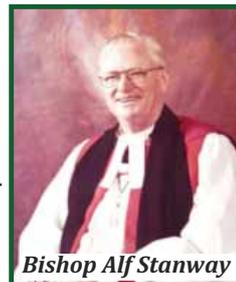
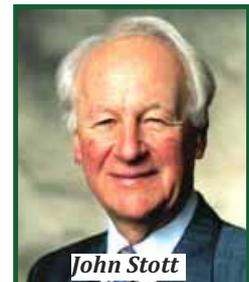


# Two Stalwarts Of The Faith Remembered

*The Ridley College lecture in memory of Bishop Alfred Stanway, long-time Bishop of Tanganyika, now Tanzania, was delivered by Christopher Wright, International Ministries Director of Langham Partnership, at Ridley on 19 September on the theme 'John Stott's Legacy And The Mission Of The Global Church.'*



Bishop Alf Stanway



John Stott

**'The memory of the just is blessed,'** we read in Proverbs 10.7, and Chris Wright amply demonstrated this in his lecture on John Stott, one of the most influential Christians of the last 100 years. Analysing John Stott's multi-faceted ministry and assessing its impact on global mission, he defined:

**Five Components Of John Stott's Ministry:** two organisations he founded:

**1. Langham Partnership,** a combination of ministries springing from his concern for pastors and all those in leadership in churches who have any role in preaching and teaching the Bible so that the church would grow in faith, not just grow bigger. On the premises that God's church grows through God's Word and that God's Word comes to God's people mainly through preaching, he asked: 'What can we do to raise the standard of biblical preaching?' And so he set out to strengthen the ministry of the Word of God in countries where churches are under-resourced by nurturing national movements for Biblical preaching (Langham Preaching), fostering the creation and distribution of evangelical literature (Langham Literature), and enhancing evangelical theological education (Langham Scholars).

**2. The London Institute For Contemporary Christianity,** born out of his conviction of the crucial importance of 'lay Christians' in the workplace, and the need for them to be engaged in their society and culture. And therefore, he saw the need for 'double listening', which he developed in the company of a group of young professional friends who, 'dragged (him) kicking and screaming into the modern world.' Chris Wright observed that Langham and LICC together show the integration of both aspects of Stott's ecclesiology (he remained active in both organizations for many years, and some of his associates were on the board of both) – he saw the need to equip pastors by training and resourcing them for the task of preaching the Bible; but he also saw that the purpose of that is to 'equip the saints for works of service' in the world. Chris Wright said: 'John Stott's ecclesiology and missiology worked together to equip the pastors to equip the people to impact the world. That double emphasis remains a part of evangelical missiology, but it is fair to say that the first part has had greater traction and attractiveness to many Christians and churches than the second. That is, people understand and support the idea of training and equipping pastors. But they are much slower to grasp Stott's insistence that the ministry and mission of all Christians in their everyday world and work was equally valuable, indeed even more important.'

*(To be continued in NL 2016-10-15)*



Chris Wright

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## Some Straight-Forward Advice

*'Finally, brothers, good-bye. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.'* – 2 Corinthians 13.11

As Paul comes to the end of 2 Corinthians, a letter he has found so hard to write, he uses five verbs in the second person plural imperative; they are five final 'commands' he makes to this group of Christians as a whole who have become embroiled in bitterness and envy, who have been competitive and judgmental, and all this has led to various kinds of ungodly behaviour. The five commands are:

1. **'Rejoice'** (NIV 'goodbye') – it is a common way of signing off but it is literally an instruction to cheer up (cf our 'cheers') and look on the bright side of things.

2. **'Mend your wrong ways and get your lives back on track'** (NIV 'aim for perfection') – it was what Paul had just said he was praying for and contains the idea of fixing what is broken and restoring what is lost rather than just improving what is already reasonable.

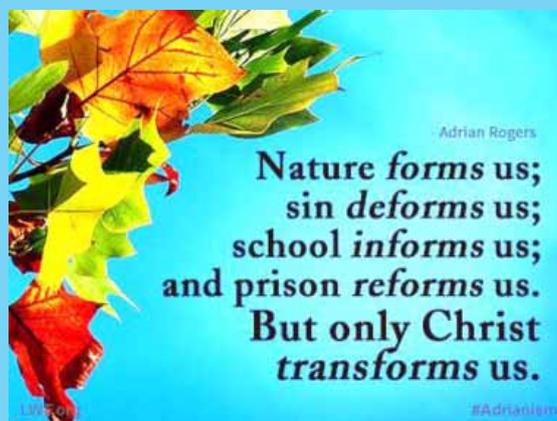
3. **'Be comforted' or 'be exhorted'** (NIV 'listen to my appeal') – the Greek word is 'paraclete', the word Jesus uses for the Holy Spirit in John 14-16, and has the dual idea of both 'comforting' (as it does in Chapter 1 of this letter), and exhorting/urging/encouraging as the NIV understands it in the context of Paul's concern for their spiritual health and growth.

4. **'Think the same'** (NIV 'be of one mind').

5. **'Live in peace'** (as in NIV and most English versions).

**What a challenge these five imperatives are to us!** They give us something to be pro-active about and not just let ourselves drift along in mediocrity as if we have to learn to live with our foibles and mutual irritations because we can't do much about them. What is the outcome of making this effort? 'The God of love and peace will be with you.' It's not rocket science – but it is a challenge.

– Bruce Christian, Chaplain, Sutherland Shire Christian School



## **CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: Another Massacre**

In March 2013 Bangui the capital of predominantly Christian (some 76%) Central African Republic was overrun and seized by 'Seleka' – a foreign-backed alliance of well-armed local and foreign Islamic militias. Seleka's advance and rule were brutal. But for CAR's Christians the worst was how so many of their Muslim neighbours celebrated Seleka's arrival, even rushing to loot the homes of their now imperilled Christian neighbours. Trust was shattered. Eventually, in January 2014, Seleka was driven from the capital along with its supporters and indeed any hapless Muslim who could be found. At that point, France and the UN intervened. Now the conflict is frozen with nearly half the state under the control of Islamic militants.



