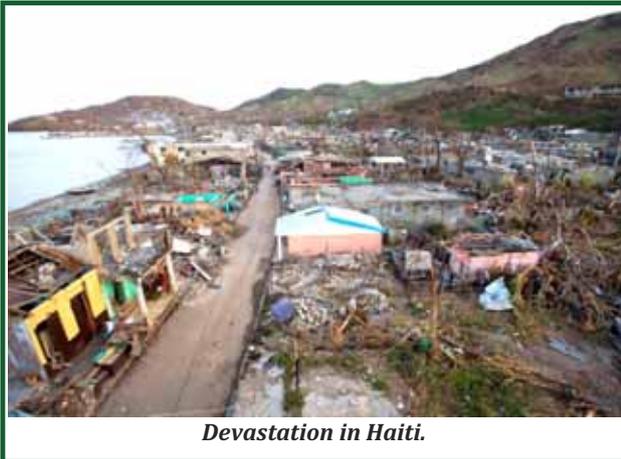


## Samaritan's Purse – Meeting The Need In Haiti



*Devastation in Haiti.*



*Samaritan's Purse loads up aid for Haiti.*

**In the wake of Hurricane Matthew's destructive rampage across the Caribbean,** Samaritan's Purse has sent its DC-8 plane loaded with urgently needed supplies to Haiti. The organization has also sent a Disaster Assistance Response Team to join staff already on the ground to respond to the catastrophe. The plane was loaded with 18 tonnes of essential items such as clean water, hygiene items, and plastic sheeting for emergency shelter. Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere, and this storm has brought extensive damage to the island nation that is still recovering from the 2010 earthquake.

**Torrential rainfall and high winds have caused severe flooding,** washed away bridges, and damaged thousands of homes. Initial reports estimate that 2.5 million people have been affected. Samaritan's Purse is prepared to meet the immediate needs of 2,000 households.

### **NORTH KOREA: Despite 70 Years Of Religious Persecution, Church Keeps Growing**

**North Korean Christians have endured 70 years of persecution,** but this has not stopped the work of God in the communist nation. Since 1995, the North Korean government has allowed about 480 foreign organizations to work in the country, and 70 of these are Christian, including Samaritan's Purse and World Vision. These Christian organizations have covered 85 of the 145 counties and 23 of the 27 cities in North Korea, which means a large part of the country's population has been exposed to Christian work, according to an article from the *Lausanne Global Analysis*.

**The North Korean government extends tolerance toward these Christian groups** not only because of the benefits they give but also because they are perceived to be people of integrity. 'In one of my trips, one minder commented to me, "Many of the people coming into our country want to take advantage of us, but you (Christians) want to help us";' one article author wrote.

**When it comes to dealing with Christian organizations, North Korea is not at all like China,** where Christians are associated with negative things like the Opium Wars and colonialism. In North Korean history, Christianity had been perceived as being generally helpful to the nation. Korea first opened its doors to Christianity in 1884 when American missionary Horace Allen was able to help heal the Queen's brother through the use of medicine. Because of this, more missionaries were invited into the country, leading to the establishment of 293 schools and 43 universities and a surge of Christian activity, particularly in Pyongyang, which at the time was dubbed as 'the Jerusalem of the East'. Thus, from a historical perspective, Christians in North Korea have been associated with education and progress.

*(Continued on p.5)*

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## Who Has The Answers?

**Ron Iddles, soon-to-retire Secretary of the Police Association of Victoria**, and a member of the Force since 1973 says, 'I don't think I've ever seen it this bad'. Mr Iddles was speaking about the current state of criminal activity in Melbourne which he says has never been so brazen since he started in the Police Force.

**In the state of NSW, enjoying being debt free with budget surpluses**, few have noticed that \$3.8bn has been set aside over the next four years for the building of new prisons to house the record number of inmates, 12,000, at last count. The Government in NSW is now developing 'rapid build', pop up gaols. Sorry. These are not called gaols or prisons any more, they are now called 'Correctional Centres'.

**Has anyone noticed that there is very little correction going on?** Has anyone noticed that these centres seem to be recruiting centres for further criminal activity? I feel for our political leaders. They are trying their best. The media is full of criticism, but the media have no realistic solutions. ALL the societal indicators are bad for Australia.

**At the risk of being branded a 'fundamentalist' or 'simpleton'**, may I suggest that historically, a society thrives when God the Creator is affectionately revered!

**The Apostle Paul contrasted the 'wisdom' of the world**, which he said was bankrupt, with the Wisdom of God, which he said alone provides the solution for both our immediate and long-term problems. (1 Corinthians 1.18-2.2). That wisdom is summed up as the Cross of the Lord Jesus, which is foolishness to the world, but to the saved is known as the power of God. It brings about real correction!

**That is why Paul places a value of zero, nil, nought on everything else**, so that he may preach, 'Jesus Christ and Him crucified'. (1 Corinthians 2.2). Humankind's immediate problem is separation from God and from ourselves. We are rebels, we have no self-knowledge because we don't know the God who made us.

