an investigation was launched. Police filed a case against Pastor Samuel's attackers – but they absconded. No arrests have been made in either case.

– *Release International*

Christian Bakers Seek To Overturn Decision In 'Gay Cake' Case

CHRISTIAN bakers in Belfast, Northern Ireland, who refused to make a cake supporting gay marriage are appealing a discrimination ruling against them. The McArthur family, who run Ashers Baking Company, are seeking to overturn a judgment which found they acted unlawfully by declining the order in May 2014. Daniel McArthur, 26, Ashers' general manager said they hoped it would be their last court appearance. 'The County Court judgment was disappointing but we're hoping and praying that these judges will recognise what's at stake and decide to protect our freedom to express our Christian beliefs,' he said.

The Northern Ireland Equality Commission, which monitors compliance with the region's anti-discrimination laws, brought the landmark civil action against Ashers on behalf of a gay rights activist Gareth Lee. The high profile case was heard at Belfast County Court over three days last March. Mr Lee, a member of the LGBT advocacy group Queer Space, had wanted a cake featuring Sesame Street puppets Bert and Ernie with the phrase "Support Gay Marriage" for a private function marking International Day Against Homophobia. He paid the £36.50 in full at Ashers' Belfast city centre branch but was telephoned two days later and told the company could not fulfil his order. In evidence Ashers' owner Karen McArthur said as a born again Christian, she knew in her heart she could not make the cake but had taken the order to avoid a confrontation in the shop. Daniel McArthur also told the court his family could not compromise their religious beliefs, despite the legal ramifications.

Mr Lee claimed he was left feeling like a lesser person.

Delivering her findings District Judge Isobel Brownlie said the bakers had breached equality legislation and directly discriminated against Mr Lee, contrary to the law. Ordering Ashers to pay agreed damages of £500, the judge said religious beliefs could not dictate the law.

– *Aaron James, Premier Daily News*

KENYA: Bold Outreach Bears Fruit

FROM witches to Islamist terrorists, a ministry based in Kenya faces daunting challenges in the far-flung areas its indigenous missionaries dare to enter. With more than 80 full-time workers and 300 part-time helpers, the ministry reaches many pockets of Kenya with no Christian presence, including northern areas plagued by bandits and lethal tribal conflicts. Armed security guards accompany workers as reach new sites with the Gospel. Christian Aid Mission reports that ministry workers recently have taken the Gospel to 17 new villages and planted six new churches in different villages. In one area the ministry team has concentrated on remote villages where Christ was unknown and planted three new churches.

613 people there have received Christ as Saviour since last December.

– *Christian Aid Mission*

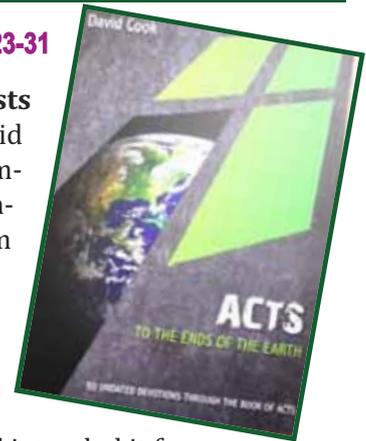
ISRAEL: Concern For IS Attacks

THE Israeli military is concerned that the Islamic State terror group is planning a large-scale attack against Israel from Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, according to a German newspaper. Quoting an Israel Defence Forces officer, the report said that while it is not clear what a future Islamic State attack against Israel would look like, it could include the use of tanks and artillery by the terrorist group. The Sinai has become an Islamic State stronghold in recent years. According to the report, there could be hundreds of Islamic State operatives currently training in the Sinai and awaiting an order to strike Israel.

– *Breaking Christian News*

The Church's Proper Response

ACTS 4.23-31



THE immediate response of the church to the threats of the chief priests and elders is to pray. They did not turn to political maneuvering and they did not ask for safety. They prayed to the Sovereign Lord (v24), reminding themselves that it is God who is in control, not the Sanhedrin. They remind themselves that he is the creator. They remind themselves of the Scriptures, from Psalm 2, to the effect that humankind's raging and plotting against God's Anointed is in vain.

Again, in v27, they mention the human players but, again, in v28, they put them in their place. Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles and the people of Israel did what God had decided beforehand should happen. As Joseph reminded his brothers in Genesis 50.20, 'You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good.' Here is the crowning conviction of Romans 8.28 – that in all things, God works for the good of His people, and in all things God will take the evil intentions of people and use them to accomplish His purpose. The cross is the best example of that.

FOR REFLECTION:

How does this experience of the church show you the best way to face up to a tough situation?

Are you facing a similar situation today? If so, then write out a prayer similar to that of the 1st Century church and pray it in relation to your situation.