**Violence and insecurity persist, especially on the 'front-line'.** The freezing of the conflict has left Christians whose towns and villages are now in rebel-held territory in a precarious position. The Islamic rebels (and their foreign backers) want CAR formally partitioned so the north might become an independent Islamic State – complete with its diamonds. Determined to preserve the de-facto partition, Islamic militants are undermining all the government's efforts to promote reconciliation.

**Kaga-Bandoro, the capital of the Nana-Grebizi economic prefecture, is a market town** in the northern Central African Republic, some 245km north of the capital, Bangui. A mostly Christian city, Kaga-Bandoro is also home to many thousands of displaced Christians from across the north-central region. But Kaga-Bandoro is in rebel-controlled territory, meaning its mostly Christian residents are essentially being held hostage.

**According to the local media organ, Radio Ndeke Luka,** 'anti-Balaka' fighters from various villages across the region had gathered in the village of Ndomete, some 10km from Kaga-Bandoro. They were allegedly plotting to liberate the city and drive the Islamic militants out. However, on the evening of Friday 16 September, ex-Seleka fighters under the command of General Alkatim Mahamat swept through Ndomete, going door-to-door killing Christian villagers. According to *Radio Ndeke Luka*, 19 were slaughtered while dozens were injured. The spokesman to the Presidency, Albert Mokpeme, called it a 'massacre'.

**The next day clashes erupted in Kaga-Bandoro** where at least five more were killed. An aid worker was seriously wounded. The rebels rampaged, looting the radio station, local businesses, aid agencies, as well as the Church of the Nativity which hosts and supports a large population of displaced Christians. Peacekeepers from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic were deployed to the area. Having separated the parties, they are now keeping the 'peace' and calling on the belligerents to lay down their weapons.

**Local Christian leaders are sceptical.** 'If the government is not going to beef up the security, then we are going to defend ourselves,' one church leader told *Morning Star News*. 'We shall not keep quiet as our brothers are dying.'

This is the 900th religious liberty prayer bulletin Elizabeth Kendal has written – a mammoth effort. Elizabeth Kendal is the author of *Turn Back The Battle: Isaiah Speaks To Christians Today* (Deror Books, Melbourne, Australia, Dec 2012) which offers a Biblical response to persecution and existential threat; and *After Saturday Comes Sunday: Understanding The Christian Crisis In The Middle East* (Wipf and Stock, Eugene, OR, USA, June 2016). See [www.ElizabethKendal.com](http://www.ElizabethKendal.com)

### **PLEASE PRAY THAT GOD WILL:**

- intervene in Central African Republic, giving great wisdom, strength, courage and authority to all who work for peace and reconciliation, especially President Faustin Archange Touadera and all CAR's Church leadership.
- rise up on behalf of the Church in CAR, so that all foreign Islamic militants will be driven out and the borders secured; may the Lord bring healing to CAR.
- influence CAR's Muslim minority, causing them to tire of violence and chaos and to withdraw their support from the rebels, who have only brought them trouble, displacement and poverty; may their hearts be open to the Gospel.

## WHEN FAITH TURNS DEFEAT INTO VICTORY ...

Life was full and enjoyable for Australian Christian Churches pastor Phil Camden when he was diagnosed with terminal Motor Neurone Disease and given months to live. He was the senior pastor of a church in Newcastle, and a member of the church's state executive, heading up church planting in NSW. Bible Society's *Eternity News* reports that after receiving the diagnosis at the end of 2013 he resigned from the pastorate, but turned his diagnosis into a new ministry. He saw his disease not as a death sentence but as a visa to go into the world of Motor Neurone Disease and bring light where there's darkness, and hope where there's hopelessness, and bring faith where there's fear. So leaving his own expiry date to God, he has been able to visit people who are dying with this disease and bring them the message of hope and eternity. He has also started a blog, in which he challenges MND patients to face their eternal destiny: [fridayswithphil.com](http://fridayswithphil.com). He now believes that what was meant to imprison him has freed him, and his inability has been turned into God's ability to bring dying people to Christ.



– *Eternity News* at [biblesociety.org.au](http://biblesociety.org.au)

**With people living longer due to medical advancements, churches are finding a growing number of senior adults in their communities. According to *Baptist News Global*, ministry time, energy and budget should include consideration of seniors, as seniors remain a key foundation for many churches and, as a group, contribute a large share of the church budget. They should be encouraged to actively serve the Lord as long as they live. They do not have the energy of younger people, but they have a wisdom born of experience that is very valuable. The report encourages churches to think carefully about the unique needs of senior adults, providing space for fellowship meetings and programs to reach others, programs such as Bible studies, and activities like craft, painting, gardening, book study groups, choirs and trips to places of interest. Those in the 65-75 age group are often the most active seniors in church programs and ministries. For those older than that, health issues can take the forefront, but they need to be visited during hospital stays and ministered to once they have moved into a nursing home or become homebound.**

– *Baptist News Global*

### An Indicator Of Biblical Authenticity

Archaeologists in Israel have discovered what they believe to be the site of a biblical city mentioned in the story of David and Goliath. The two-gated city is thought to be around 3,000 years old. Its modern name is Khirbet Qeiyafa and it is in Israel's Elah Valley. Archaeologists believe the city is mentioned in 1 Samuel 17.52 – 'And the men of Israel and Judah rose with a shout and pursued the Philistines as far as Gath and the gates of Ekron, so that the wounded Philistines fell on the way from Shaaraim as far as Gath and Ekron.' Scientists used carbon dating of some charred olive pits to determine that the city flourished at the end of the 11th Century BC through the early 10th Century, which included the days of King Saul and David.