**Only the Cross work of Jesus brings us to know God** and to know ourselves and how we have been made to live.

**Our ultimate problem is that we are in no fit state to meet this God**, but meet Him we will, and only through the Cross does God give us the forgiveness we need and the new life which we need to stand before Him. Here is God's solution; this is His answer; and it works!

**Humankind's perversity is seen in its resistance** of even the consideration of this solution. My wife marks Bible study papers for the Crossroads Bible Institute. Prisoners from all over the Pacific and Australia study the Bible and submit their responses, which are marked and encouragement given. Crossroads has access to every prison in every state of Australia, except one. You guessed it - Victoria!

**It's one thing to define a problem.** But it's another thing to find where the solution lies.

- David Cook

## **RUSSIA: Victims Of Geo-Political Tensions**

**Signed into law on 7 July, Russia's new anti-mission measures** have since been applied to at least nine cases. Most of those accused of illegal missionary activity have been found guilty and fined. However, the Novosergiev District Court of Orenburg Province ruled in favour of Baptist pastor Alexander Demkin, rejecting the ridiculous charges brought against him over his church's popular summer program for children. In some cases, rulings are being appealed and the law is being tested; this is fuelling debate.

**Donald and Ruth Ossewaarde started visiting Russia in 1994.** Since 2005, they have lived in Oryol, 360km south-west of Moscow, witnessing and ministering openly and freely. However, on Sunday morning 14 August, Ossewaarde was arrested as he led worship in his home. Police accused him of posting evangelistic tracts in public places – an accusation he denies – and engaging in missionary activity without a permit. First, the court refused to allow time for Ossewaarde's lawyers to arrive from Moscow. Then, when the judge found Ossewaarde guilty of conducting unlawful missionary activity and sentenced him to pay a fine of 40,000 rubles (US\$640), the court-appointed lawyer advised him to accept the verdict, pay the fine and leave the city. At that point, Ruth returned to the US while Donald and his legal team set about preparing the appeal. The Ossewaardes have closed their ministry in Oryol and referred their local community of believers to the Russian Baptist Church.

**In the appeal hearing on Friday 30 September, Ossewaarde explained** that he has been living and ministering in the 'new democratic Russia .... without any trouble for 14 years', in line with the religious freedom provisions in the Russian constitution. He told the court that he had studied the anti-mission measures in the 'Yarovaya Law' and was certain that his pastoral ministry and the worship occurring in his home were not in violation of that law. He said he was merely 'exercising the rights guaranteed by the constitution and the laws of the Russian Federation'. Unable to make a decision, the judge suspended the session for several hours. When the court was reconvened, she upheld the original verdict: guilty. Donald Ossewaarde and his legal team will appeal the charges all the way to the Supreme Court if they have to, for the sake of religious freedom in Russia. [The case can be followed at <http://www.donossewaarde.com/>]

**These measures as they apply to Christians have nothing to do with religion** and everything to do with geo-politics – in particular the geo-politics of Syria, of sanctions, and of the West's involvement in political destabilisation, eg, regime change activities. To say Russia is 'cracking down on Christianity' is untrue and unhelpful. Such hostile, anti-Russia language can only hurt the cause of foreigners and Protestants in Russia.

**This situation requires wisdom and delicacy** and above all an acknowledgement that Western governments are fuelling toxic fear of Russia to further their own ideological, economic and geo-strategic interests at Russia's expense. Specifically this is with regard to cultural Marxism, gender ideology and same-sex marriage, as well as Sunni rule in Damascus, US and German control of Eastern European markets and continued US-led NATO expansion (including into the Black Sea).

**The greater the tensions, the more 'protective' and reactionary Russia will be,** and the more victims we will have. As Donald Ossewaarde testifies: 'Up until recently, we had complete freedom to be able to distribute literature, talk to people on the street. We were even able to put literature in mail boxes.' But now, he says, Americans and other non-Russian Orthodox are being viewed with suspicion.

### **PLEASE PRAY THAT:**

- the Lord will intervene in Russia, to redeem this situation and sanctify the Church; may the Russian people and the Russian Orthodox Church speak out against injustice, so that the Gospel might continue its healing work amongst a needy people shattered by 70 years of Communist captivity.
- give Russia's churches, missionaries, lawyers and judges great wisdom, divine guidance and supernatural courage to do and speak up for what is right in God's sight; may these anti-mission measures be judged and found wanting and the law be amended radically or repealed so that religious freedom is restored.
- give Donald Ossewaarde and his legal team, along with other appellants, 'the Spirit of wisdom' (Ephesians 1.17) as well as spiritual insight and amazing grace in abundance; may the Gospel be preached, suspicions be swept away and this whole situation be turned to blessing.

*'And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.'*  
(Romans 8.28).

*'Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.'*  
(Romans 12.14)

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)

## Should The Influence Of Christian Values Be Consigned To The History Books?

**This was the question recently posed to former Prime Minister John Howard** by Bible Society's *Eternity News*. In his response, Mr Howard stood firm on his credentials as a person of faith himself, while recognising that arguments today had to appeal to the whole community, not just to those who shared a Christian worldview.

