

## Sydney's Mr Eternity Remembered 50 Years On

HammondCare at Hammondville, Sydney, is marking 50 years since the death at that nursing home of Arthur Stace who became known internationally as 'Mr Eternity' for his 30 year mission to write the word *Eternity* across Sydney and beyond. Stace's chalked, copperplate *Eternity* is an icon of Sydney and featured on the Sydney Harbour Bridge in the 2000 Millennium fireworks, in the opening ceremony of the Sydney Olympics, and in countless works of art. **After spending more than three decades** writing *Eternity* on footpaths up to 500,000 times, Arthur Stace spent his final years as an aged care resident at Hammondville before dying of a stroke on 30 July 1967.

**HammondCare Chief Executive, Dr Stephen Judd**, whose father, Rev Bernard Judd, facilitated Arthur's move into care at Hammondville, said Arthur's links with HammondCare and Hammondville went back much earlier. 'The story began when Arthur, an impoverished alcoholic, joined hundreds of other unemployed men during the Depression in visiting the mid-week ministry of Rev Bob Hammond at St Barnabas Broadway,' Dr Judd said. 'Arthur would say, "I went in to get a cup of tea and a rock cake but I met the Rock of Ages".'

'**In remembering the life of Arthur Stace**, we are also acknowledging the remarkable life stories of all residents and their unique contributions to our lives,' Dr Judd said, 'and recalling the legacy of care that made such a difference to Arthur when he needed it most.'

**A commemorative service and high tea (featuring rock cakes)** was held at Bond House, Hammondville for residents, families and staff on Thursday 27 July. The day also featured art works, historical displays and interviews with staff and residents whose lives have been influenced by Arthur Stace.



## A Sign Of The Times? Armed Police Patrol Keswick Convention

**Armed police and barriers are being brought in** to help protect Christians attending the Keswick Convention in Cumbria against any potential terror threat. Extra security measures are being put in place for the three-week festival, as officials say they are not taking risks in light of recent attacks in Manchester and London. Organisers stress there is no information to suggest a specific threat.

**Armed police will patrol** the Skiddaw Street and Rawnsley premises, according to the Carlisle-based newspaper, *News And Star*. Organiser, Keswick Ministries, has also hired its own professionally trained security team.

In light of national advice, planter barriers and cars will be parked outside buildings to deter attacks involving vehicles at the event, where approximately 15,000 people are expected to attend.

Jutta Devenish, a spokeswoman for Keswick Ministries, told the *News And Star*: 'We have been taking advice from local police over a long period of time. They said that as these actions have been recommended on a national basis, they advise us to do the same.'

**Professor Don Carson, Pastor Alistair Begg and Principal Ivor Poobalan** are among speakers due to address the convention, which runs until 4 August.



– Alex Williams, Premier News

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## Exalting The Lord

*'Be exalted, O LORD, in Your strength; we will sing and praise Your might.'*  
– Psalm 21.13

**We live in a society so influenced through public and social media** that it refuses to acknowledge God as Creator and the One who sustains His Creation, and rules it for His own sovereign purposes. We insist on attributing all 'climate change' to human interference and we refuse to hear the voice of God speaking loudly and clearly to us through 'natural' disasters. We deny the reality of any super-natural interference in our purely 'natural', 'scientific' world. In short, this society has no room for God, the Creator-Ruler-Redeemer, in its completely closed worldview.

**This is the context in which we Christians must sing** with conviction, certainty and enthusiasm, 'Be exalted, O LORD, in Your strength', and to declare openly and confidently to a confused and sceptical world, 'We will sing and praise Your might.' This is even more binding for us than it was for David because we have seen God's might and glory so powerfully displayed in the life and words of Jesus, His Incarnate Son. As the Apostle John declares: 'The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.' (John 1.14).

**Can we truly say with the Apostle Paul,** 'I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. (Romans 1.17), and does every part of our lives demonstrate to our family, friends, neighbours and work colleagues, that we really believe it?

**We should not let silence or fear of contradiction** prevent the world from hearing this important truth! God the Holy Spirit can use it to bring about revival, as He has often done throughout human history.

**'Be exalted, O LORD, in your strength; we will sing and praise Your might.'** Will we?  
– Bruce Christian

### 'Why Is It Fine To Criticise Christianity But Not Islam?' – Richard Dawkins

**Premier News reports** that when a radio station in California cancelled their invitation for atheist Richard Dawkins to speak about his new book due to his 'abusive speech against Muslims', Dawkins did not apologise for his comments. Instead, he explained: 'I have called Islamism "vile" but surely you, of all people, understand that Islamism is not the same as Islam.' He maintains that Islamism has 'oppressive cruelties'. Dawkins added: 'I am known as a frequent critic of Christianity and have never been de-platformed for that. Why do you give Islam a free pass? Why is it fine to criticise Christianity but not Islam?'

**Good question.** The experience of 20 centuries has shown that Christianity can outlive any and all of its critics. Perhaps Richard Dawkins could investigate why this is so. Perhaps, too, his response could be the start of the scales falling from his eyes. We must pray that this would be so, and that he and multitudes of others will enter into a study of 'comparative religion' and find that there is no comparison – only the sharpest of contrasts between Christianity and all other religions as well as no religion and all aberrant forms of Christianity. The Gospel remains 'the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes' and 'the arm of the Lord is not shortened that it cannot save'. 'Please Lord, show Yourself in power to this man and all like him, that the scales would fall from their eyes and they would behold You in all Your glory, know You and be saved.'