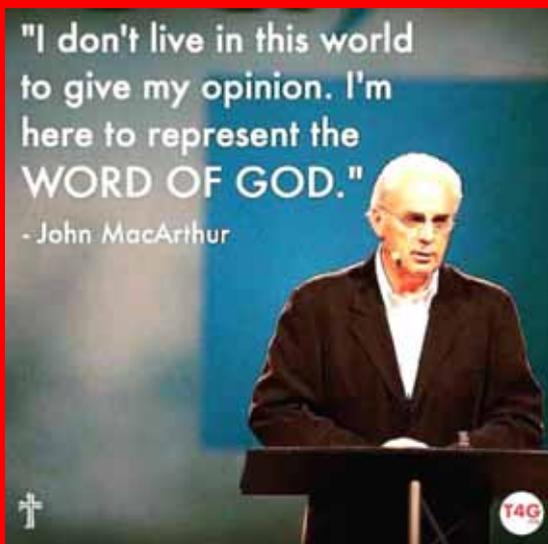
The mandate of the Church is to speak the Gospel and the church prays that it would do so (vv29,30), that no threat will slow down the church in its ministry. Note again that they do not pray for safety, but for bold speech (v29) and accredited speech (v30). Luke records the shaking of the place and their filling with the Holy Spirit; the same people baptised in the Spirit in Acts 2 are now filled afresh with Him. We are baptised once, but filled with the Spirit often.

The fruit of filling is again underlined in v31 – bold speaking of the Word of God. The first resort of the church under threat of persecution is to pray about God's sovereign control; its petition is about bold speech; its result is spiritual fullness showing itself in bold Gospel proclamation.

This is a great pattern for us who are under all kinds of threats to silence us today.

Content taken from 'ACTS – To The Ends Of The Earth' by David Cook, published by 10Publishing, used with permission.

SEEN ON FACEBOOK:



Upcoming Event:

CMA Ministry Breakfast: *Unleashing The Power Of Purpose.*

When? 19 May at 7.15 am for a 7.30 start, concluding at 8.45 am.

Where? At NewHope Baptist Church, 3 Springfield Rd, Blackburn, VIC.

Who should come? Christians in or approaching retirement and church leaders who serve them.

Cost: \$20.00, CMA Subscribers: \$15.00.

For further details go to:

<https://www.cma.net.au/events/eventdetail.php?EventID=250>

Website Worth Watching:
jipacker.com

*1 Samuel 3.10:
You are called.*

BOOKS WORTH READING

LEON MORRIS: *One Man's Fight For Love And Truth*, Neil Bach, Authentic Media/Paternoster, 2016.

CHRISTIANITY has had various symbols over two millennia but the most popular has been the cross. Christians are agreed that the cross is central to our faith. However many people don't realise that western theologians by the middle of last century had so diluted its meaning that it had effectively lost its power.

Enter an unlikely Australian onto the world theological platform. His work on the language of the Bible and its meaning was so decisive that theologians corrected their view of the cross.

Neil Bach's story of Leon Morris traces 'the Doc's' story from his youth in Lithgow to his study done while a BCA missionary in remote South Australia; from his appointment as Warden of Tyndale House, Cambridge, to his return to lead Ridley College. It is a great read and continues one of the themes of Australian history: that Australians can take on the world as underdogs and win.

As a student under Dr Morris I was intrigued by his self-effacement, his extraordinary output, the depth of his knowledge, and his network of influence while he was leading a demanding theological and university college and lecturing full-time. I was puzzled that he was of such different calibre to the professors I had enjoyed in earlier degrees. This book answered many of my questions about the man and his ministry. Central were his love for the Lord Jesus, his commitment to the authority of the Word of God and his desire to see more people enlivened by God's gracious love.

Leon Morris: One Man's Fight For Love And Truth is enriched by the frequent references to Leon's wife Mildred and her strong ministries. Many of us will recall how instrumental his promotion of women's ministries was, undergirded by his work on the linguistic background of the key passages of the New Testament [including the headship passages where he showed that the ancients did not associate the head with thought or government but usually linked it to source or origin]. As a Melbournian I was interested in his collaboration with Archbishop Woods, especially in the *Forward In Depth* campaign that influenced so many of us, and the Diocese as a whole.

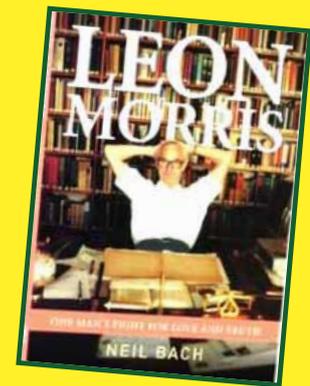
Some of the surprises in the book for me included the fact that Leon Morris did not go through a theological college as a student. Perhaps that was part of his secret – that he formed his own methods of research and analysis. Amongst a number of interesting positions he declined or was approached for, in 1966 he led the voting for a new Archbishop of Sydney on the penultimate day. Morris's influence was global, with extended periods in the USA, England, South America and South Africa. Like all good biographers Neil Bach considers some of Morris's idiosyncrasies, weaknesses and failures.