– *Charisma News*

### Award For Southern Cross

A feature story about domestic violence has won gold at the annual awards of the Australasian Religious Press Association, held recently in Sydney. The cover story *Victim To Their Charms*, written by Anne Lim for *Southern Cross* magazine, shared the stories of a number of Anglican women and men who have been subject to

physical, emotional and spiritual abuse at the hands of their spouse. The story also highlighted the difficulty victims often have being believed and supported effectively. The judges of the *Best Feature* category described the piece as 'a penetrating probe into an uncomfortable reality' and applauded Anne Lim's writing and research skills.

– *Sydney Anglicans*

### Compassion's Many-Faceted Ministry

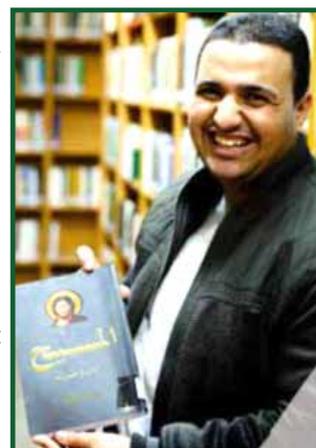
Compassion International, well-known for serving children for more than 60 years through sponsorship, also partners with local churches in 26 countries to serve communities. Compassion's partnership with the local church empowers them to provide highly individualized programs for families of sponsored children. The work includes de-addiction programs, gardening, provision of clean water and water treatment plants. Compassion says it's not about religion, it's love in action. It's not a one-time handout, but a consistency that happens day-in and day-out. In community after community, the children themselves begin to teach their parents how to read and write, mentor them on life and social skills, and share the hope they've found in Jesus Christ.

– *MNN*

## **Langham Trust Reports Progress On Arabic Bible Commentary**

**His name is Joseph Luis.** He is a 25 year old from a place called Minya in Upper Egypt and is currently studying for a Master of Divinity in a seminary in Cairo. Here he is in the seminary library with an Arabic translation of John Stott's book, *The Incomparable Christ*. Joseph says that he likes books, particularly books that explore the relationship between faith and science, as ideas about atheism are becoming more prevalent in Egypt.

**Bahaa Labib, a leader in the Hadayek Qubar Evangelical Church in Cairo** says 'I can't imagine anyone growing without books. It's really impossible ...' And yet, as Dr Riad Kassis, the Director of Langham Scholars, himself an Arab Christian says, 'If you go into a Christian bookstore in the Middle East, in Egypt or in Lebanon or in Jordan, you'll be amazed because we have very few Christian books written in Arabic by Arabs. While translated books are very important, we need books written from our own context.'



**'This is what Langham Literature has been doing.** In fact there is a unique project that Langham Literature and Langham Scholars are working on: *The Arabic Bible Commentary*. It is unique because it is the first time Christian scholars from the whole region are coming together to produce not just another commentary on the Scriptures, but a commentary that is addressing our needs and challenges.' He calls it 'a landmark in the history of the Christian church in the region.'

**The project started in 2008, involving Christian theologians from five Arab nations** and is being produced by Egyptian publishing house *Dar El Thaqaqa*. But in recent years there have been a number of challenges to writing and editing due to unrest, revolutions and instability in many of the Arab countries. This has resulted in a revised project plan, with a final publishing deadline of the end of 2017 or early 2018, God willing.

**The total project cost for Langham Partnership** is anticipated to be over \$582,000. Participants in the project include Arab Orthodox, Catholic, and Evangelical biblical scholars (who all adhere to the Lausanne Covenant as the framework of their contributions). Riad said this Christian unity is 'crucial in a context where violent acts of divisions on religious grounds abound and destroy the social mosaic of the region.' It is expected that the commentary will have 'more visibility and circulation not only within the Christian community, but hopefully among our fellow Muslim citizens', he explained.

**Currently, commentary on all books of the Old Testament are running to schedule** and no set-backs are expected. Several New Testament books are with the publishing house as final drafts, while other books are at varying stages of completion. There are also plans for the commentary to include 131 articles. These will cover various aspects of Christian doctrine and contemporary ethical issues, including Aids, Arab Christians and Citizenship, Secularism and Pluralism.

**Langham scholar Rev Dr Andrea Zaki Stephanos, managing editor for the commentary,** said that stability in the region would greatly help in bringing the project to completion. He has asked for prayer for all those involved. Please pray for those who are writing and producing *The Arabic Bible Commentary*. Please consider what you can give to help this much-needed resource become a reality for Christians in the Arab world. Contact Langham Australia by email: [Australia@langham.org](mailto:Australia@langham.org) or phone 02 4751 9036.

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### **Canadian Missionary Released From Detention In China – Veronica Neffinger**

**A Canadian missionary to China has been released** from being held by the Chinese government for two years. According to [ChristianToday.com](http://ChristianToday.com), Kevin Garrett and his wife, Julia, lived in China for 30 years where they did missionary work and ran a Christian coffee shop. In 2014, Garrett and Julia were arrested in Dandong, a city on the North Korea border, and accused of carrying out tasks from 'Canadian espionage agencies to gather intelligence in China.' Julia was released on bail in February 2015, but Kevin was kept in custody. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau helped to secure his release, and Garrett arrived at Vancouver International Airport on 22 September. 'We are grateful for your persistence in securing Mr Garratt's freedom, and your defence of the core Canadian principle of freedom of religion,' said Bruce Clemenger, President of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, to Trudeau and his government.

## A HAPPY MARRIAGE BETWEEN SCIENCE AND SCRIPTURE

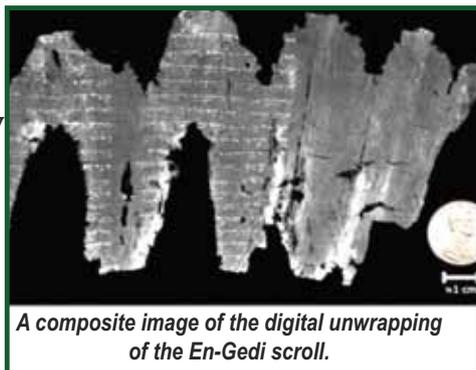
### En-Gedi: Ancient Scrolls 'Virtually' Deciphered To Reveal Earliest Old Testament Scripture

An extremely fragile, ancient Hebrew scroll has been digitally unwrapped for the first time, revealing the earliest copy ever found of an Old Testament Bible Scripture.