– Bob Thomas

## **CHINA: 'Big Brother' Invades The Church**

**The Chinese Communist Party continues to use Zhejiang Province** (China's Christian heartland and President Xi Jinping's former stamping ground) as a test site for its repressive religious policies. This is particularly true of Wenzhou City, long known as 'China's Jerusalem' because of its thriving Christianity. In late March authorities in Zhejiang ordered that all churches be fitted with surveillance cameras. Amidst stiff resistance, tensions are mounting, as are the concerns of China's Christians. As the West continues to kowtow – even in the wake of the death in custody of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo – it signals to all that President Xi is indeed the most powerful and untouchable leader in the world today.

**In Ningbo, a city with a significant population of Christians,** surveillance cameras are already everywhere, including in the churches. In Wenzhou, however, resistance continues. At many churches cameras have been installed by force. Not only has this resulted in property damage, but church members resisting the forced installation have been wounded in scuffles or taken away by police. In Rui'an, a county-level city on the southern outskirts of Wenzhou, the 600-member Tuanqian Village Church was by early June the only church in the area still resisting the imposition of surveillance cameras. However, once the authorities cut the church's access to power and water, members started to doubt if they could resist much longer. It seems this has been the pattern in Rui'an. Unable to resist the installation, churches across Wenzhou are finding other ways to resist; for example, by disconnecting internal cameras or redirecting them (eg from the offertory box to the ceiling).

**Authorities have also installed surveillance cameras close to the Inner Mongolia home of Zhang Kai,** the Christian human rights lawyer arrested in Wenzhou in August 2015 and imprisoned for providing the churches with legal advice. Not only is he being closely monitored, he is being harassed, intimidated and threatened.

**Despite the CCP's claims that the cameras will be used to enhance security,** not everyone is convinced. In November 2015 the CCP released a draft of its 13th Five-Year Plan (2016 to 2020). It includes a plan to 'Improve the Social Credibility System' (chapter 71). With the alleged aim of 'increasing integrity', the CCP will develop and implement 'a unified system of credit rating codes nationwide'. Data will be collected from which social credits may be earned through good behaviour, and lost through bad behaviour, such as traffic violations, overspending, infidelity, and spurious internet browsing. Credit-rich enterprises and individuals will be rewarded, while the credit-poor will find themselves blacklisted, unable to travel, attend university or get jobs. It is not hard to imagine how this might impact the Chinese Church.

**Much of the data collected** will come from the myriad of surveillance cameras currently being rolled out nationwide supposedly to 'maintain national security' and 'prevent acts of terrorism'. Armed with sophisticated facial recognition software, these cameras are already being used not merely to catch criminals but to influence behaviour. For example, in many cities they are being used to name-and-shame jaywalkers, in real time. As the *Wall Street Journal* notes, 'China has access to immense amounts of data: photos uploaded by the country's more than 700 million internet users and a centralised image database of citizens, all of whom must have a government-issued photo ID by age 16.' Furthermore, 'This year [2017] China set up a government-funded laboratory to push the development of facial recognition and other forms of artificial intelligence. China hopes to become a leading innovator in those technologies.'

– Elizabeth Kendal

### **PLEASE PRAY THAT:**

- God will grace His precious Church with all the wisdom, faith and grace it will need to traverse the difficult days ahead.
- the Spirit of God will awaken the Chinese people to the moral failings and inherent dangers of atheistic totalitarianism; may government over-reach give rise to spiritual revival.
- our Lord Jesus Christ will continue to build His Church in China, even as the Father continues to work out His eternal purpose to unite all things in Christ (Ephesians 1.9,10).

*'Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.'*  
(Proverbs 19.21)

**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)**

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## Ken Ham Reclaims 'God's Mercy Sign' At Ark Encounter



(Photo: The Ark Encounter/Ken Ham/via Gospel Herald)

Creationist Ken Ham has decided that *The Ark Encounter* will be permanently lit with rainbow coloured lights to 'take back' the symbol from the LGBT Community. 'The Ark is lit permanently at night with a rainbow to remind the world that God owns it and He decreed it as a sign of His covenant with man after the Flood,' Ken Ham says.

**On Facebook, he shared a photo of *The Ark Encounter* in Williamstown, Kentucky, lit up in red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet.** 'We now have new permanent rainbow lights at *The Ark Encounter* so all can see that it is God's rainbow and He determined its meaning in Genesis 6. He explained that the rainbow is a reminder that 'God will never again judge the wickedness of man with a global Flood; next time the world will be judged by fire. As of Wednesday 19 July, Ham's post received over 25,000 'likes' and hundreds of comments – most of them encouraging.

'**Love this.** It's time to take the rainbow back and celebrate its actual meaning,' wrote one woman.

'**This is why I love the rainbow** and chuckle whenever I see LGBT try and use it. I'm like "you do realize your sign has been around since (almost) the beginning of time and you're actually sharing a promise from God, right?"' wrote another.

'**Wow, beautiful.** So great to see the rainbow in its true context!' wrote another.

– Leah Marieann Klett



### **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.

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## New Life For Oldest Methodist Chapel

The oldest Methodist chapel in the world is celebrating after the completion of an extensive refurbishment project. The New Room, in Bristol, UK, also known as John Wesley's Chapel, has been undergoing restoration and expansion for the past 18 months. The Duke of Gloucester was on hand to officially open the redeveloped space, which includes a chapel, visitor centre, heritage museum, café and gift shop, and a conference centre. The chapel was built in 1739 by John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. It claims the title of 'cradle of Methodism' because after its foundation the faith spread around the world and now encompasses some 75 million members worldwide.