I was amazed to read that sales of his books now well exceed the extraordinary total of two million. Best-selling titles include *Testaments Of Love*, *New Testament Theology*, many commentaries including his famous *The Gospel According To John*, and *The Apostolic Preaching Of The Cross*. In that book he established that redemption includes the truth that Christ paid the price needed for our freedom and that propitiation includes the thought that at the cross we see Christ turning away God's appropriate and righteous opposition to sin and penalty for sin.

Leon Morris: One Man's Fight For Love And Truth is a book that will deepen your understanding of God's love revealed at the cross and it will enrich your faith. At a practical level you will be encouraged to see what God can do through any person who is wholly dedicated to serving Him.

There are too few biographies of Christians being published. Here is an enjoyable story of an Australian Anglican by one of our own. I am going to buy a bundle to give to others, including non-believers who will benefit from both a good Australian story and also a better understanding of God's love and the crux of Christianity.

– Revd Dr Peter Crawford, Vicar Of Emerald, 1981-2015.



'Leon Morris: One Man's Fight For Love And Truth' is a book that will deepen your understanding of God's love revealed at the cross and it will enrich your faith. At a practical level you will be encouraged to see what God can do through any person who is wholly dedicated to serving Him.'

BOOKS WORTH READING

JEWELS FROM JOHN NEWTON, Daily Readings From The Works Of John Newton, Miller Ferrie, Banner Of Truth, Edinburgh, 2016. ISBN 978 1 84871 555 4.

IF you think that reading the full four volume set of *The Works Of John Newton* might be a daunting prospect, this book is for you. Miller Ferrie, wife of the minister of Grace Reformed Church of the Lord Jesus Christ in New Leipzig, North Dakota, is a retired English teacher, so she is doubly qualified to relish the writings of the likes of John Newton.

But if you use this book over the course of a year in your daily devotions, I wouldn't be surprised if it has whetted your appetite to read more and more of *The Works Of John Newton*. Here are 365 devotionals, one for each day of the year, taking a verse of Scripture and expounding and applying it with excerpts from Newton's writings, including some excerpts from his delightful hymns.

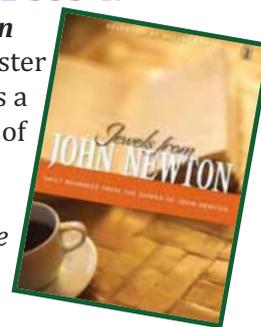
I opened this book to 9 May, the day of writing this review. Newton is expounding on 1 Timothy 1.15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' Surely this was a precious text to John Newton, whose tombstone reads: 'John Newton, Clerk, once an infidel and libertine, a servant of slaves in Africa, was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the Gospel he had long laboured to destroy.'

From his own rich experience of the grace of God, Newton writes: "The apostle well knew the different reception the Gospel would meet in the world; that many poor guilty souls, trembling under a sense of sin and unworthiness, would very hardly be persuaded, that such sinners as they could be saved at all. To these he recommends it as "a faithful saying," founded upon the immutable counsel, promise, and oath of God, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; sinners in general; "the chief of sinners;" such as he represents himself to have been. He knew, likewise, that many others, from a mistaken opinion of their own goodness, or a mistaken dependence on something of their own choosing, would be liable to undervalue this faithful saying. For the sake of these, he adds, "it is worthy of all acceptance." None are so bad but the Gospel affords them a ground of hope: none are so good as to have any just ground of hope without it ... Jesus Christ came to restore us to the favour of God; to reconcile us to ourselves and to each other; to give us peace and joy in life, hope and triumph in death, and after death glory, honour, and immortality.'

Many a minister will have sought to console some tortured soul whose belief is 'I can't be saved; I've done something so terrible I can't be saved.' Here is practical, Biblical help from one who in his own mind must have vied with the Apostle Paul for the unenviable title of 'the chief of sinners' and may well have wondered if there was forgiveness and salvation for such a one as he. Ministers will find much help in this compilation of John Newton's 'sanctified common sense'.

So *Jewels From John Newton* is a book to be read and cherished. Highly commended. But don't just take my word for it. C.H. Spurgeon says: 'In few writers are Christian doctrine, experience and practice more happily balanced than in the author of these letters, and few write with more simplicity, piety and force.'

– Bob Thomas.



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