**Identifying Judaeo-Christian values as 'the greatest moral and ethical shaper of today's Australia,'** Mr Howard said that while we owe much to such institutions as the United Nations and documents like our constitution, much of what we value traces back to the teachings of Jesus. 'Such as, the separation of church and state, where He said: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." The notion that Christian influence and values should be consigned to history books is a non-sense,' Mr Howard said.

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

### When God Brews Up A Storm ...

**God created a massive dust storm to deliver recent converts to Christianity from the Islamic militants who hunted them, according to a report from *Bibles For Mideast*. The ministry in the Muslim-dominated country has just finished baptising 50 new Christians when militants surrounded their bus and fired shots.**

**After the baptism service, the group boarded a bus to return to their house church for the worship service and the Lord's Supper. As the bus began to move, cars followed and several shots were fired at the bus.**

**The new converts and their leaders feared the worst.**

**That's when the wind started to pick up, and dust began to swirl around them. Witnesses say there was a giant storm behind the bus and the militants were cut off by the dust.**

– *Charisma News*

### Famine Imminent In Nigeria

A United Nations official has declared massive famine is imminent in Nigeria and the surrounding Lake Chad area, with about six million people 'severely food insecure.' Toby Lanzer, UN Humanitarian co-ordinator for the region, says that tens of thousands are dying. Mr Lanzer reported that in the next 12 months, as many as 80,000 children will die of starvation in northern Nigeria. The Christian Association of Nigeria is working in the Gurku Inter-faith Camp to counteract the pain and suffering Boko Haram has inflicted. The *21st Century Wilberforce Initiative* recently met in Nigeria with more than 7,500 pastors, parliamentarians, journalists, and denominational leaders to help mobilize them to plan and take action in what has been called 'the biggest crisis facing any of us, anywhere.'

– *ASSIST News Service*

### Compassion – For Christ, Church And Child

What makes *Compassion International* known worldwide is their unique identity in the communities they serve, namely, 'Christ, Church and Child.' The ministry focuses on the individual child — providing physical, social, economic, and spiritual care in impoverished areas. *Compassion* says poverty is

a guide to where they serve, and they only work in communities where there is an active local church. It is estimated that 400 million people in the world live in abject poverty. The *Compassion* programs provided through the local church offer parents the security of knowing their children have a better future through nutrition, education, and Gospel-centred care.

– *Mission News Network*

### Joining Forces To Reach The UK's Unreached

Christian agencies have joined forces in a new outreach to evangelise people of other faiths. The *Evangelical Alliance* is working with *London City Mission* and *Global Connections* to reach out with the Gospel to the five million people in the UK who are part of a non-Christian religion. A *Reaching The World On Your Doorstep* event will take place on 23 November in West London, where evangelists will share ways to engage effectively with non-Christian people of faith. The event is part of the emerging Christian response to the new multi-cultural societies of the West. Gavin Calver, director of mission at the *Evangelical Alliance*, says that in the past missionaries went overseas; today we just need to go next door, down the street or around the corner.

– *Christian Today*

**NORTH KOREA: Church Keeps Growing Despite Religious Persecution** (Continued from p.1)

However, Christian persecution in North Korea has become intense since 1945. The government, seeking to remove all traces of Christianity, conducted a massive crackdown against Christians. In the 1970s, the government announced Christians no longer exist in the country. For the 14th year in a row, North Korea has been ranked as the number one country where Christians are most persecuted, according to Open Doors USA. A report released last month by Christian Solidarity Worldwide said that there are thousands of Christians suffering from extremely harsh torture in labour camps.

The report said in some cases, Christians are hung on a cross over a fire, and at times crushed under a steam-roller. 'Prisoners are forced to carry out long days of hard labour, such as mining and logging. Malnutrition is rife due to the poor rations, and increases the mortality rate. Prisoners live in poor accommodation that does not provide adequate protection against the tough winters, further damaging their health; and are subject to brutal treatment, torture and even execution by prison guards,' the report said.

Yet, in spite of this, Christian presence in the country continues to remain. One important challenge Christians in North Korea are facing is unity. 'Unless Christians give priority to unity there, it will be difficult for North Koreans to differentiate cults working there (such as the Moonies) from orthodox Christians,' the author wrote. 'Whether we are operating in more sensitive areas or working to improve the livelihood of North Koreans inside, it is imperative that we unite as the body of Christ.'

- Gospel Herald.

**MEGAVOICE'S Expanding Influence**

Tom Treseder, Director of MegaVoice, reports: We are sending via our partners, our new, specially designed, small, secure, MegaVoice Bible into the most hostile and restricted places on Earth. Because they are so small, don't look like a book and are private, 'M' leaders, Orthodox Jews, black clad 'M' ladies and refugees in all shapes and sizes are pleading for them. We will soon be distributing the world's first, single piece, self-powered, pocket size Bible for the world's deaf and hearing impaired. With our range of MegaVoice Bibles, there is no segment of people around the globe that now cannot be reached with the Good News. That means the non literate, blind, handicapped, speakers in over 6,400 languages and dialects, those in sensitive and hostile situations, the aged and non techie and hearing impaired can now hear the Gospel.