– *Christian Today*

## Fruitful Ministry Developing In Sydney's South West

A gold coin is all it costs to get a bag of fruit and vegetables in Sydney's south west. Anglicare and St Luke's Anglican Church are providing the fresh produce to pension, healthcare, Centrelink or immigration card holders. Each week there are more than 60 households taking advantage of the offer. St Luke's senior minister Stuart Pearson says *Fresh Food Tuesday* allows them to engage with people in a meaningful way, providing needs and building relationships with those seeking help. Anglicare Liverpool manager Anita Cuca says it is harder than ever to feed a family on a low income. She says that with the cost of living, including such high rents, people on low incomes are finding it difficult to put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads. *Fresh Food Tuesday* offers affordable food to those struggling to make ends meet on low incomes. The Food is supplied by Oz Harvest and Food Bank.

– *Sydney Anglicans*

## Serial Preacher Blessed And A Blessing

To preach verse-by-verse through Isaiah – from 2008 until February of this year – Pastor Andy Davis memorized all of the book's 1,292 verses. It's a discipline he developed while working as a mechanical engineer for several years after becoming a Christian. The US Baptist pastor's sermons have been described as 'carefully reasoned presentations of truth – Biblical exposition crafted with the care one would expect of a mechanical engineer.' He has now memorized more than 40 books of the Bible and says he relies on God's Word internalized as he battles the intellectual, emotional and spiritual trials of the ministry, and the increasing secularization of society. Dr Davis says his verse by verse exposition of Scripture is his way of building faith and fighting secularization, showing people the magnificence of the Word of God. His new book *Revitalize* shares the story of his church's renewal.

– *Baptist Press*

## Lausanne Movement Celebrates 500th Anniversary Of Reformation

The Lausanne Movement last month conducted a gathering of global mission leaders in Wittenberg, Germany, to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. During the three-day event the leaders representing all regions of the world sought

to hear from God regarding Lausanne's vision to see the Gospel for every person and an evangelical church for every people. The participants were divided into 12 working groups, based on their individual passions and interests, including areas for mission such as evangelism, church planting, prayer in evangelism and intentional discipleship. Organisers say new partnerships, ideas and exciting initiatives have been formed as a result of the gathering, all of which have the potential to impact global mission over the next 3-5 years.

– *Lausanne Movement*

## TEARFUND At Work In Mosul Region

The violent recapturing of Mosul may have come to its conclusion, but for hundreds of thousands of Iraqis the desperate reality of being displaced far from home is an ongoing reality. TEARfund is working in the region to offer immediate humanitarian assistance, including providing safe water and sanitation, psychosocial support and cash grants. Cash grants have helped people to prioritise their most urgent needs, giving them flexibility and dignity of choice. It is estimated that since the beginning of the Mosul offensive, 920,000 civilians have fled their homes and close to 700,000 people are still displaced, with nearly half living in nineteen emergency camps.

– *Christian Today*

## REACHING OUT

# Build And Grow – Grand Plan For Sydney

**The Archbishop's New Churches For New Communities** has held a series of regional dinners to unveil a three-year fundraising plan for the construction of ministry facilities in growing areas. In partnership with the Mission Property Committee, which buys land, NCNC's role is to raise funds to provide emerging congregations across the Anglican Diocese of Sydney with dual-purpose facilities for community and church use.



**'We are on a mission to preserve the future of Christianity in these growth areas** and these facilities will enable emerging congregations to connect with the communities around them and grow together,' said the executive director of NCNC, the Rev Glenn Gardner. There was an appeal at the dinners for parish councils to consider including NCNC in their mission allocations budget, and an appeal for ambassadors for this task. The series of dinners began with a function at the newly built Oran Park Church. Each dinner was hosted by a regional bishop, with the Archbishop sharing his vision for NCNC, reports from church planters and members of congregations in the Southwest and Northwest growth corridors.

**Pictured above:** Archbishop Davies with members of Hope Anglican Church, Leppington, including (from left) Damian and Eva Dropmann, Chanelle Lim, Lenore Symons, lead pastor Luther Symons and Richie Lim.  
– Russell Powell, Sydney Anglicans

## Allan Day Memorial Lecture At Ridley

**Religious Origins of Modern Science** is the title of the ISCAST Allan Day Memorial Lecture to be held at Ridley College, Melbourne, at 6pm on Tuesday 15 August. The speaker is Professor Peter Harrison FAHA, an Australian Laureate Fellow and Director of the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at the University of Queensland. He has a particular interest in historical and contemporary relations between science and religion and is the author of over 100 articles and book chapters, his six books include, most recently, *The Territories Of Science And Religion*. The cost is \$15 ISCAST Members/Ridley College students/Concession. \$20 non-members.

**It is sometimes thought** that modern science developed largely independently of, or even in opposition to, religion. Historians of science, however, have proposed various ways in which religion might have played a significant role in the emergence of modern science. This lecture will evaluate some of the standard arguments for the religious origins of science, and put forward some new ideas about the influence of religion on the development and persistence of science.

## A Ministry For Returned Soldiers

**A church ministry to returned servicemen and women** is seeking to expand and equip local churches to create safe and caring environments for soldiers to reconnect with their Christian faith.

**Warrior Welcome Home**, a ministry of St John's Anglican Church in the Sydney suburb of Gordon, has been running since 2012 and recently set about supporting parishes in Darwin – a centre for Australia's armed forces – to run similar ministries.

**The leader of the ministry**, the Rev Rob Sutherland says there's nothing particularly complicated in what they do – it's very focused on being simple and about relationships. 'We look to heal the dents in the soul,' he says 'and we have found that love, principally the love of God, works at healing those spiritual wounds.'