The scroll was discovered by archaeologists in 1970 at En-Gedi, the site of a large, ancient Jewish community dating from the late 8th Century BC. But contents of the En-Gedi Scroll were long thought to be lost forever, because it was destroyed in a fire in 600AD and was impossible to touch without dissolving into chunks of ash. 'Each fragment's main structure, completely burned and crushed, had turned into chunks of charcoal that continued to disintegrate every time they were touched,' they said.

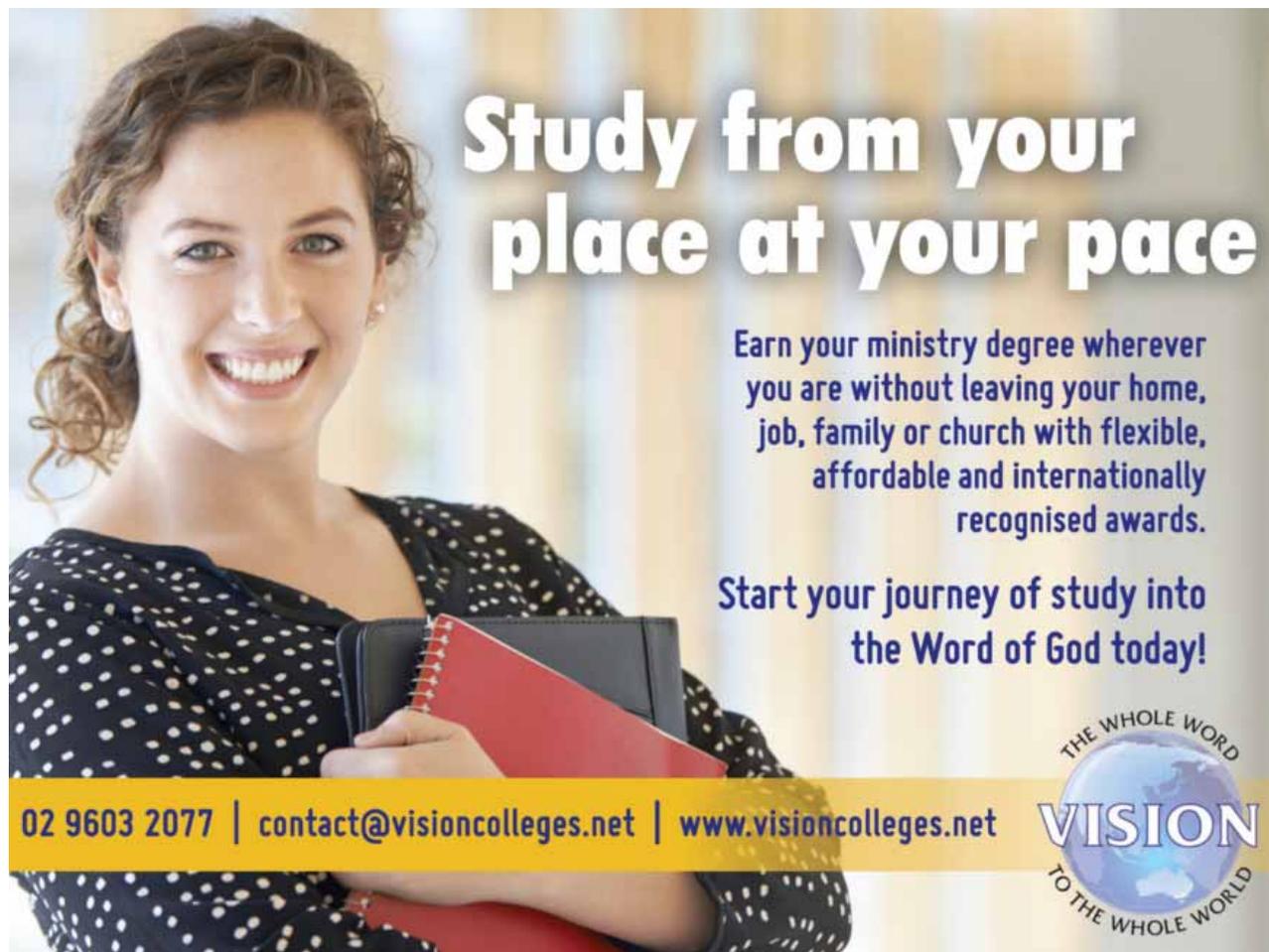
Now digital technology has enabled researchers to 'virtually unwrap' the scroll to decipher its contents. A micro-computed tomography (micro-CT) scan was able to pick up traces of metal in the ink revealing the original text. 'We were amazed at the quality of the images,' Dr Michael Segal, head of the School of Philosophy and Religions at Hebrew University of Jerusalem, said. Much of the text is as readable, or close to as readable as actual unharmed *Dead Sea Scrolls* [the oldest scrolls ever found] or high resolution photographs of them.'

Researchers hope that the same techniques can be used on *Dead Sea Scrolls*. The En-Gedi Scroll shows 18 lines of text in each column, which were originally 35 lines long. Like other ancient Hebrew scrolls, it contains only consonants and no vowels, as symbols for vowels were not introduced in Hebrew until the 9th Century.



A composite image of the digital unwrapping of the En-Gedi scroll.

(Continued On Page Seven)



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## A HAPPY MARRIAGE BETWEEN SCIENCE AND SCRIPTURE

(Continued From Page Six)

**'We were immediately struck by the fact that in these passages,** the En-Gedi *Leviticus* Scroll is identical in all of its details both regarding its letter and section division to what we call the Masoretic text, still the authoritative Jewish text today,' Dr Segal said. 'The En-Gedi *Leviticus* scroll is the most extensive and significant biblical text from antiquity that has come to light since the discovery of the *Dead Sea Scrolls*.' Researchers hope the techniques developed to read it will be used on other scrolls, including some from the *Dead Sea Scroll* collection, which have remained undecipherable until now.