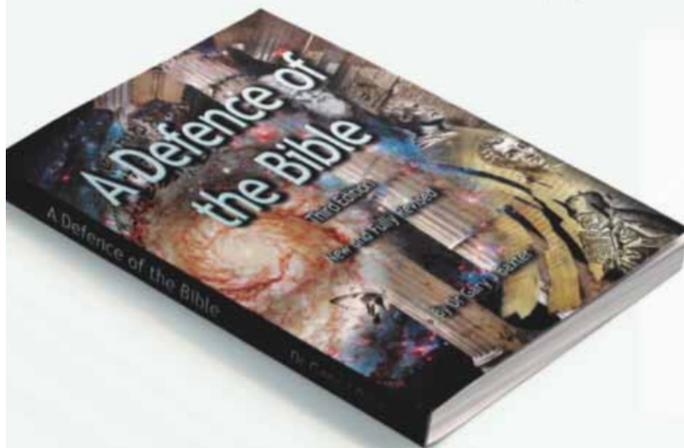
## The Bible is true and can be trusted!

Presenting clear and compelling historical and scientific support for the Bible's reliability, *A Defence of the Bible* brings together wide-ranging evidence and equips Christians with ready information to answer critics.

Now in its third edition, *A Defence of the Bible* answers the common arguments used against Christianity and the Bible, including detailed responses to four major misconceptions:

- ✗ That Christianity is "just another religion"
- ✗ That the Bible is merely a collection of ancient myths and is full of mistakes
- ✗ That science through the Theory of Evolution can explain our existence without the need for God
- ✗ That Jesus Christ, if he ever existed, was merely a good man and was not God

Dr Gary Baxter spent five years compiling information for *A Defence of the Bible*, which draws on an extensive variety of sources, anchored by the author's formal scientific knowledge and his biblical faith. Dr Baxter has a PhD in synthetic organic chemistry from Monash University.



*A Defence of the Bible* is published in large-format paperback, consisting of 186 full color pages with 196 images and 584 footnotes.

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### Shorten Sells Us Short On Plebiscite Issue

**Bill Shorten does not trust the Australian people** to settle the meaning of marriage. The rejection of a marriage plebiscite by Opposition Leader Bill Shorten demeans those he claims to represent, according to FamilyVoice research officer Ros Phillips.

**'Bill Shorten is selling us short,' she said.** 'He does not trust the Australian people. They deserve a say on whether we should change the man-woman meaning that marriage has had for thousands of years. It is a fundamental, culture-defining issue. It has already been considered by the parliament at least 14 times. Only a public vote can settle the matter.'

**Ros Phillips said Mr Shorten's stated reasons for rejecting a plebiscite** do not add up. 'His party has been willing to waste billions on fatal home insulation schemes and similar projects, yet he calls a people's vote too expensive,' she said. His false claim that a people's vote would result in gay suicides is a sign of his desperation. The Irish people voted on marriage last year without any gay suicides. Holland and Sweden, the world's most gay-friendly nations, have same-sex marriage but still report high levels of depression and suicide in the gay community, similar to levels in less friendly countries. A recent study of Queensland gay suicides found that relationship problems were the most common contributing factor rather than "homophobia".

**'Is the real reason behind Labor's plebiscite decision** the fear that if Australians are given a chance to consider the marriage question in the privacy of the polling booth, they may vote to keep its man-woman meaning?'

### Rising Pro-Life Tide On Spring Street

**Melbourne witnessed an unprecedented display of unity and colour on Spring Street in support of the unborn** on 8 October. The Australian Christian Lobby's Victorian Director Dan Flynn described the *March For The Babies* as a pro-life triumph.

**'Over 1,000 Victorians affirmed the rights of the unborn and their support** for those facing unexpected pregnancies,' Mr Flynn said. 'Every year the March gets larger and younger and the opposition becomes smaller. The only opposition this year was from a few protesters in Sex Party T-Shirts. The message to Members of Parliament is that Victorians in rising numbers are demanding human rights for unborn babies. The message that, even if a baby is unwanted, it is still a human, resonated with the large crowd.'

**Church ministers were urged to find their voice in supporting the unborn** and to overcome the fear imposed by political correctness. 'This March is against the background of Victoria having the most liberal abortion laws in the western world, with state-sanctioned abortion up to birth, for any reason,' Mr Flynn said.

**Ramon A Williams  
- Worldwide Photos -  
WANT TO SEE MORE?**

*New Life* can only publish a small selection of photos, but you can see more of those attributed to Worldwide Photos by contacting Ramon Williams,  
e-mail: [rlgmedia@ozemail.com.au](mailto:rlgmedia@ozemail.com.au)



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## FROM ALL QUARTERS ...

### Bible Society Turns 200 In 2017

**On 7 March 2017 the Bible Society in Australia turns 200!** Bible Society will be celebrating what God has achieved through His Word over all of that time. The focus will be not just on the Bible Society, but on the Bible itself, and will also be a time of praying and planning for the future of the Bible in Australia and beyond, calling on God to ensure that His Word is heard far and wide.

**In 1817, Governor Lachlan Macquarie** (with urging from Elizabeth Macquarie and others) founded a branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Sydney. It began one month before the first bank (the Bank of New South Wales, now Westpac), and all of the original directors of the bank were directors of the Bible Society.