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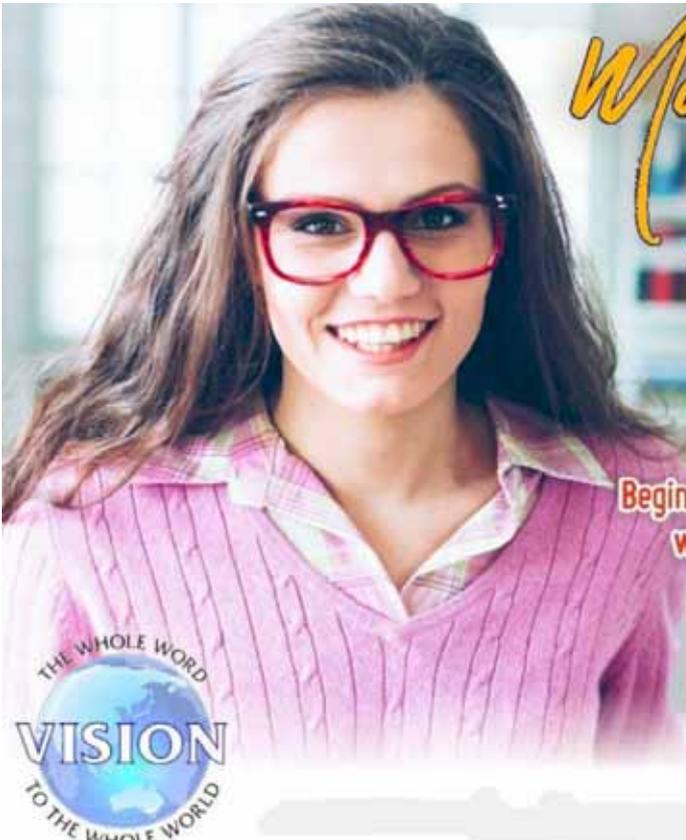
If you've just retired or are about to retire don't be surprised if you find yourself experiencing loneliness. When our days are filled with busyness our sense of loneliness can often be masked by other things, like the affirmation of others or the ways we distract ourselves with entertainment. Netflix can be a great panacea. Everyone experiences loneliness. It's part of being human. We enter this world on our own and we leave it on our own. Loneliness is also, I suspect, a by-product of the separation we often feel from God, even if we know God loves us.

**Jean Vanier, in his wonderfully wise book, *Becoming Human*, writes,** 'We only become aware of loneliness at times when we cannot perform or when imagination seems to fail us. Loneliness can appear as a faint dis-ease, an inner dissatisfaction, a restlessness in the heart. Loneliness comes at any time. It comes in times of sickness or when friends are absent; it comes during sleepless nights when the heart is heavy during times of failure at work or in relationships; it comes when we lose trust in ourselves or in others. In old age, loneliness can rise up and threaten to overwhelm us. At such times life can lose its meaning. Loneliness can feel like death.'

**I finished full-time work in February last year and quickly discovered** how much I missed the camaraderie of the work- place. The retirement/semi-retirement phase of life provides us with far more time to think, and that can be challenging. We have to confront the reality of our unfulfilled hopes and dreams. We have to face our own mortality. I turn 67 in November, so if I achieve the average life expectancy for Australian males I may only have another 15 years left on planet Earth. Although the fact that I've made it to this age probably means statistically that I'll live longer, but even so I probably only have another 20 years or so of life here. That's confronting. One of the things I love about *Q4Connection* is that it provides a raft of resources to help signed-up members to navigate this potentially tricky phase of life, as members of God's Kingdom.

– Paul Arnott

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## KEEPING ON KEEPING ON

### After 50 Years In A Wheelchair, Joni's Still Walking With Jesus

On July 30, 1967, a teenage girl went with her sister to a beach on the Chesapeake Bay and suffered a diving accident that rendered her quadriplegic. Today, Joni Eareckson Tada leads an international ministry, advocates for those with disabilities, and is a sought-after speaker, best-selling author, and radio host. Last weekend marked the 50-year anniversary of the accident, and *Christianity Today* met with her to discuss how God in His faithfulness has worked in and through her life over the past five decades. This article is an extract from an article in CT by Kelli B. Trujillo. (To read the full article go to: [christianitytoday.com>women>2017>July](http://christianitytoday.com>women>2017>July) Image: Courtesy of *Joni And Friends*).



**Joni says:** As a young girl I was so distracted, enamored, fascinated, infatuated. The world was before me and I had so many options. If I could go back, I'd say to myself, 'Look at me, Joni, listen: Love Jesus more, obey Him more. Follow Him more closely, not at a distance. Don't second guess the Holy Spirit's whispers and convictions in your heart. Don't make your own decisions without checking in with God. Follow Him much more closely.'

**Just the other day I was reading 1 Peter 5.10 [ESV],** where Peter says, 'After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace ... will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen and establish you.' Honestly, I'm amazed that the last 50 years feel like only 'a little while.' Maybe God does that when we finally do love Jesus more, when we finally do follow Him more closely. Maybe He erases all the horror, all the despair, all the depression of the past when we learn how to trust God. He pushes into the background all the terrible times of anguish, and He brings forward the highlights – the moments of hope, peace, and growth. As I look back over 50 years, I just see God at work. That's pretty exciting.