**Before the scroll was virtually unwrapped,** experts believed the artefact may have been a Torah scroll. But a look at the images showed it was the *Book Of Leviticus*, from the third book of the *Book Of Moses*. This makes it the earliest Pentateuchal book — relating to the first five books of the Jewish or Christian Scriptures — ever found. The developments have been described as a 'significant discovery in biblical archaeology'.  
– *Breaking Christian News*

### Christian Writer Shot Dead In Jordan

**A Christian writer who was accused of committing blasphemy was shot dead** just when he was entering Jordan's highest court to face trial for blasphemy charges. Nahed Hattar, a prominent Jordanian writer was accused of committing blasphemy for sharing a cartoon deemed offensive to Islam. Nahed was shot as he was entering the highest court to stand trial for allegedly offending Islam. The 56-year-old, Christian writer was struck by three bullets as the unknown assailant was arrested on Sunday, 25 September. According to the witnesses, the gunman shot Nahed at a close range just when he was preparing to enter the courthouse.

**'He was standing at a short distance of about one metre in front of Nahed on the stairs of the Supreme Court,'** a witness told on condition of anonymity, as he was fearful of consequences for bearing witness against the gunman. A Jordanian government spokesperson Muhammad Momani condemned the killing terming it as a 'heinous crime.' He said: 'The government will strike with an iron hand all those who exploit this crime to broadcast speeches of hatred to our community.'

**Read: *Who Are The Brisbane Christian Fellowship?*  
by David Holden, at [www.defenceofthefaith.org](http://www.defenceofthefaith.org)**

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Belgrave Heights House Party For The 60+ Brigade

The Belgrave heights Festival House Party 60+ event is fast approaching. Hosted in the Convention Lodge, people will enjoy daily Bible teaching with David Price and will enjoy some fun and fellowship, fabulous food, renewing old friendships and making new ones, crafts and evening around the fire. The House Party commences on Monday 31 October at 11.30am and concludes with lunch on Friday 6 November 2016. The cost is \$210 per person inclusive of all meals, in shared accommodation. For further information please contact Gill Williams Phone: (03) 9752 6855, or email: [office@bhc.org.au](mailto:office@bhc.org.au)

#### United Prayer Needed

Herman Linde, of Wonga Park (Vic) Christian Reformed Church, invites fellow concerned Christians to come together as the Lord's people to bring the needs of our community, state and the nations before Him in unity. 'I really feel that we won't see God do great things amongst us unless we do this,' Herman says. 'If we want to see revival we first have to show God that we're serious about it and that we're willing to be used by Him.' The next meeting will be held at the Christian Reformed Church of Wonga Park, Cnr Gatters and Yarra Roads, Wonga Park (enter from Gatters Road) on Sunday 16 October at 2.30pm. For more information, contact Herman at [herman.linde@live.com.au](mailto:herman.linde@live.com.au)

## NEW LIFE ADVERTISING

### NEW ENGLAND CALLING!

The Presbytery of New England in Northern NSW currently has several vacancies which they are seeking to fill:

#### MANILLA (Sanctioned Charge)

Located some 40kms north of Tamworth, this charge is actively seeking an ordained minister to fill its pastoral vacancy. It is an active fellowship located in a small township with an active congregation seeking to reach their wider community.

Interim Moderator: Rev Graham Barnes,

8 Hill Street East, Walcha, NSW 2354. Email: [grabarnes@gmail.com](mailto:grabarnes@gmail.com)

#### GLEN INNES (Home Mission Station)

Located on the New England Highway, halfway between Armidale and Tenterfield, Glen Innes is a smaller but vital congregation which seeks a pastor to lead them in engaging and developing the many opportunities for the Gospel in this township.

It is anticipated that its status may be raised to a pastoral charge in the near future.

HM Moderator: Rev David Hassan

53 Graham Street, Tamworth, NSW 2340. Email: [davidhas@bigpond.com](mailto:davidhas@bigpond.com)

#### GUYRA-BEN LOMOND (Home Mission Station)

Some 40kms north of Armidale, at one of the highest points of the New England range, Guyra is a small congregation which seeks a pastor to lead them in developing a fresh vision for their community, following a voluntary private appointment of some 16 years.

Ideally, this would suit a part-time missionary who was either a self-funded retiree, or who could find some support in another occupation.

HM Moderator: Rev Gaius Goh

PO Box 4114, Armidale NSW 2350. [vrhcggoh@gmail.com](mailto:vrhcggoh@gmail.com)

*Further enquiries to the Interim Moderator / Moderator of the respective charges. Each of these congregations is part of the Presbyterian Church in NSW, and any applicants must be able to work in conformity with the standards of that Church.*

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## CHURCH AND NATION

### Innocuous Comments Still Risky In Tasmania – FamilyVoice

**FamilyVoice Tasmania Director Jim Collins** has welcomed the Tasmanian Government's proposed amendment to the Anti-Discrimination Act, but says it does not go far enough. The amendment, tabled in the House of Assembly, would provide a 'religious purpose' exception to section 17(1), which outlaws conduct that offends, humiliates, intimidates, insults or ridicules another on the basis of attributes including race, age, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation. 'The Hodgman government deserves praise for seeking to adjust the current 'overstep' problem with our anti-discrimination law, despite being howled down by opponents,' Jim Collins said. 'This law has rightly been under national scrutiny after a Tasmanian church leader was subjected to stressful litigation, merely for gently explaining church teaching on marriage to parents who had chosen his church schools for their children.'