**Bible Societies arose as the states were founded.** In 2010, all of these organisations came together and nationalised as Bible Society Australia. The Governor of NSW, His Excellency David Hurley, is Bible Society's national patron.

**A major event will take place on Sunday 5 March 2017** with a *National Celebration Of The Bible*. An event will be held at the Hillsong Convention Centre in Sydney, with various church leaders speaking, including Anglican Archbishop Glenn Davies and Hillsong's Brian Houston. Invitations will be extended to as many church leaders as possible to join the congregation on the day.

We cordially invite you to join us as we worship God in a special service marking the re-establishment of the Presbyterian Church in Kyneton. The guest preacher for this service is the Rev Peter Hastie, Principal of the Presbyterian Theological College, Melbourne.



### Kyneton Presbyterian Church

Sunday 6th November 2016

2:30 pm

Red Brick Hall

23 Yaldwyn Street West, Kyneton

Rev Matt Tegart matt@gisbornepresbyterian.com.au 0466 648 400

Noel and Joy Johnston 5422 7303

The Presbyterian Church of Victoria <https://pcv.org.au/>

### Elizabeth Kendal's New Book ...

#### War! Destruction! Violent Persecution! Martyrdom! Forced Displacement!

For hundreds of thousands of now destitute Christian families, this is the new reality.

Yet contrary to all appearances, God is at work in the Middle East.

*'Kendal's book is a godsend to anyone who is at a loss to understand what lies behind the suffering in the Middle East. Drawing on authoritative voices from the region, her clear-eyed analysis untangles the conflicts with the heart and insight of a prophet. She gives a sobering account of the West's complicity in the atrocities – and what we can do to bring healing in a crisis as appalling as is the indifference to it.'*

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

For more information go to: [www.ElizabethKendal.com](http://www.ElizabethKendal.com)



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#### TURN BACK THE BATTLE:

#### Isaiah Speaks to Christians Today.

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

For purchasing options, visit: [www.turnbackthebattle.com](http://www.turnbackthebattle.com)

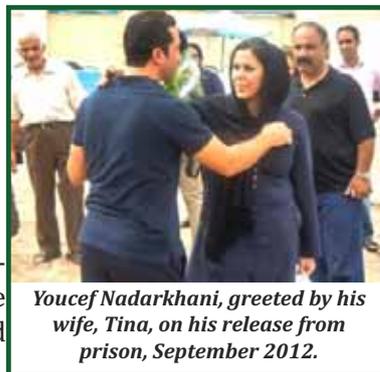
## Iranian Converts Appeal Against Lashes For 'Illegal' Communion Wine

**Three Iranian Christian converts are appealing** after they were sentenced to 80 lashes each for drinking alcohol during Holy Communion. (Non-Muslims are permitted to drink alcohol in Iran, but leaving Islam is forbidden, so any such conversions are not recognised.)

**Yasser Mossayebzadeh, Saheb Fadaie and Mohammad Reza Omid** – all from Muslim backgrounds – were also charged with 'acting against national security', alongside Youcef Nadarkhani, a pastor once sentenced to death for apostasy. They are due to appear in court again in the northern city of Rasht on 15 October. The maximum sentence for that charge is six years in prison. This is the second time Omid has been convicted of drinking alcohol. A third conviction could lead to his execution.

**Mossayebzadeh, Fadaie and Omid were initially arrested on 13 May** alongside Nadarkhani and his wife, Tina. The couple were released later that day, but the three others were detained. More than 200 Christians have been detained by Iranian authorities since 2015. Many are in jail, while others have been released conditionally, pending sentencing or an appeal. Middle East Concern's Rob Duncan said that at least 43 Christians were arrested in August alone. 'The Iranian regime is conducting a very active campaign against house churches at the moment and leaders of house churches are harassed and put under pressure,' he said.

– *World Watch Monitor*



*Youcef Nadarkhani, greeted by his wife, Tina, on his release from prison, September 2012.*

### **PAKISTAN: 'Redouble Prayer' For Asia Bibi Ahead Of Supreme Court Execution Verdict**

'**Pakistan must revoke, release and repeal**', says *Release International*, as Pakistan's Supreme Court was to decide on 13 October whether to approve the execution of Christian woman Asia Bibi, who is has been convicted of blasphemy. *Release International*, which supports persecuted Christians around the world, is calling on Pakistan to release her and for Christians to redouble their prayers for Asia. 'Pakistan must revoke this death sentence, release Asia Bibi and repeal the blasphemy law, says Release International Chief Executive, Paul Robinson. Time and again, we have seen these laws abused to target individuals and destroy their lives,' says Robinson.

**His organisation has launched a petition to abolish the blasphemy law**, which carries a mandatory death sentence. 'These laws are used to fan the flames of violent persecution. They are invoked to devastate lives and stir up extremism. Merely to accuse a person of blasphemy can be to pass a sentence of death. All too often, even when the courts confirm a person's innocence, vigilantes take the law into their own hands and murder those who have been accused of blasphemy, often without a shred of evidence. More than 50 people have already died as a result of vigilante killings since 1990. We urge Pakistan to reject extremism and violent persecution. Show mercy to Asia, set her free and guarantee her and her family's protection. For the future peace of this great nation, Pakistan must repeal these much-abused laws.'