**When I was first injured, I just wanted out of my wheelchair.** I wanted to walk again, I wanted to have hands that worked. So I followed every scriptural injunction: I was anointed with oil, I went to the elders, I confessed sin. I would call my friends up on the telephone and insist, 'Hey, the next time you're going to see me, I'm going to be on my feet. Have faith with me, believe with me.'

**One of the first things I read about healing that really helped was from Mark 1.** I read those words, 'This is why I have come,' and I began to see Jesus' priorities of healing differently. The same man who healed withered hands and blind eyes is also the one who said, 'If that hand causes you to sin, cut it off, or if that eye leads you astray, gouge it out.' God is interested in a deeper healing.

**There really are more important things in life than walking.** There are more important things in life than having the use of your hands. And that is having a heart that's free of the grip of sin and pride and self-centeredness. I'm not saying I've arrived – I've got a long way to go – but I'm on my way, and that's a very good feeling.

**I memorized a quote from William Law many, many years ago.** He said, 'Receive every inward and outward trouble, every disappointment, every trial, every uneasiness, every darkness and desolation with both your hands, as a blessed opportunity ... of dying to self, and entering into a fuller fellowship with your Saviour. Look at no outward or inward trouble in any other view; reject every other thought about it; and you will find that the day of your distress will become the blessed day of your (spiritual) prosperity.' That's huge in the life of the believer who suffers. You can take pain as an opportunity to die to yourself and live to Jesus – and you don't have to break your neck to do it.

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## INASMUCH AS YOU DID IT TO THE LEAST ...

### Nigerian Woman Wins UN Award For Work Re-Integrating Boko Haram Victims

A Nigerian aid worker who works with victims of Boko Haram's insurgency in the north-east of Nigeria, has won the 2017 UN *Sérgio Vieira de Mello Prize*. Dr Rebecca Dali, Executive Director of the Centre for Caring, Empowerment, and Peace Initiatives, won it because her centre is "at its best" in caring for women, children, and orphans, the most vulnerable populations in north-east Nigeria, ravaged by eight years of violence.

Dr Dali, as wife of the ex-President of the Church to which most of the 276 Chibok girls belonged, was amongst the first to visit their parents after the mass kidnap in April 2014. The *Sergio Vieira de Mello* award is conferred biennially, to draw the world's attention to the unnoticed efforts by individuals, groups and organisations 'doing something special and unique to reconcile people and parties in conflict.' Dr Dali had set up CCEPI in 2009, the year Boko Haram's insurgency in Borno State began, before its violence later spread to Yobe and Adamawa States, and neighbouring countries (Niger, Chad and Cameroon).

**The letter announcing her award read:** 'This is in recognition of the courageous efforts of you and the CCEPI to promote the re-integration of returning women abducted by the Boko Haram group back into their local communities. As the communities resisted their re-integration, your negotiation skills and reconciliation efforts played an important role in their successful re-integration.' The CCEPI has been taking care of children born of girls abducted by Boko Haram who are referred to as 'bad blood children' in the southern part of Borno State. Hanson Tamfu of the UNHCR said that Dali has been instrumental to the re-integration of women who lived with Boko Haram in spite of resistance from the integrating communities, as she advocated against the double victimization of the women. He said that Dali was the first humanitarian agent to set up a livelihood program for Internally Displaced Persons and returnees in Madagali and Michika local government areas of Adamawa. He said that the centre took the risk of reaching areas considered inaccessible and dangerous at the peak of the Boko Haram activities at a time when other NGOs could not.

– Illia Djadi, World Watch Monitor



**Ramon A Williams**  
- Worldwide Photos -  
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*– Jeff M. Sellers, Editor, Persecution News Service, Morning Star News.*

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## Suicide Bomber Kills 26 In Pakistan

A Taliban suicide bomber in Pakistan killed at least 26 people, including nine police officers in the capital city of Lahore on 25 July. The attacker was part of a new Taliban faction known as the Taliban Special Group, which consists of well-trained suicide bombers. Reports say the attacker was targeting law enforcement, but FMI's Bruce Allen says that's not the whole story. 'What the mainstream media is not reporting is that this is the second-largest Christian colony in Pakistan where this blast occurred,' Allen says. 'And while this Taliban Special Group claimed that it was targeting police, the fuller story is that they're targeting police, or security, in Christian colonies.'

**Pakistan has faced numerous attacks over the past few months**, including three separate bombings in late June that killed 83 civilians. Allen says the continual violence is taking a toll on believers. 'It just puts the Christians at this heightened state of alert, and they have been for some time,' Allen says. 'We recall last Easter, a time of great celebration, and there's an attack against Christians in the parks. And that's what they live with constantly.'

**FMI supports several pastors throughout Lahore and the surrounding vicinities.** Allen says he often receives messages from them asking for prayer for an end to the violence. 'You have the pastors and church planters who are ministering to those people, and it's very wearing on them because they want to encourage people to persevere in the midst of hardship, and yet the people are crying like the children of Israel in Egypt regarding their 400 years of slavery, "Lord, how much longer? When will we be delivered?"'

- [mnonline.org](http://mnonline.org)



Pakistani Christians gather for prayer.

### MYANMAR: Baptist Pastors Face Eight Years In Prison

Two Baptist pastors in Myanmar who have been imprisoned since Christmas Eve face up to eight years in prison for helping a journalist who photographed evidence of the Myanmar military's bombing of a Roman Catholic church.