**However Jim Collins believes the proposed change**, merely to allow an exception of a 'religious purpose', is inadequate. It would still allow someone to take offence at innocuous remarks of a non-religious nature, triggering stressful litigation similar to that experienced by Tasmania's Archbishop Porteous. 'It is absurd that s17(1) centres around the nebulous concept of "taking offence" at somebody's remarks,' Mr Collins said. 'We already have other laws, such as s19 of the Act, that prohibit real "hate speech". Free speech has been a way of life for Australians. We can still be respectful as we put forth differing points of view, but to haul people before anti-discrimination tribunals for a subjective claim of offence doesn't advance freedoms in our society. It only creates further division. I urge the government to solve this thorny problem by repealing section 17(1).'

### Shorten's Softening Of Rhetoric Bodes Well For People's Vote – ACL

**The Australian Christian Lobby has welcomed Opposition Leader Bill Shorten's softening** of his rhetoric against people who support preserving marriage between a man and a woman. 'I welcome Mr Shorten's condemnation of same-sex marriage activists who forced pro-marriage supporters to meet in secret this week,' ACL Managing Director Lyle Shelton said.

**Staff at the Mercure Hotel at Sydney Airport were 'rattled'** by phone calls from gay activists threatening violence unless a pre-booked meeting room for pro-marriage supporters was cancelled. 'It's good to see Mr Shorten de-escalating his rhetoric,' Mr Shelton said. 'I have been concerned that his labelling of marriage supporters as "homophobes" and as "people who come out from under rocks" was emboldening those who have resorted to threats of violence against hotel staff and ACL's staff. It is also good to see Mr Shorten now saying that our side of the debate should be allowed to organise for the plebiscite without being intimidated into moving meeting venues.'

### Radical Gender Theory Is 'Odd And Unscientific' – Sydney University Law Professor

A leading family law and child-protection expert has criticised the teaching of radical gender theory in classrooms across the country, calling them 'odd and unscientific'. Sydney University law professor Patrick Parkinson has called for an extensive overhaul of the *Safe Schools* program, having taken issue with its promotion of 'exaggerated statistics' on the prevalence of transgender and intersex conditions in the community to support its creators' belief that gender is fluid and can even be chosen. In a research paper, Professor Parkinson notes that gender ideology, which lies at the heart of *Safe Schools*, has become a widespread belief system, particularly in Western countries. With its origins in university philosophy departments rather than science, it has no place in the primary or secondary school curriculum, which is required to be evidence-based, he argues. More than 500 schools across the country have signed up to be *Safe Schools* members, and the program has attracted federal and state funds.

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## 'LINE UPON LINE, PRECEPT UPON PRECEPT'

### Gaming The Bible – Learning Through Guided Play

Thousands of kids around the world, including Kiwis, are now playing a New Zealand-made online Bible game designed to bring the Scriptures alive. 'We love it,' was the resounding comment from kids at the Hope Centre Lower Hutt (pictured), who trialled *The Aetherlight: Chronicles Of The Resistance*.

So far, the game has more than 15,000 players across multiple platforms mainly from New Zealand, Australia and the United States, with 400 kids playing the game every day. Game makers *Scarlet City* in Auckland estimate more than 30,000 hours have been played worldwide. The game tells a tale paralleling the story of the Bible, reimagining the Bible story as a 'steampunk' allegory taking characters and stories from the Bible and putting a fresh face on them to connect with kids.



The New Zealand Bible Society is partnering with *Scarlet City* to help families and churches connect the story kids encounter in the world of Aethasia to the real story of the Bible. 'Reading the Bible for most kids these days is a foreign concept. This is a way for them to engage with, and understand the Bible,' said Hope Centre Lower Hutt Children's Pastor Sarah Hart. Ten year old Mackensie Te Pohe loved playing the game. 'It's really fun and interesting,' she said. – Dr Mark Tronson - Press Service International

See more at <http://www.christiantoday.com.au/article/gaming.the.bible/22798.htm>

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– Jeff M. Sellers, Editor, Persecution News Service, Morning Star News.

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## **Boko Haram Guns Down Christians Leaving Church**

**On Sunday 18 September, Boko Haram launched a spattering of attacks** within hours of each other in northeast Nigeria. In one assault, they gunned down eight Christians as they were leaving church. Boko Haram members also ambushed a Nigerian military convoy, and beheaded a village chief and his son. All this comes in the wake of failed negotiations between Boko Haram and the Nigerian government to swap kidnapped women and girls for imprisoned insurgency members.



**It's been seven years of Boko Haram militants terrorizing northern Nigeria.**

But the crisis they've instigated is not grabbing headlines like their Euro-Middle Eastern ISIS counterparts or attacks on the West. Greg Kelley with World Mission says, 'They're causing all kinds of terror and it's incredibly difficult. In fact, there are so many communities in northern Nigeria that Christians have 100% evacuated just because they are literally targeted and murdered on site as they're identified.' This crisis isn't just Nigeria's problem. It's affecting countries around them — and really, no matter how far the effect goes, Christians need to fight against and pray for injustices.

**'The reality is that, although they're concentrated in Nigeria,** Boko Haram's influence has spilled over into Niger and Cameroon, specifically where you have hundreds of thousands of refugees. There's an additional 400,000 refugees in just those two countries as a result of Boko Haram.' Because of the hostilities, northern Nigeria can be a very volatile area for ministry. And Kelley says it's exactly where World Mission has been called. 'Literally, as Christians are fleeing, the people we work with are leaning into and going into those very places and sharing the Gospel with these terrorists, essentially,' explains Kelley. 'Nigeria is a dichotomy in missions, because [in] the southern part around Lagos you'll find all kinds of Christian activity and churches and meeting. But there's a line that literally runs right through the centre of the country. North of that is majority Muslim, south of that is majority Christian. So all of our work is targeted in the northern part where Muslims live and worship, and that's where Boko Haram is very active.' Over 2.6 million people have been torn from their homes because of Boko Haram. Most are in camps now, and they need hope. There are these Internally Displaced People camps scattered throughout northern Nigeria where Muslims have essentially been congregated because of Boko Haram, and it really makes them very accessible [for ministry]. So our strategy is going into these IDP camps in northern Nigeria where there are more than a million people just in Nigeria alone living.'