– *Release International*

### **INDIA: Christian Woman Murdered, Believers Beaten In Three Separate Attacks**

**A 55-year-old Christian woman in a rural village in**

Punjab, North India, bled to death after she was attacked outside her house on 11 September. Balwinder Kaur, who suffered from a mental disability caused by an accidental electric shock around 20 years ago, was arrested last year following accusations that she desecrated the *Guru Granth Sahib* (the Sikh holy book). It not yet clear who is responsible for her murder. Hindu extremists forced their way into a private home in Uttar Pradesh on 26 August and beat up a church pastor who was leading a prayer meeting. The pastor, who is a convert to Christianity, was accused by the mob of proselytising Hindus. On 16 September, Prashant Bhatnagar, a 45-year-old Christian man, was abducted and severely beaten by a group of men, believed to be from Shriram Pratishtan (a local Hindu organisation), whilst distributing Christian literature in Kharghar and Taloja, near Mumbai. He was taken by car to a secluded spot in Taloja, where he was beaten and threatened with death if he continued distributing the literature.

– *Barnabas Fund*

### **MOROCCO – Muslim People-Smuggler On Trial For Murder Of Six Christians During Sea Crossing**

**The Muslim captain of a migrant smuggling boat** has gone on trial in Spain for the religiously motivated murder of six Christians. At least 50 migrants were crammed into a ten-metre-long inflatable, which left the Moroccan coast for Spain in December 2014. When the craft encountered rough seas, witnesses said that the captain accused a Nigerian church pastor, who was leading Christians on the boat in prayer, of causing the bad weather by praying. The captain and his second-in-command, both from Cameroon, beat the pastor with planks of wood before throwing him overboard. A further five Christians on the boat were also thrown into the sea.

# **ANNUAL REFORMATION DAY SERVICE**

**SUNDAY 30 OCTOBER 2016**

**AT 3.00PM**

**MAYFIELD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**MERNDA**

**(1345 Plenty Road, Mernda)**

**SPEAKER:**

**Rev Dr Botros Botrosdief.**

**SERMON: What Is Reformation Day And Why Do We Celebrate It?**

**Rev Dr Botros Botrosdief is the presiding Minister of  
the Whittlesea Mernda Parish**

**where he ministers, not only to his two Australian congregations,  
but to an Arabic-speaking congregation.**

**He is Egyptian by birth and upbringing but has obtained his doctorate  
from South Korea.**

**There will be items from Janette Wells, as well as our Arabic speaking  
and Urdu speaking brethren.**

**ENQUIRIES:**

**Victorian Protestant Federation**

**Phone: (03) 9329 8483; (03) 9329 0072.**

**God Reaches Out To One And To All**

**ACTS 8.26-40**

So far we have read of large numbers of people coming to repentance and faith in Jesus (see 2.41,47; 4.4; 6.7). Now we meet just one man, who highlights God’s interest in each and every person.

**Philip is directed by the angel to the Jerusalem to Gaza road.** There he meets an Ethiopian on his way home from Jerusalem, reading the scrolls of Isaiah. The Spirit directs Philip to the chariot (v 29) and Philip asks the Ethiopian if he understands what he is reading. The man invites Philip into the chariot and asks him to explain Isaiah 53.7,8 (vv 31–33). Philip explains that Isaiah is referring to Jesus and no doubt tells the man that he must repent and be baptised (Acts 2.36) as a public display of his repentance. The eunuch is baptised and Philip is taken away by the Spirit of the Lord (v 39).



**The great evangelist of Acts is God Himself.** His angel gives Philip his direction. He prepares the Ethiopian who just happens to be reading the great Messianic passage of Isaiah 53. He appoints him to hear the message. He ordains his response (see Acts 11:18).

**What might Philip’s message have been?** Look at Isaiah 53.5–12:

- Our sin was laid to Christ’s account—v 5.
- We are all sinful people—v 6.
- He voluntarily gave Himself for the sin of His people—vv 7,8.
- He will be vindicated and see the fruit of His work—vv 10–12.

**The Ethiopian’s response (v 36) would indicate** that Philip had called upon him to repent and be baptised. We ought not to be paralysed by God’s sovereignty in salvation. God directs, prepares, and ordains, but He chooses to bring people to faith through human messengers. ‘Faith comes from hearing the message ...’ (Romans 10.17).

**God is ever reaching out to people. He makes us ‘fishers of men’.** He urges us to pray for labourers for the harvest field. He sends His Son to be Saviour and His Spirit to be co-witness. And He mandates us to explain the truth (v 31).

**FOR REFLECTION:**

What caused such rejoicing to the Ethiopian? (v 39)  
 Reflect on the ministry of Philip in chapter 8. What ups and downs did he experience?

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

**SEEN ON FACEBOOK:**

There are three things that earthly riches can never do; they can never satisfy divine justice, they can never pacify divine wrath, nor can they ever quiet a guilty conscience. And till these things are done man is undone.