- *Baptist Standard*

### PALESTINE: PA Creates New Social Media Blasphemy Law

On 11 July, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas decreed a new law which allows the imprisonment of anyone sharing or 'liking' Facebook or other social media posts that the Palestinian Authority leadership disapproves of. The new Cyber Crime Law was enacted solely by President Abbas himself without review by the Palestinian Legislative Council, which has long been paralysed by a power struggle between Abbas' fateful government and Hamas. The new law has sparked waves of protests in the Palestinian Authority area, as journalists see it as an attempt to censor any criticism of the Palestinian Authority which Abbas leads. However, even before this law was passed, Palestinian journalists who posted material on social media critical of the Palestinian Authority were liable to be arrested. So why was this new law enacted, with penalties that are harsher than those imposed on thieves and sex offenders? The answer is almost certainly that it is part of an attempt to introduce a global Islamic blasphemy law for social media posts.

- *Barnabas Fund*

### CHINA: Church Camps And Sunday Schools Banned

Now's the time when children head off to Christian summer camps - but in one province in China all such camps have been banned. Officials in Zhejiang have recently told churches to cancel summer camps and ordered

Sunday schools not to meet over the summer months. Please pray for churches in Zhejiang whose plans for holiday camps have had to be shelved. Authorities in Henan province have also recently begun to insist that even official Three-Self churches should seek approval for all large-scale religious activities. International students attending schools and colleges in Henan are now banned from practising their religious beliefs on campus. Ask God to be with disappointed churches and children whose summer plans have been disrupted. Pray that they will find fellowship and discipleship in other ways. Please pray for state-run churches in Henan, Zhejiang and across China as officials appear determined to restrict their freedoms further. Pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to move among the churches in China and bring revival even to congregations under the tightest monitoring and control.

- *China Aid via Release Int*

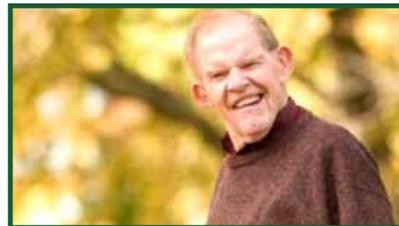
### Call To Prayer For The Korean Peninsula

Churches around the globe have been invited to join in a day of prayer for the 'peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula' next month. The theme for the day, to be held on Sunday 13 August, is based around Romans 14.19: 'Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.' The day of prayer was organised by the Korean Christian Federation of North Korea and the National Council of Churches in Korea, in South Korea. In a letter sent to the World Council of Churches and the World Communion of Reformed Churches, organisers have invited parishes and individuals to pray for the 'reconciliation and healing of the divided Korean Peninsula'. Materials for the event, including a prayer and order of service, can be downloaded from the WCC website.

- *Christian Newswire*

## WITH CHRIST ... BETTER BY FAR

**HADDON ROBINSON**, the respected author and seminary president who set the standard for expositional preaching, was called Home on 23 July, aged 86. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, where Robinson served as an Interim President and Professor of Preaching, broke the news of his passing and posted a tribute this weekend. Robinson also taught at Dallas Theological Seminary and was President of Denver Seminary.



**In his books, classes, and radio instruction**, Robinson taught that sermons should be guided by the Biblical text and focus on one idea or theme. *Christianity Today* featured Robinson – formerly the senior editor of a fellow CT site, [PreachingToday.com](http://PreachingToday.com) – in a 2002 article on the neglected craft of expository preaching. Robinson has been teaching students about expository preaching for decades. His classic (and recently updated) tome *Biblical Preaching*, which is used in more than 150 seminaries and Bible colleges, has become the go-to text for aspiring expositors.

**'The number of preachers who really begin with the text** and let it govern the sermon is relatively small,' laments Robinson. 'Today, the danger is that some preachers will read the latest psychology book into the text. They're not driven by a great theology but, instead, by the social sciences.'

**In addition to *Biblical Preaching*, Robinson wrote more than a dozen books** on the topic and regularly taught through radio ministries *Discover The Word* and *Our Daily Bread*. He warned preachers about veering into heresy with Biblical application; distracting the congregation with sermon illustrations; or ostracizing parts of the audience with tone. Among many striking quotes about preaching, Robinson had said, 'There are no great preachers, only a great Christ.'

– *Christianity Today*

## CHURCH AND NATION

### Ban On Kids Witnessing – 'Bureaucracy Out Of Control'

The call to prevent children sharing their faith at Queensland schools is an example of out-of-control bureaucracy, according to Christian advocacy group FamilyVoice Australia.

**'It is grossly improper** for unelected officials in the (Queensland) Education Department to make policy without parental consultation and government approval,' said FamilyVoice National Director Ashley Saunders. 'This is out-of-control bureaucracy,' he said. 'It completely undermines the role of parents as fundamentally responsible for the education of children. It is unacceptable for officials to ban discussion on the Christian values that most Australian parents and school curricula for the past 200 years recognise as the basic foundation of Western society.'

**'Why the sudden attempt to silence this conversation?** What is the department afraid of? In preparing students for entrance into broader society, teachers should be helping them learn to share their views in an articulate and respectful fashion, not trying to shut them up.'

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Read *The Christian Sabbath Or The Jewish Sabbath, Which Should I Follow?*  
by David Holden  
at [www.defenceofthefaith.org](http://www.defenceofthefaith.org)

**Sad, Bad And Glad Reception Of The Gospel ACTS 17.1-15**

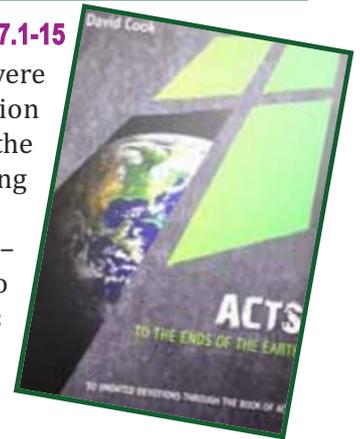
**The Gospel now comes to the seaport of Thessalonica.** Ancient seaports were infamous for their prosperity and licentiousness. Here, the Jewish opposition seems to have been especially tough and persistent (v 13). The immorality of the city probably contributed to the toughness of these Jews – they had to be strong in order to maintain their separateness from the local community.