**According to the United Nations, northern Nigeria is seeing famine-like conditions created by these attacks.**

Many of the refugees used to be farmers, and have now lost their livelihood. 'We're being told there are 20,000 children right now just on the verge of death due to malnutrition in these camps in Nigeria. And we bring in food and sanitary items, and our partners are building relationships with them and just loving them without strings attached. And then of course they share *The Treasure*, which is World Mission's solar-powered audio Bible in the native tongue, which is Hausa, and people are gathering around, Muslims gathering around in small groups listening to the Word of God in these refugee camps.'

**But why audio Bibles, rather than the written Scriptures?** Kelley says not only is the community in northern Nigeria highly oral and relational, but also, so many schools in the area have been destroyed and literacy has gone down. 'Even prior to [Boko Haram], there was a highly illiterate area. But once you bring the chaos in of people running indiscriminately from place to place, it takes out all of the infrastructure which includes medical [and] it includes schooling. So people literally don't have access to schooling right now in so many places in northern Nigeria, so the illiteracy levels we're seeing, they're getting even worse now,' explains Kelley.



**'Christian-Safe Zone' Mooted For NE Iraq**

An advocacy group has called for a protected area for Christians in Iraq's north-east Nineveh plains after 'Islamic State' has been defeated. The group, *In Defence Of Christians*, hopes to enlist the support of the US Congress for the venture, which would also need the consent of local authorities both in Baghdad and in the autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan. The idea of a 'Christian safe zone' was first urged after the jihadists' offensive in 2014 which, according to *Amnesty International*, saw

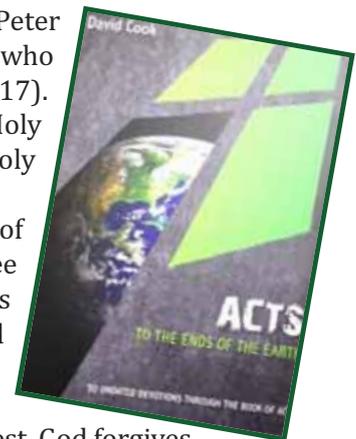
more than 900,000 religious and ethnic-minority Iraqis, about a quarter of them Christians, fleeing to the Kurdish region and beyond. Supporters of an autonomous Nineveh have called for the West's assistance to help resettle victims of genocide to their homes. Support for Nineveh's beleaguered Christians was echoed by Chaldean Patriarch Louis Raphael, who has suggested a referendum to give Christians a choice on whether they want to be governed from Baghdad, or be part of the autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan. — *World Watch Monitor*

**Why? Why? Why?**

**ACTS 8.14-25**

**This passage has been the source of much controversy in the church.** Peter and John are sent by the Apostles to Samaria. They lay hands on the disciples who have been baptised in Jesus’ name (v 16) and they receive the Holy Spirit (v 17). Whose name should they have been baptised with in order to receive this Holy Spirit? It is clear they were true believers. Why had they not received the Holy Spirit at the time of their repentance as did the 3,000 in Acts 2?

**Some find here, in this two-stage experience,** the basis for the practice of confirmation. That is, through the hand of the confirming bishop, the confirmer receives the Holy Spirit. Others argue that the normal Christian experience is two-stage; conversion is followed by Spirit baptism as a subsequent, second experience. Though other passages in Acts are cited to prove this point, the Acts 8 incident is the clearest.



**Why was there a two-stage experience for the Samaritans** when for the rest, God forgives our sin and gives us the Holy Spirit at one time (Acts 2.38–39)? Should Christians seek further fullness of the Holy Spirit beyond their conversion, thinking that without this second blessing they have not received all God intended for them? If this is the case, why don’t any of the New Testament letters urge the seeking of such a second blessing to solve any of the pastoral issues dealt with by the New Testament? Without backing from the letters of the New Testament for this belief in subsequence, was there a good historical reason for a two-stage blessing at Samaria?

**There was ongoing conflict between Jews and Samaritans** and such tension was not to be tolerated in the church. Therefore, Samaritan believers needed to realise that they were not a separate sect within Christianity and so they received the Holy Spirit through the hands of the Jerusalem Apostles. They are part of the one body of Christ. It was also important for Jerusalem believers to know that Samaritan believers were not inferior; the same Holy Spirit filled each. So Peter and John were eyewitnesses of the integrity of the Samaritan believers’ experience.

**There are so many characters, stories and experiences of salvation in Acts.** Which one is normative for today? It is not Luke’s intention to show the normative spiritual experience for today.

**FOR REFLECTION:**

Simon sought commercial value from the Holy Spirit (vv 18–24). Why is Peter’s response appropriate? See Ephesians 1.13,14. What elements make up the normal Christian experience?

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

**SEEN ON FACEBOOK:**



*John 14.14.  
He Answers Prayer.*

**Words Of Wisdom:**

**SIX PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC SPEAKING:**

1. Be Heard.
2. Be Interesting.
3. Be Yourself.
4. Be Confident.
5. Be Aware of Your Surroundings.
6. Be Pleased to Be There!

*– Rev Alistair Bain, Minister of St John’s Presbyterian Church, Hobart*

## BOOKS WORTH READING

### THE BOOK OF ISAIAH AND GOD'S KINGDOM: A Thematic-Theological Approach, Andrew T. Abernathy, NSBT 40; London: Apollos, 2016. ISBN 978-1-78359-428-3

This is the theological exposition on the massive prophecy of *Isaiah* that many have been waiting for, and we are grateful to Dr Andrew Abernathy for supplying the felt need of a book that integrates and explains *Isaiah* as a whole, showing how it contributes to the theme of God's Kingdom in the biblical canon. Dr Abernathy, formerly a lecturer in Old Testament at Ridley College, Melbourne, is now Assistant Professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College, Chicago.