Thomas Brooks (1608–1680)



**Luke 11.8**

**Be a persistent pray-er**

**Words Of Wisdom:**

*‘Christianity gives man dignity, yet it humbles him. Humanism exalts man, yet it debases him.’*

*—Rev Peter Barnes*

## BOOKS WORTH READING

### J.C. RYLE, PREPARED TO STAND ALONE, Iain H. Murray, Banner Of Truth, Edinburgh, 2016. ISBN 978 1 84871 678 0

**Do you remember when we used to sing in Sunday School:** 'Dare to be a Daniel, dare to stand alone, dare to have a purpose firm, and dare to make it known'? Well, Bishop J.C. Ryle was the Church of England's Daniel of his day, and Iain Murray brings his life before us with compelling candour. Not only did J.C. Ryle inspire many to join 'Daniel's Band' in his own day, but his influence has lived on, inspiring among others, Archbishop Sir Marcus Loane of Sydney to take a courageous stand for Biblical truth when the occasion warranted it.

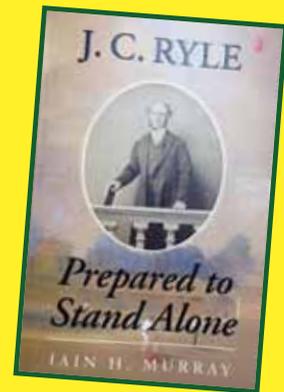
**As the author reminds us in his Dedication to J.I. Packer,** we are bidden in Scripture to 'Remember them ... who have spoken unto you the Word of God' (Hebrews 13.7). Bishop J.C. Ryle certainly fits into that category, and so Iain Murray has done us yet another favour in writing this biography of one who is worthy to be a role model for his own and succeeding generations.

**Ryle was a prolific writer** known for his clarity, directness, faithfulness to Scripture and practicality in its application of faith to life. In modern-day speak it would be said of him that he walked the talk. We learn from Murray's biography that much of his writing began life as series of tracts later recast into books such as *Holiness*, *Light From Old Times* and *Knots Untied*. His *Commentaries On The Gospels* are absolute gems which have assisted many a busy preacher to untangle his thoughts and add verve and vigour to an otherwise ordinary sermon.

**Ryle shines through in this book as a manly man,** able to cope with adversity and unpopularity, to shine Gospel light in dark days, to 'pray through' and 'preach through', and in all 'to keep (his) armour bright'. In short, he was truly 'a man in Christ.'

**J.C. Ryle - Prepared To Stand Alone** abounds in quotable quotes, including this advice to aspiring writers: 'It is an extremely difficult thing to write simple, clear, perspicuous and forcible English ... To use very long words, to seem very learned ... is very easy work. But to write what will strike and stick, to speak or write that which at once pleases and is understood, and becomes assimilated with a hearer's mind and a thing never forgotten - that, we may depend upon it, is a very difficult thing and a very rare attainment.'

**One of the Church's biggest needs in our day** is for Christians made in the mould of J.C. Ryle; Christians who will be 'strong in the Lord and in His mighty power'; Christians who 'when the day of evil comes, may be able to stand (their) ground, and after (they) have done everything, to stand'. Reading and analysing this book will help them do this. - Bob Thomas



*'(Bishop J.C. Ryle was) a famous, outstanding and beloved exponent of the evangelical and reformed faith.'*

*- Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones.*

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## BOOKS WORTH READING

**PSALMS, Tremper Longman III, Nottingham: IVP, 2014.  
ISBN 978-1-78359-163-3**

**Tremper Longman III is Professor of Biblical Studies at Westmont College, Santa Barbara, California, and he is the author of numerous books and Bible commentaries. He has a special interest in Old Testament *Wisdom Literature* and the *Psalms*, and so he was a good choice to write the replacement in the *Tyndale Old Testament Commentary* series, the popular original volumes in the series having been written by Derek Kidner.**

**Longman accepts that the phrase 'of David' in some 73 psalm titles** refers to David as the author of the psalm. He is not persuaded by recent attempts to find an overall structure and order to the Psalter, but does see the first psalm as introducing the major themes of law and Messiah that run through the whole book. As well, there is a general shift from lament to praise as we move through the Psalter, and the five-book structure of the Psalms may suggest a deliberate link to the *Torah (Pentateuch)*. Given the great interest in such features in recent scholarship, Longman definitely takes a minimalist position in regard to the organisation of the Psalter as a connected whole.

**Longman stresses the use of psalms in worship in the Old Testament period.** He explains the different psalm types (genres) and Hebrew poetic style, and he suggests that poetry calls for reflective and meditative reading, for it is a rich and emotive form of divine communication.

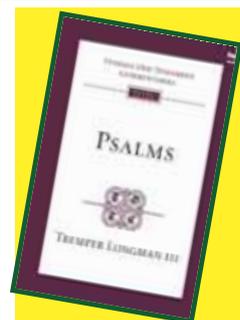
**As Longman explains, the theology of the Psalms focuses on the multifaceted character of God,** and especially His Kingship. They point forward to Christ, for they were used by Him and speak of Him as the God-man. We should make the prayers of the book of *Psalms* our own prayers, which may include angry prayers (imprecations) as we call on God to vindicate His oppressed people and to enforce justice. This is preferable to acting in vengeance ourselves. The Psalter is an indispensable resource for Christian belief, worship and ethics, and Longman's thoughtful but easy-to-read commentary assists us to gain more from it.