**For three weeks Paul ‘reasoned, explained and proved’ (vv 2,3) the Gospel** – the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus, the Messiah. It is important to note that in this especially difficult environment, it is the same Gospel that is powerful. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, after conducting a university mission in Oxford in 1941 said, ‘There is no greater fallacy than to think that you need a Gospel for special types of people.’

**Jewish opposition is driven by jealousy (v 5),** though the reason they cite is loyalty to Caesar (v 7). This is just like the opponents in Philippi who used concern for community as a cover for greed (Acts 16.20,21). In the King James Version, verse 5 reads, the Jews gathered ‘certain lewd fellows of the baser sort’ to cause uproar in the city.

**The Bereans, 40 miles away, nobly examine the scriptures** in the light of the Gospel. They were eager to hear and many came to believe (vv11,12). The Jews from Thessalonica pursue the missionaries and oppose them in Berea before Paul leaves and is escorted to Athens.

**In each of the five cities visited** on this second missionary journey: Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens and Corinth, there is Gospel preaching, a response of faith from some and opposition from others. God is sovereign. His purpose is not thwarted. He uses the bad reception as much as the glad reception to see His purposes fulfilled.



**REFLECTION:**

To be forewarned is to be forearmed. We should not be surprised when we encounter opposition to the Gospel. So why are we so taken aback by opposition to Gospel work?

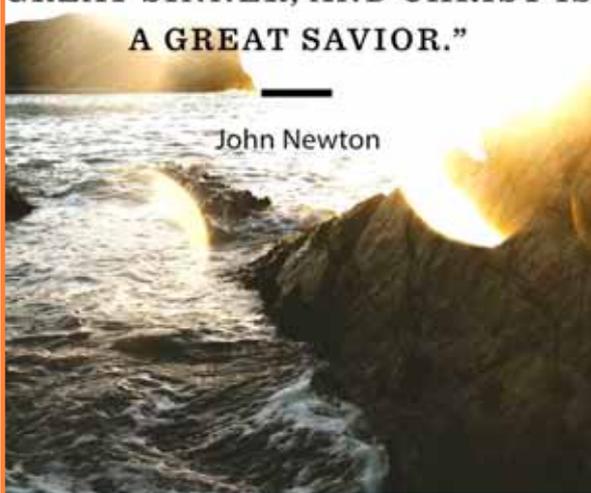
The Bereans were of noble character (v 11). Note the reason they are described this way. What do you learn from their example?

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

**SEEN ON FACEBOOK:**

**“ALTHOUGH MY MEMORY’S  
FADING, I REMEMBER TWO  
THINGS VERY CLEARLY: I AM A  
GREAT SINNER, AND CHRIST IS  
A GREAT SAVIOR.”**

John Newton



**John 14.1-3  
Our destination.**

**Words Of Wisdom:**

**“If we do not preach about sin  
and God’s judgment on it,  
we cannot present Christ  
as Saviour from sin  
and the wrath of God.  
And if we are silent about these things,  
and preach a Christ who saves only  
from self and the sorrows of this world,  
we are not preaching the Christ of the Bible . . .  
Such preaching may soothe some,  
but it will help nobody.”**

- J. I. Packer

## BOOKS WORTH READING

### **ANCIENT ISRAEL'S HISTORY: An Introduction To Issues And Sources, Edited by Bill Arnold and Richard S. Hess, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014. ISBN 978-0-8010-3930-0**

**At the opening of this helpful volume,** Richard Hess explains the importance of the study of biblical history, one argument being the historical foundations of our faith and another the historical context of salvation history. God is at work in the real world of space and time. It does matter to our faith whether the things recorded in the Bible actually happened.

**Hess provides a survey of significant scholars** currently working on Israelite history, and the present volume introduces the study of Ancient Israel by examining the story traditionally told, the most important sources for historical interpretation (written and material), the major issues and problems in this field of study, and how to synthesise biblical and extra-biblical sources.

**In regard to *Genesis*, there is a lack of direct archeological evidence** for its characters, but that does not prove that it is non-historical, argues Bill Arnold. James Hoffmeier is a recognised expert in Israel's sojourn in Egypt, the exodus and wilderness wanderings, and he shows the credibility of the biblical account of these events in the book of *Exodus*.

**Samuel Greengus outlines the customs of covenant-making** in the Ancient Near-East, and this is relevant to an appreciation of the form and contents of the book of *Deuteronomy*. Lawson Stone shows that the biblical text and archeological findings are both to be taken into account in forming a theory of Israel's appearance as a nation in Canaan. He does a good job of showing how text and archeological discoveries can be reconciled.

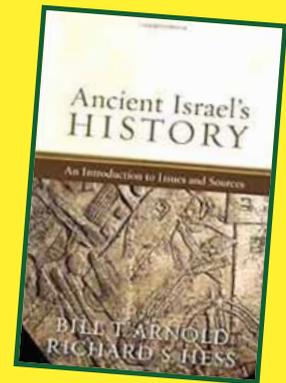
**Robert D. Miller discusses the Judges period** in which Israel was virtually swamped by Canaanite culture and Philistine hegemony. David Bodi views Saul and David as rival tribal chiefs rather than as successive kings (depending on analogies drawn from the northern Mesopotamian city-state of Mari). Stephen Ortiz shows that skeptical scholars can no longer deny the existence of David, especially in light of the Tel Dan Inscription. James Mead argues that common prophetic phenomena in the Ancient Near-East suggest the historical plausibility of the biblical presentation of the prophets and their message.