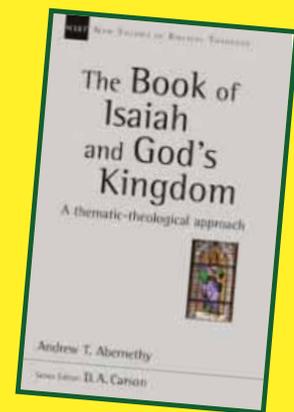
He is right to view God as King as the leading theology of the book, as made clear in the vision of God enthroned in the temple in Isaiah 6. He explains the narrative logic of the placement of chapter 6 and does not insist that it be understood as Isaiah's inaugural vision and call to be a prophet. Abernathy helpfully explains what biblical theology is (and isn't) and reads this huge prophecy in final form (remaining agnostic as to the details of how the book was assembled). Nothing Dr Abernathy says is inconsistent with Isaianic authorship of the book as a whole.

What is 'great' about the prophecy of *Isaiah* is the breadth of its vision, providing as it does a sketch of all human history culminating with God as the acknowledged King of all the nations. This makes plain that the only appropriate response for us to make is humble and committed service of the Divine King. The proclamation of God as King punctuates Isaiah's prophecy at key points (eg chapters 24, 33, 36-37, 40, 52, 60-62, 66), and he acts as King both in history and at the end of the historical process. The believer's hope is for the return of God as King to redeem Zion (chapters 40, 52), which is Isaiah's 'good news' (= Gospel). Dr Abernathy shows its fulfilment in the coming of Jesus the Divine King, bringing a redemption that will be totally manifest at His Second Coming. The final chapters of *Isaiah* feature God as the victorious Warrior-King who fights for His people, and they picture all nations bringing tribute to the universal King.

Dr Abernathy rightly insists that this theocratic framework must shape our interpretation of the 'lead agents' God uses to establish and maintain His Kingdom, namely the promised Davidic ruler of chapters 7, 9, 11 and 16, as well as the prophetic 'servant of the Lord' in chapters 42, 49, 50 and 52, and the messenger of Isaiah 61. All figures find their fulfilment in Jesus Christ, though Abernathy is correct in saying that it is not clear in *Isaiah* itself that these three persons are the same individual. Dr Abernathy's careful exegesis and clear thinking are on display when he does not rush to turn the Davidic leader of the early chapters into a saviour-figure, for in these passages it is God who delivers His people, and the role of the Davidic ruler is to ensure that justice is done in the subsequent period of blessing. This underlines God's concern for justice and social equity.

I would supplement Abernathy's excellent presentation by saying that Jesus fulfils these prophecies as the Incarnate Divine King who saves as well as by being the Davidic leader with a passion for justice and a ministry of the care of the poor. I cannot, however, follow Abernathy in his argument that Israel is the figure described in the first Servant Song of Isaiah 42, though he does view the subsequent three Servant Songs as referring to a future suffering prophetic individual. As well, unlike Abernathy, I see no reason to differentiate between the Servant of the Lord and the prophetic messenger of Isaiah 61, who announces what God the King will do in transforming the fortunes of Zion. Again, the New Testament sees Jesus as the faithful Servant who suffers as well as the Saviour God who sends the Servant to do His costly task. These comments are not aimed at detracting from Dr Abernathy's excellent study. The glorious vision of *Isaiah* is intended to produce a just community of those who trust and serve God the King. There is no grander vision in Scripture. The long wait for a book that clearly and reliably outlines and explains this inspired vision is over. I heartily recommend this book to all serious students of the prophecy of *Isaiah*.

- Greg Goswell



*'The glorious vision of Isaiah is intended to produce a just community of those who trust and serve God the King. There is no grander vision in Scripture. The long wait for a book that clearly and reliably outlines and explains this inspired vision is over.'*

## WITH CHRIST

### SA Major Geoff Freind Dies After Being Assaulted In Malawi During Preaching Tour

Perth Salvation Army Major Geoff Freind was assaulted while walking between his hotel and shops in Malawi during a preaching tour in Africa. Mr Freind, 60, was a long-serving Salvation Army Major based in the Perth suburb of Morley. He was on leave and taking a five-week solo-preaching tour in Malawi in eastern Africa when he was attacked while walking from his hotel to nearby shops.

**Mr Freind was put in an induced coma** at a Johannesburg hospital, but died on 21 September. His wife and four sons had travelled to be by his side. Mr Freind's brother-in-law

Peter Walker said his family was devastated. 'Geoff was a great family man who loved his family,' he said. The family was the centre of his life. He was a great dad and he's going to be terribly missed.'

**Mr Walker said little was known about the circumstances of Mr Freind's death** but it was believed he was attacked by a group of people and sustained serious head injuries. Salvation Army Major Neil Venables said Mr Freind was passionate about his faith and helping the community. 'With Geoff, it was always about people, investing in people's lives, wanting to bring about the best in people's lives,' he said.



### John Wesley White, Who Mentored Franklin Graham, Brought Many Souls To Christ

John Wesley White served as an associate evangelist with Billy Graham Evangelistic Association from 1961 to 1996. Dr White died on 4 September 2016; he was 87 years old. He joined his late wife, Kathleen, who passed away in August 2011.

**Dr White was a scholar who held a doctorate in philosophy from Oxford University**, among other degrees. He memorized hundreds of Bible verses and wrote more than 20 books. He preached the Gospel with BGEA from 1961 to 1996 and hosted a religious television show in his native Canada.

**The evangelist was also a close friend of the Graham family** and instrumental in helping Franklin Graham discover his calling to proclaim the Gospel. It was Dr White who convinced Franklin to preach for the first time—in Juneau, Alaska, in March 1989. Since then, Franklin has held 182 evangelistic festivals in dozens of countries, introducing multitudes to the love of Jesus Christ. In his autobiography, *Rebel With A Cause*, Franklin wrote, 'John became not only my close adviser and friend but also my teacher.'

**Billy Graham wrote about Dr White:** 'I have seldom met a man who had a deeper burden for evangelism. To the end, Dr White continued to share the Gospel through monthly letters. The father, grandfather and evangelist leaves behind a legacy of service and devotion to Jesus Christ. — *Decision Magazine*

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