**As for his comments on particular psalms,** Longman on *Psalms One* sets its teaching about the righteous and the wicked in a wide biblical-theological frame that includes the instruction ('law') of *Deuteronomy* and *Wisdom Literature* (especially *Proverbs*). The Psalms of David are general enough that others in similar situations of distress can make them their own. For example, *Psalms Three* speaks of 'foes' but does not name his enemies, and *Psalms 51* uses 'sins', but says nothing specific about adultery or murder.

**A general weakness in the commentary is that** Longman refuses to see individual psalms as at all thematically connected to and interacting with neighbouring psalms. That is, he rejects the valuable work done by Gerald Wilson and resists recent advances in *Psalms* scholarship that have been influenced by Wilson's ground-breaking work. Longman's understanding of *Psalms 110* does not read it as an oracle by David himself, despite the psalm title and the use made of it by Jesus and the Apostles.

**The Psalter is a massive book, but Longman keeps his comments brief,** non-technical and to the point, but he always shows the connection of *Psalms* to Jesus and notes their use by New Testament authors. The commentary is dedicated to his wife Alice, who has memorised the *Psalms* and appreciates their connections to Christ, who Himself found in them a solace in His suffering, a guide for His ministry, and the basis of much of His own teaching. It would be true to say that no other Bible book was used by Jesus as much as was the Psalter. Longman's book will assist our own appreciation and use of this peerless part of God's Word.

– Greg Goswell



*Longman's book will assist our own appreciation and use of this peerless part of God's Word.*

## **William J. Dumbrell Called Home**

The noted Australian biblical scholar William J. Dumbrell went to be with his Lord on 1 October. Bill was among that select band of Australian biblical scholars whose names are instantly recognisable around the world by others in academia and the Christian community. Through his distinguished teaching career in Australia, Canada and Singapore Bill has influenced generations of theological students, and many more again through his prolific writings. Bill was a pioneer in this country of teaching, in the context of a theological college, the discipline of biblical theology; that is, a wholistic approach to God's progressive revelation through the Scriptures — the idea that God has had a single overarching plan for His world stamped into the fabric of creation and revealed successively through His relationships or covenants with His people, each covenant building on that which has gone before.

**While Bill was initially trained in the specialist disciplines associated with the Old Testament**, he refused to confine his interests to just one section of the canon. From the start, in his series of studies which became his best-known work, *Covenant And Creation*, and then in *The Faith Of Israel*, Bill had an integrating approach. At a time when biblical scholars (along with the Christian community generally) tended to see the two Testaments as almost strange bedfellows, plan A and plan B of God's dealings with the world, works like *The End Of The Beginning* and *The Search For Order* explicitly showed how the Old and New Testaments fit together as a whole Bible. For Bill, eschatology, the study of God's goal for His creation, only has meaning in the light of the ordered and wonderfully potential world God has made. When others tended to marginalise Genesis 1-11, seeing God's redemptive program commencing only with the call of Abraham, Bill saw creation as foundational. Unless we understand what God has done in bringing into existence a world to reflect His glory, we won't understand what redemption, God's new creation, is all about.

**There is hardly a corner of Scripture Bill did not apply his fertile mind to**, with numerous specialist studies in journals and essays in edited volumes. His later works have been on books of the New Testament, showing how God's grand design has worked out in the coming of the Lord Jesus. If *Galatians*, or *Romans* or *John's Gospel* belong to the New Testament, or New Covenant, Bill asked, how should we understand this covenant concept undergirding them and serving as an interpretive principle for their understanding?

**While Bill never set out to be a controversialist, he was fearless in advocating and defending what he saw as truth**, even if this meant that the boat felt like it was being rocked a little at times. Bill was always ready to explore new ideas and make fresh connections. In his writings, every word counted — he managed to pack more ideas into every sentence than most people can say in a paragraph and so his work richly repays a careful reading. **Bill always showed a keen interest in the lives of his students** and sought to encourage younger scholars. He leaves for the Christian community a lasting legacy of thoughtful scholarship and the example of godly Christian manhood for which we are greatly indebted and for which we praise God.

**Dr William J Dumbrell was born in 1926, converted when he was 25 in 1951 and began his studies at Moore Theological College four years later.** He took out a BD externally from the University of London with First Class Honours in 1961. He later earned an MTh from the same university in 1966 and a ThD from Harvard University in 1970. He was ordained in 1956 and served in churches in Parramatta and Ermington before lecturing at Moore College from 1963-66. Upon his return from Harvard, he lectured at Moore College in Old Testament from 1971 to 1984 and was Vice Principal from 1975-84. He then taught at Regent College, Vancouver, from 1984-88, before returning to teach at Moore College from 1988-1994. Bill and Norma then left for missionary service in Singapore, where Bill taught at Trinity College.

– John Davies, Retired Principal of Christ College, Sydney, and Russell Powell, CEO, Anglican Media Sydney

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