**Both the Bible and external evidence** testify to the political and military significance of wicked King Ahab, and Kyle Greenwood reviews the evidence for this king's activities and achievements. Sandra Ritcher describes the economic prosperity of the contemporary reigns of Jeroboam II in the North and Uzziah in the South.

**Brad Kelle looks at the state of the Judean Kingdom** in the aftermath of the Assyrian invasion and finds that archeology provides little extra information to that given by the biblical text itself. Peter van der Ven shows that the biblical picture of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians and the return from exile and resettlement are consistent with physical remains uncovered by archaeologists.

**This book provides a wealth of fascinating information** and sensible thinking about the vexed issue of what archeology can and cannot do. We are not to expect too much of archeology, since what survives the ravages of time is largely accidental, but nor are we to dismiss it as irrelevant, and in this regard, the authors succeed in performing a delicate balancing act.

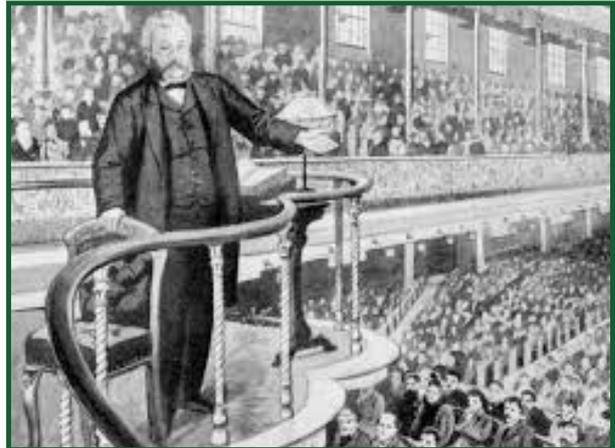
– Greg Goswell



*'God is at work in the real world of space and time. It does matter to our faith whether the things recorded in the Bible actually happened.'*

## Five Ways Spurgeon Coped With London's Terror Attacks

On 30 September 1888, 'Jack the Ripper' murdered his third victim, Elizabeth Stride, only five miles from the recent terrorist attack in Finsbury Park, London. Terror seized Spurgeon's London. Would the murders continue? Who would die next? (Catherine Eddowes and Mary Jane Kelly). The following morning, Spurgeon addressed Jack the Ripper's murder of Elizabeth Stride in his opening prayer at the Metropolitan Tabernacle: 'We hear startling news of abounding sin in this great city. Oh! God, put an end to this, and grant that we may hear no more of such deeds. Let Thy Gospel permeate the city and let no monsters in human form escape Thee.'



**Spurgeon himself was no stranger to terror.** A madman once stormed through the door of his house with a club. Seizing the weapon, Spurgeon opened the door and bellowed at the top of his voice, 'If you are not out of this house this very moment, I'll break every bone in your body.' The man was paralyzed with fear and arrested.

**Spurgeon was almost knifed, too,** in Mentone, France (only 18 miles from the terrorist attack in the Nice airport in July 2016). The man barged into the hotel but Spurgeon forced him to leave.

**In the recent wake of suicide bombers, knife attacks, and runaway vehicles,** here are five ways Spurgeon coped with terrorism in London:

**1. Mourn the Loss of the Victims.**

'How Jesus would have wept in London! He could not stand in the front of a lone grave, about to look upon a single corpse, without weeping.'

**2. Pray for the Terrorist's Salvation.**

'Ours it is to persist in loving, even if men persist in enmity. We are to render blessing for cursing, prayers for persecutions. Even in the cases of cruel enemies, we are to "do good to them, and pray for them." We are no longer enemies to any, but friends to all. We do not merely cease to hate, and then abide in a cold neutrality; but we love where hatred seemed inevitable.'

**3. Keep Calm and Preach On.**

'Preach the Gospel, the gates of hell shake; preach the Gospel, prodigals return; preach the Gospel to every creature – it is the Master's mandate – and it is the Master's power, "the power of God unto the salvation of every one that believeth"'

**4. Forgive the Evil.**

'The Christian man is not allowed to hate any one.'

**5. Live Each Day in Light of Eternity.**

'If God had willed it we might each one of us have entered Heaven at the moment of our conversion ... Why then are we here? Does God delight to tantalise His people by keeping them in a wilderness when they might be in Canaan? Will He shut them up in prison when He might give them instant liberty? Why are God's ships still at sea? One breath of His wind might waft them to the haven. Why are His children still wandering hither and thither through a maze, when a solitary word from His lips would bring them into the centre of their hopes in Heaven? The answer is: they are here that they may glorify God, and that they may bring others to know His love. We are not here in vain, dear brethren.'

**And Finally.** On the morning Jack the Ripper murdered Elizabeth Stride, Spurgeon preached: 'He by death has destroyed death, and by His resurrection has torn away the gates of the grave ... The primary mission of the church is not to protect itself from the world, but to protect others from the world to come. May God be especially near the victims of the terror attacks in London, and may He embolden each of us to respond like Christ did when faced with the greatest terrorist attack in human history: 'Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.' (Luke 23.34).

– Christian George

*'Morning By Morning  
New Mercies I See'*



*- Photo Credit: Rev Rob Duncanson, Darwin*